Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics, 1751-1755: A Reappraisal

A recent assertion that Pennsylvania's public men in the colonial era were not motivated primarily by principle has used Benjamin Franklin as the main example. We are informed that, whatever else they were, in public life Franklin and his colleagues were mere politicians, "less interested in principles and theories than in power and advantage." Pennsylvania politics was, perforce, no purer than its practitioners—"a jousting at the top among gentlemen rulers and their factions. The prize was a power advantage for one of them." Although some reviewers have taken exception to this assessment, it seems to be winning acceptance and, therefore, should be examined with the closest attention. This,

1 This is the contention of William S. Hanna in his stimulating and provocative book, Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics (Stanford, Calif., 1964).
2 Hanna, ix.
3 Ibid., 201.
4 For a skeptical review, see Jack P. Greene, Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB), LXXXIX (July, 1965), 369-372. One recent scholar who seems to endorse Professor Hanna's thesis is Norman S. Cohen. In his "The Philadelphia Election Riot of 1742," ibid., XCII (1968), 317, he in effect paraphrases Hanna: "Political struggles in Pennsylvania had been between contending aristocratic forces, fighting for power, wealth, and preferment." For another recent approving use of Professor Hanna, see Gary B. Nash, Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726 (Princeton, 1968), 335-336n.
fortunately, is possible within the compass of an article, because the thesis is based on a study of Franklin's conduct alone, rather than on an investigation of the behavior of a large number of Pennsylvania leaders, and, consequently, its validity rests on and can be tested by the accuracy with which it deals with the Doctor.

Having no theoretical or ideological predilections, Franklin is represented as entering the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751 as an independent. For the next four years he is supposed to have retained his independence and with it the friendship and confidence of the leaders of the province's two feuding factions. In the summer of 1755 Thomas Penn and he had what has been described as a "personal quarrel," allegedly caused by Penn's failure to thank him for supplying General Edward Braddock's army with horses and wagons and allegedly exacerbated by a series of indignities inflicted upon him by the Proprietor's supporters in Pennsylvania. As a result of this quarrel Franklin is pictured as petulantly joining the Quaker party in order to obtain the power to avenge himself upon Penn by leading a drive to soak his estates with taxes. His vindictiveness having once been vented, it became, we are told, the key to his political behavior during the years remaining before Independence. Thus, in the winter of 1764 he assisted Thomas Penn's nephew, Governor John Penn, in repelling the Paxton Boys at the outskirts of Philadelphia, a favor which young Penn is pictured as repaying by slighting and snubbing him. "Once again a member of the Proprietary Family had hurt Franklin's pride" and once again "Franklin's retaliation was prompt in coming"—leadership of the movement to abolish proprietary government and replace it with royal government. In 1774 our attention is directed to the Cockpit in London, the scene of another assault on Franklin's pride, this time by Attorney General Alexander Wedderburn. The Doctor responded, so it is said, by attempting to avenge himself upon Wedderburn's royal master by joining the movement to divest him of his American colonies. There was, we are informed, "a certain similarity between the events of 1755 and 1774"; in both cases personal "clashes led

5 So Professor Hanna implies, 73.
6 Ibid., 73, 81-89.
7 Ibid., 155-156.
Franklin to seek revenge by pulling down what the offenders—Penn, Wedderburn, et al—represented: proprietary and royal government.” Thus Franklin’s provincial political career is made to resemble a vendetta in which his most important actions were calculated to avenge affronts. Power perforce became his political objective because without it he could not gratify his grudges.

If this description of his career is accurate, it lends impressive support to the theory about the ignoble motivation of Pennsylvania politicians. There is reason to suppose, however, that this portrait of Franklin can be challenged. And nowhere can it be challenged more profitably than by focusing on his split with Thomas Penn in the summer of 1755. Scrutinizing his decision to break with Penn and join the Quakers is appropriate because it was the most important step he ever took in provincial politics—fixing as it did his allegiance for the next twenty years—and because it has been viewed as the prototype of his political decisions before Independence. If it can be shown that that decision has been misinterpreted, then a reappraisal of the descriptions of Franklin’s other decisions, especially those to lead the movement to overthrow proprietary government in 1764 and to support American independence after 1774, will obviously be in order. Furthermore, since Franklin’s career has been used to document a theory about the motivation of a whole generation of Pennsylvania politicians, a successful challenge to the presentation of as significant an episode in that career as his decision to join the Quakers in 1755 must shake the credibility of that theory. Indeed, on the basis of this paper’s assessment of Franklin’s position in Pennsylvania politics from 1751 to 1755 it appears that he was not motivated by a quest for power or by other unseemly appetites and that provincial politics did not lack “evidence of any inner direction . . . that responded to fundamental principles.” Rather, it appears that in so far as Franklin reflects the nature of the political process in the province, the venerable Whig theory, whose insistence on the primacy of principle in political affairs many have rejected, provides the most accurate conceptual framework for explaining Pennsylvania politics during these years.

8 Ibid., 199.
9 Ibid., ix.
II.

As late as ten years ago, it was generally assumed that Franklin entered the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751 as a member of the Quaker party and as a Whig and retained his party affiliation until Independence destroyed the Friends as a political force. The first challenge to this assumption came, oddly enough, not from an analyst of Pennsylvania politics, but from a student of what the province's pundits called its "German problem." In 1955 Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., wrote an article, "Benjamin Franklin and the German Charity Schools,"\(^{10}\) describing an abortive attempt to deal with this problem, in which he pointed out that the trustees of the schools, selected in the winter of 1754, included Franklin and five other prominent Pennsylvanians, all of whom were proprietary partisans: William Allen, William Smith, James Hamilton, Richard Peters, and Conrad Weiser. Bell observed that the five last named trustees and Thomas Penn, who selected them, conceived of the charity schools as having a dual objective—Anglifying the German population of Pennsylvania so that it could resist the blandishments of the French in the West and weaning the Germans, hitherto the backbone of the Quaker party, away from their ancient allies and attaching them to the proprietary party. Considering Franklin's intimacy with the trustees—all but Weiser were close friends—it seemed impossible that he could have been ignorant of this latter objective and, since there is no record of his protesting against it, one shares Dr. Bell's temptation to conclude that he was not averse to seeing the Quaker domination of public affairs destroyed. Yet it is entirely possible that he supported the charity schools solely to counteract the machinations of the French and that he shut his eyes to the political designs of the other trustees, fearing that a dispute over them would jeopardize the prospects of immunizing the Germans against French influence. Whatever the truth, there was at least enough in Franklin's participation in the charity school scheme to suggest a proprietary party connection, although Dr. Bell was too wise to conclude from such one-dimensional evidence that Franklin was a proprietary party partisan; rather he left his party affiliation an open question.

Two years later Professor Glenn Weaver ventured to resolve that question. Writing on "Benjamin Franklin and the Pennsylvania Germans,"11 Weaver was impressed, as Bell had been, by Franklin's collaboration with the proprietary stalwarts in running the charity schools and also by the extent to which he shared their views on all facets of the "German problem." Therefore, he concluded that Franklin was a member of the proprietary party, thus becoming the only scholar of whom the present writer has any knowledge who places Franklin unequivocally in Thomas Penn's corner.

Next to write on Franklin's political posture during the early 1750's was Professor John J. Zimmerman. In an article on "Benjamin Franklin and the Quaker Party, 1755-1756,"12 published in 1960, Zimmerman demonstrated that Franklin's co-operation with proprietary leaders did not stop with the charity schools, that with proprietary chieftain William Allen he formed a kind of philanthropic duumvirate, and that in tandem the two men supplied substantial amounts of money and inspiration for numerous provincial projects, the most notable of which were the Academy of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Hospital. By showing that Allen's influence in England procured Franklin the deputy postmaster generalship of North America in 1753,13 Zimmerman demonstrated that

11 See William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, XIV (1957), 536-559.
12 Ibid., XVII (1960), 291-313.
13 Concerning another office which Franklin received through proprietary influence, Professor Hanna appears to be in error. On June 3, 1749, Governor James Hamilton appointed Franklin a justice of the peace. Hanna avers that this office was a "proprietary favor" and that in accepting it Franklin courted "certain Quaker censure" (p. 49). It does not appear, however, that at that time proprietary governors used commissions of the peace as instruments of patronage. William Peters explained the Pennsylvania practice by complaining to Penn on June 4, 1764, that "by your having always given the Preference to the Quakers in the Commissions of Peace... they have obtain'd great Influence in the Country which they have always... made use of against you." Penn Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). See also James Pemberton to John Hunt, Apr. 11, 1764, Pemberton Papers, HSP. Since it was customary to award commissions of the peace to the Quakers—Isaac Norris accepted one when he first entered politics—Franklin's acceptance in 1749 can not have jeopardized his standing with the Friends. It appears that not until after the provincial elections of October, 1764, did the proprietary party begin to use justice of the peace's commissions as patronage, as we now understand the term, i.e., the use of an official position to reward friends and punish enemies. See Joseph Galloway to Franklin, Nov. 23, 1764, Samuel Wharton to Franklin, same date, and Charles Thomson to Franklin, Dec. 18, 1764, in Leonard W. Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven, 1967), XI, 468,
the bonds between the two men were cemented by patronage as well as by partnership. Having added these dimensions to Franklin's proprietary connections, Zimmerman might have been expected to side with Weaver in putting him in the proprietary camp. This he did not do, however. Considering that the traditional view of Franklin as a member of the Quaker party was hardly a figment of the imagination of successive generations of historians, Zimmerman concluded that Franklin had a foot in both political camps, that during the 1750's he was, in fact, a neutral in provincial politics.

Zimmerman's conclusions, though not his terminology, have been accepted by more recent scholars. Professor Ralph H. Ketcham in his "Conscience, War, and Politics in Pennsylvania, 1755-1757" (July, 1963) labeled Franklin a mediator, while Professor William Hanna preferred the term independent, but both men meant to convey the same idea of his position on the political spectrum as Zimmerman did by using the term neutral.

As discerned by Professor Hanna, the implications of Franklin's independence were highly favorable to his theory about politics in provincial Pennsylvania. As he saw it, in a community polarized between two implacable political parties, a man could remain friendly to both, yet uncommitted to either, only by having no convictions which could be inspired or inflamed. Thus for Hanna, Franklin's independence proved the poverty of his principles which in turn proved him to be typical of the Pennsylvania politician as he, Hanna, conceived him.

Yet there are other contemporary scholars who have found Franklin brimming with principles. We refer to Clinton Rossiter, Adrienne Koch, and Gilbert Stourzh, who within the last score of years have subjected the traditional view that Franklin was a Whig to rigorous scrutiny and have concluded that it was true with only the smallest qualifications. Franklin, the consensus is, read Locke, Sidney, and

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472, 522-523, hereinafter cited as Papers. Patronage in colonial Pennsylvania has received scant attention, a most regrettable scholarly oversight, considering its importance in understanding the dynamics of a society's politics.

14 Professor Ketcham's article is in William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, XX (1963), 416-439.

the other Whig wisemen and subscribed to many of the concepts which they enunciated: the social contract, natural rights, and the sanctity of the British Constitution as fixed by the Revolution Settlement;\textsuperscript{16} nevertheless, his dedication to democratic principles is ascribed by these scholars as much to a pragmatic temperament as it is to the persuasiveness of any philosopher's pen.

During the period which we are examining, Franklin seems to the present writer to have laid particular emphasis on securing for Pennsylvanians the rights of Englishmen as guaranteed by the British Constitution. There was nothing novel about this desire because the enjoyment of these rights, full and unabridged, was a common and perennial concern of all American Whigs. Where Franklin was in the vanguard was in his proposal of a kind of corollary to the British Constitution, whereby certain rights and privileges would be allowed in America which were not permitted in Great Britain. He believed that because of the "different Circumstances" of America and as a reward for the immense sacrifices which Americans had made in taming and settling a new continent and adding to the power, wealth, and commerce of the mother country, the Crown could and should grant the colonists "additional Liberties and Privileges, not used in England."\textsuperscript{17} What he had in mind, it seems, were those unusual powers which by 1750 the Pennsylvania Assembly had wrested from their Proprietors, principally the appointment of officials customarily chosen by the executive in other jurisdictions and the well-nigh exclusive control over the expenditure of public money. According to Franklin, these powers, and perhaps even the popular election of militia officers, could be granted "under an English Constitution" and "enjoyed agreeable to that Constitution."

Suggesting a constitutional sanction for so audacious an extension of the popular power provoked Franklin's enemies to revile him as a "republican" and as a "leveller."\textsuperscript{18} The Doctor's reverential respect for the British monarchy and for the person of George III

\textsuperscript{16} On this point, see also Malcolm R. Eiselen, Franklin's Political Theories (Garden City, N.Y., 1928), 8, 10-11.

\textsuperscript{17} See Franklin's "Dialogue between X, Y, and Z," Dec. 18, 1755, Papers, VI, 299; see also his letters to William Shirley, Dec. 4, 22, 1754, ibid., V, 447, 451; and the Assembly message (written by him), Dec. 3, 1755, Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, V, 4176-4177, hereinafter cited as \textit{Votes of Assembly}.

\textsuperscript{18} See, for example, Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Aug. 22, 1755: "Mr. F[ranklin] was always of a Republican disposition and levelling Principles." Penn Papers.
during the early years of his reign refutes the first charge, while Pro-
fessor Hanna himself punctured the second by arguing that Franklin
believed in an elitist social theory which expected the wise, the rich,
and the good to exercise their “natural and rightful leadership”
in society.\textsuperscript{19} He also noted that Franklin was not the least bit
troubled by the underrepresentation of the West in the Pennsylvania
Assembly or by the disfranchisement of some of the province’s
humbler citizens.\textsuperscript{20} While these facts prove that Franklin was no
leveller, they do not prove that he was no Whig. Professor Caroline
Robbins in her masterly study of the left wing of eighteenth-century
British Whiggery, \textit{The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman}, points
out that views which today appear hopelessly conservative were in
that era perfectly consistent with the most advanced liberal think-
ing, that, specifically, the eighteenth-century Whig could believe in
a “ruling class and an uneducated and unrepresented majority”
without considering his profession compromised or himself hypo-
critical.\textsuperscript{21} Her words ought to dispel any doubts about the sincerity
of Franklin’s convictions.

Professor Robbins corroborates the view that Franklin was a
Whig in another way, too. It is well known that during the Doctor’s
second mission to England (1764–1775) he was an active member of
the Club of Honest Whigs, a group of like spirits who met fort-
nightly at the London Tavern to fraternize and talk politics. Pro-
fessor Robbins has discovered that to name the members of the club
was to call the role of the most conspicuous commonwealthmen of
the era: Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, James Burgh, Jonathan
Shipley, Theophilus Lindsey, John Lee, Andrew Kippis, and John
Canton.\textsuperscript{22} Thus Franklin was a commonwealthman by association
and, Professor Robbins implies, by disposition as well, a supposition
confirmed by a Pennsylvania political writer in 1765, who emphati-
cally declared that the Doctor entered Pennsylvania politics in 1751

\textsuperscript{19} Hanna, 28–29.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, 72, 75, 160.
\textsuperscript{21} Caroline Robbins, \textit{The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman} (Cambridge, Mass.,
1959), 16, 276.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid.}, 336. An excellent recent study of these men is Verner W. Crane, “The Club of
Honest Whigs: Friends of Science and Liberty,” \textit{William and Mary Quarterly}, Third Series,
"under the character of a common wealth's man."23 Whether we prefer to call him a commonwealthman (the term may be somewhat inappropriate because of its British association with Parliamentary reform) or a "radical Whig," the virtually synonymous epithet applied to him by Professor Rossiter, the important point is that until recently no student of Franklin's political thought has ever doubted that he was a Whig, and a principled one, too.24

How, then, is the conflict between the two streams of recent Franklin scholarship to be resolved? Is Franklin to be pictured as brimming with political principles, as Rossiter, Robbins, and Koch contend, or is he to be deemed deficient in them, as Hanna, extrapolating from Bell, Zimmerman, and Ketcham, concludes? Actually, what produces the conflict is not any intrinsic irreconcilability between Franklin's Whiggery and his independency, but rather between his Whiggery and a deduction from his independency that he lacked political principles. If that deduction is rejected, then a conflict is not inevitable and it is possible to regard Franklin's Whiggery

23 In a broadside, now in the Franklin Papers at APS, which can be dated Sept. 28, 1765, an enemy of Franklin, probably his erstwhile friend and confidant, the Rev. William Smith, charged that he "originally crept into confidence under the character of a common wealth's man with the cry of our constitution and charter rights in his mouth." Another campaign screed, published a year earlier (from which the broadside of Sept. 28, 1765, borrowed heavily), confirmed that Franklin entered Pennsylvania politics with strong Whiggish sentiments. "First I would observe," wrote an anonymous opponent in a supplement to the Pennsylvania Journal, Sept. 27, 1764, "that it was by pretending a sovereign Regard to our Liberties and Privileges that these men [Franklin and his cronies] first got themselves recommended to Power. With the Cry of our Constitution and Charter-Rights constantly in their Mouths, they fixed themselves in their Seats, and enriched themselves at our Expence."

24 Gov. Robert Hunter Morris entertained no such doubts either. Writing to William Shirley on June 16, 1755, he lamented that Franklin had "very out of the way notions of the power of the People and is as much a favourer of the unreasonable claims of American Assemblies as any man whatever." Pennsylvania Archives. First Series, II, 362. Another attestation of Franklin's Whiggery can be found in a letter of William Smith to Thomas Penn, written in September, 1755. Commenting on a series of Assembly messages which Franklin had recently written, vigorously affirming the House's natural rights and rights conferred upon it by the British Constitution, Smith assured Penn that "The Substance of these late inflammatory Messages I have often had from him as his real Sentiments," Papers, VI, 211. Corroboration of the view that Franklin was a Whig from the earliest days of his career has recently been offered by J. A. Leo LeMay, who on the basis of a study of the Pennsylvania Gazette in the 1730's and 40's concludes that Franklin was a fervent liberal at this time, indeed "too much of a radical for either of Pennsylvania's political parties." "Franklin and the Autobiography," Eighteenth-Century Studies (Berkeley, Calif., 1968), I (no. 2), 196-197.
and his independency as compatible, which is to say, it is possible to regard the findings of both streams of recent Franklin scholarship as correct. This the present paper will not concede, however, until an answer is given to the vital question of who elected Franklin to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751, a question which those who would make him an independent have thus far ignored.

The only information which Franklin himself left about his entrance into the Assembly was contained in a pamphlet, Remarks on a Late Protest, which he wrote in the fall of 1764 to refute a polemic thought to have been inspired by a now antagonistic William Allen. In his Remarks Franklin revealed that he had been proposed for one of the Philadelphia seats in the House by certain “persons,” whom he declined to identify, “against my own Inclination, and against my Entreaties that I might be suffered to remain a private Man.”

As to who his sponsors were, he gave a clue by taunting Allen with being unable to win an election to the Assembly from Philadelphia for the past twenty-eight years. Such systematic exclusion of the leader of the proprietary party could only mean that the Quakers controlled the city’s elections, a conclusion which is confirmed by checking the religious affiliations of the men who represented Philadelphia in the Assembly during the decade before Franklin was elected. Quakers were selected to fill seventeen of the twenty seats available during this period. Thomas Leach, an Anglican who supported Quaker policies, was elected twice and William Clymer, another Anglican whose political views are not known, was elected once. It is also confirmed by a vaunting assertion of the Assembly in September, 1753, that for some years past the proprietary party had enjoyed “no formidable Share of the People’s Love and Esteem” and had in fact been so dispirited that it had not bothered to contest elections with the Quakers. Obviously, then, Franklin was elected to the Assembly by the Quaker party. But did both of its branches support him, or only one?

The larger faction among the Friends was led by Isaac Norris, who succeeded John Kinsey as Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1750; the smaller faction—and it was much smaller—was

26 See Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, June 1, 26, 1756, Penn Papers.
27 Papers, V, 47.
led by Israel Pemberton, who in the same year succeeded Kinsey as Clerk of the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Yearly Meeting. The attitudes of the two groups reflected in a rough way the positions of their leaders. Pemberton and his followers were concerned above all else with preserving the purity of the Quaker persuasion and were prepared to renounce any worldly concern—participation in politics not excepted—which threatened to corrupt it. Norris and his followers held, on the other hand, that withdrawal from politics could never be in their people's best interest and believed that they could render them an acceptable service by retaining political power, even if this involved an occasional compromise with the tenets of their religion.

Toward Franklin the opinion of the two groups diverged sharply, largely as the result of his organization of the Association, a voluntary militia, in 1747. Militant pacifists, Pemberton and his followers opposed the establishment of any kind of military force in the province; consequently, they "abused and reproached" Franklin and his coadjutors for their efforts and sabotaged part of their scheme by employing what were described as "all possible underhand Practices" to dissuade the Germans, whom Franklin hoped would swell the ranks of the Association, from joining.\(^{28}\) Franklin repaid the animosity of the Pembertonites in kind; he denounced them openly—declaring as he passed the Friends' Meeting House that "more Mischief was hatched in that Place than in a meeting of Jesuits at St. Omers"\(^{29}\)—and threatened (so it was alleged) to use his influence "to demolish" them. Given this mutual hostility, it seems most unlikely that the Pemberton faction supported him for election to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751. Certainly it did him no favors during subsequent campaigns. Some of its members actu-


\(^{29}\) *Papers*, XI, 375–376. Both this and the following remark (*ibid.*, 382) were attributed to Franklin by proprietary enemies in electioneering pieces written in 1764. The authorities for the statements were William Smith and, apparently, William Allen, with both of whom Franklin's friendship had ceased in the middle 1750's (*ibid.*, VII, 12; XI, 439). Therefore, if Franklin did in fact make the remarks here quoted, he must have made them in the early fifties or the late forties.
ally regarded him as Pennsylvania Quakerism’s worst enemy, more menacing even than the Presbyterians. The worst the Presbyterians could do, after all, was to take control of the province, purge the Quaker politicos, and persecute the sect, a prospect not altogether abhorrent to some of the Pembertonians, who knew that persecution often purified a persuasion. The danger posed by Franklin was much more insidious, however, for he was a purveyor of ingenious schemes which could lead the faithful painlessly and imperceptibly into practices (supporting armies, for example) which were alien to and subversive of Quakerism. Hence Franklin must be opposed and allies must be taken wherever they could be found, even among the leaders of the proprietary party, with whom Pemberton frequently tried to negotiate election day alliances to defeat the Doctor. Fortunately, the differences between Pemberton and Franklin were not strong enough to prevent them from working together on philanthropic projects which benefited the whole province, the Pennsylvania Hospital being the most outstanding enterprise on which they collaborated. Nevertheless, suspicion and hostility toward Franklin were persistent and usually paramount, so there is no reason to suppose that Pemberton and his followers supported his candidacy for the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751.

Clearly, then, the Doctor’s support must have come from the Norris wing of the party, which not only shared the general admiration for his scientific accomplishments and for the civic improvements which he had initiated in Philadelphia, but also esteemed him highly for establishing the Association. Some Norrisites, taking their

30 See, for example, Richard Peters’ letter to Thomas Penn, June 5, 1756. Peters reported that over breakfast Samuel Fothergill had informed him that the Quakers were afraid of the Presbyterians and “much more so of Mr. Franklin.” Penn Papers.

31 Only in 1764 did his efforts yield dividends: his staunch opposition to Franklin’s scheme for royal government in the province and his active intervention against him during the provincial elections in October supplemented the vigorous efforts of the proprietary party and contributed substantially to his defeat. Pemberton went so far as to appear at the polls on election day, where he buttonholed Quakers and tried to prevent them from voting for Franklin’s ticket. William Logan to John Smith, [Oct. 2], 1764, Smith MSS, HSP.

32 Pemberton and his followers did not attempt to disguise their opposition from Franklin. Samuel Fothergill was not afraid to “pour out . . . just reproofs” on him to his face and Pemberton himself always spoke his mind to Franklin with what he described “as the usual freedom which has ever subsisted between us.” Peters to Penn, June 5, 1756, Penn Papers; Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, Nov. 27, 1755, Pemberton Papers.
cue from James Logan, unequivocally favored defensive war and were happy that Franklin had taken steps to put the province in a posture to repel aggressors. Others, who had grave doubts about the legality even of self-defense, were nevertheless troubled by the dilemma of Quaker political power—by governors unable to discharge the fundamental responsibility of protecting those whom they governed—and were grateful to Franklin for devising a method to defend the province which at the same time saved Quaker principles by not compelling men to bear arms against their will. With Isaac Norris himself, Franklin’s relations were far less abrasive than they were with Pemberton. Nevertheless, there was no easy familiarity between the two men. Norris was extremely jealous of his position as leader of the Quaker party in the Assembly and regarded Franklin with his consummate abilities as a threat to supplant him. Therefore toward his putative rival he displayed a certain wariness which not infrequently flared into open displays of temper and jealousy. For his part Franklin treated Norris with delicacy and deference, an approach which disguised, though it could not dispel, the tension which suffused the relationship between the two men. Despite these difficulties, Norris and Franklin were able to co-operate effectively in Pennsylvania politics for more than a decade because their perceptions of the province’s interests were similar. Only in 1764 did they split, the reason being a disagreement over the advisability of establishing royal government in the province.

Having demonstrated that Franklin was put into office by the Norrisite Quakers, have we not, ipso facto, demonstrated that he could not have entered Pennsylvania politics as an independent? Was he not beholden to his backers and under as strong an obligation to do

33 See Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, Oct. 30, 1756, Penn Papers. William Franklin, as clerk of the Assembly, observed several of Norris’ flights of jealousy as well as his father’s response to them. “The Speaker,” he wrote Joseph Galloway on Dec. 28, 1759, “having been long a Member and accustomed to have considerable Weight and Influence in the House, it is not unnatural to suppose he would readily take Umbrage at any One whom he thought likely to interfere with his Power. I have myself seen several Instances where he has given such an Opposition to some Measures proposed by my Father as could not be accounted for but from Motives of Jealousy. This however never created any personal Differences between them. Whenever the Speaker proposed any Measure which appeared to my Father to be for the publick Benefit, he ever gave it all the Assistance in his Power; and whenever the Speaker opposed any Measure proposed by my Father he never shewd any Resentment to him on that Account.” Mason-Franklin Collection, Yale University Library.
their bidding as the humblest party hack? Not necessarily, because it appears that in accepting Quaker support Franklin escaped the obligations which less distinguished candidates are compelled to assume. Almost without exception, the average aspirant to office is forced to strike a bargain with his backers, agreeing to support their positions and to accept the discipline of their organization in return for their assistance. Franklin, however, was by no means the average office seeker. His genuine reluctance to be a candidate compelled the Quakers to come and court him. Consequently, he was in the driver's seat in negotiations with them and merely by agreeing to run for office fulfilled his side of the electoral bargain. The Friends, on their part, dared not ask him for any other favor, or demand any other condition, for fear that haggling about these matters might alienate him and cause him to back out of his hesitant candidacy. Hence Franklin's freedom of action appears to have been in no way compromised by commitments contracted to gain office.

Since the Quakers evidently obtained no leverage over him by electing him to the Assembly, it looks very much as though they decided to support him at their own risk. Actually they took no risk in electing him because they knew that his and their views on questions of public policy coincided and that therefore they could count on his support whenever a controversial issue came before the House. Pennsylvania Quakers were Whiggish almost to a man in their attitude toward the government of the province. Ever since the days of William Penn (no mean Whig himself) the local Quakers had battled with all the means at their disposal to reduce the proprietary prerogative, and they had succeeded so well that by 1751 they had established more self-government in Pennsylvania than any other colony in North America enjoyed. They were determined to suffer no diminution of their powers and therefore in constituencies under their control they elected none but Whigs. They knew that, despite his connections in the proprietary camp, Franklin was a Whig and that therefore he would be a safe candidate as well as a distinguished one. And so they elected him.

The present writer feels that it was the political principles which Franklin shared with the Friends which makes it imprudent to call

34 See note 25.
him an independent during his early years in the Pennsylvania Assembly; after all, the term hardly seems appropriate when the identity between his views and theirs impelled him to support them in every substantive conflict (save military preparedness) with the proprietor and his party. This is not to say that the scholars who have stressed Franklin’s independence were deficient in historical perception, for considering that during the early 1750’s he was by his own admission affecting an “Appearance of Impartiality”\(^\text{35}\) (for which we may read independence), they pictured him precisely as he tried to appear to the public. Nevertheless, his posture of independence was at the mercy of events and only so long as they favored him was he able to project it. What we mean is this: during his first three years in the Assembly no issue intruded of sufficient divisiveness to compel him to take political sides and thus there was no spark to shear him from Penn and solder his ideological bond with the Quakers into a working partnership. In the winter of 1754–1755 such an issue divided the Quaker Assembly and the Proprietor, but Franklin, absent at the time in New England, escaped it, so that not until the summer of 1755 was he confronted with a doctrinal dispute which caused him to split with Penn, side with the Quakers, and discard his independent pose.

Actually, Franklin was not so completely at the mercy of events that he lacked the power to influence them in his own behalf. On one occasion, for example, he helped to suppress an inflammatory issue—a proprietary plan to abridge one of the Assembly’s self-proclaimed natural rights—which would have precipitated a split among Pennsylvania politicians and arrayed him with the Quakers against Penn. His action, however, did not prove the feebleness of his political principles so much as it showed the primacy of his concern for the public welfare. In the early 1750’s he was engaged in promoting two of his most ambitious philanthropic enterprises: the Pennsylvania Hospital and the Academy of Philadelphia. The success of these undertakings, feared by many to be beyond the resources of the province, depended on the support of all segments of Pennsylvania society and on Thomas Penn as well, who was expected to donate money and land for both institutions. Proprietary

\(^{35}\) Franklin to Peter Collinson, Dec. 29, 1754, Papers, V, 453.
assistance was especially vital for launching the Academy, because the Quakers, motivated by a sectarian suspicion for institutions of higher learning (which has been exaggerated by hostile historians) were reluctant to aid it. To secure the assistance of Penn and his friends Franklin was obliged to maintain his posture of independence, because the moment he became a partisan of the Quakers, proprietary purses would close. Reasoning, therefore, that the province would profit more from a hospital and a college than it would from the early intelligence of a proprietary project against the Assembly (which would not succeed in any event), Franklin felt justified in concealing the proprietary plan to preserve as long as possible his effectiveness as a fund raiser. If the plan had posed any real danger to popular liberties, he certainly would not have suppressed it for a moment.

In these last paragraphs the thesis of this paper should have emerged fairly clearly. It holds that different sets of political convictions made a split between Franklin and Thomas Penn all but inevitable, but it claims that for peculiar reasons the issues which precipitated the split did not confront Franklin for almost four years after he entered the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751. In the pages that follow these issues will be identified and an attempt will be made to explain why they lay dormant for so long and why they materialized when they did. This will demand a systematic study of Pennsylvania politics between 1751 and 1755 and, while it is hoped that such an effort willcommend itself by illuminating a complicated and obscure period of the province’s history, its primary purpose will be to prove that Franklin’s split with Penn in the summer of 1755 was the result of a proprietary challenge to his convictions and not of a personal quarrel between the two men.

III

Franklin entered the Pennsylvania Assembly (August 13, 1751) during one of the province’s occasional eras of good feeling. The architect of this interlude of amiability was James Hamilton, whom Thomas Penn had appointed governor in 1748. Hamilton was a

36 Here I would like to challenge Professor Hanna’s suggestion (p. 35) that Thomas Penn was principally responsible for promoting harmony in the province by interceding with Parliament to have Pennsylvania excluded from the operations of the Currency Act of 1751.
native Pennsylvanian whose services in the Assembly (1734-1739) and as mayor of Philadelphia (1745) had won him the reputation of being "a benevolent and upright, as well as sensible man" and whose colonial upbringing was assumed to have given him "more Affection for the People than is common with Governors." Favored by reputation, Hamilton was also assisted by events. His appointment as governor coincided with the conclusion of King George's War, which improved the temper of Pennsylvania politics by removing the divisive issue of military preparedness from the legislative agenda. Then, in 1749, the threat that Parliament would pass an act prohibiting all the American colonies from issuing legal tender paper currency neutralized another explosive issue, the demand of the Assembly for a substantial increase in the volume of the province's paper; by persuading the House that it would invite Parliamentary retaliation by issuing a flood of paper money just as the Commons was considering banning its future use throughout North America, Hamilton succeeded in having a fresh emission deferred until Parliament's final determination on the problem was known. In August, 1751, with the moratorium on paper money still in effect, with no other issues agitating the province, and with Hamilton's popularity unimpaired, Pennsylvania was at peace with itself. Given the vulnerability of Franklin's independent posture to political conflict, no atmosphere could have suited him better.

The waiting game on currency expansion ended with Parliament's passage of a colonial Currency Act in June, 1751. This statute forbade the New England colonies to emit any more legal tender paper currency but made no mention of Pennsylvania or the rest of the colonies and therefore was construed as having sanctioned by its silence the continued emission of paper money in those places. The

Penn, it is true, did strive to have Pennsylvania exempted from the workings of the act, and the Assembly, it is true, did thank him for his efforts (Oct. 18, 1749). But the Proprietor forfeited all the good will which he had won, and then some, by refusing in a message transmitted through Hamilton on Aug. 16, 1751, to share with the Assembly the cost of managing Indian affairs (even though he profited more from peaceful Indian relations than any other man in the province). Four years later the Assembly was still angry about this expression of niggardliness (Nov. 11, 1755). Votes of Assembly, IV, 3278, 3285, 3437; V, 4113. 37 Franklin to James Logan, Apr. 3, 1748, Papers, III, 283. 38 [Richard Jackson], An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania (London, 1759), 99.
friends of paper money in Pennsylvania hailed this act as a vindication of the province's past monetary policy and as a signal that a further emission of paper money would be tolerated in England; hence, in the Assembly's first business session after the news of the act was received, it passed a bill emitting £40,000 in paper (February 25, 1752).\textsuperscript{39} To everyone's disappointment, Hamilton rejected it (March 6) and continued to reject paper money bills for the next eighteen months. To justify his intransigence he claimed that Pennsylvania did not need more money and professed to fear that the opponents of colonial paper money in Great Britain who had not been appeased by the passage of the Currency Act might be provoked by a fresh Pennsylvania emission to have the statute extended to the province. The Assembly scoffed at both arguments. It was astonished that Hamilton could assert that Pennsylvania did not need more money, when statistics which it had collected showed that since 1739 the province's population and commerce had grown at least three times as fast as its money supply\textsuperscript{40} and when it was being inundated by petitions from all parts of the province complaining of an acute scarcity of money. The governor's fear of residual British opposition to colonial paper money the Assembly treated as a chimera, primarily because it had received what it regarded as authoritative information from England that it could pass a paper money bill without any danger of having it repealed.\textsuperscript{41} The more the Assembly considered Hamilton's objections, the more implausible they appeared and the more convinced it became that the governor himself did not believe them. Rather, it appeared that he had invented them to disguise the real reason for his opposition to a paper money bill. What was the real reason? The Assembly theorized that Hamilton had received instructions from Thomas Penn, ordering him to oppose the expansion of the province's currency,

\textsuperscript{39} Actually, the Assembly had received news of the act before its Oct. 14–16, 1751, session, but since the October session was traditionally devoted merely to organizing the House after the elections of the first of the month and was never considered a business session, no action was taken in response to the Currency Act until the following winter. \textit{Votes of Assembly}, IV, 3467–3471.

\textsuperscript{40} See the Assembly's message to Hamilton, May 25, 1753. In an earlier report of Aug. 19, 1752, the Assembly advanced rather more modest claims about the growth rate of the province's population and economy. See \textit{ibid.}, 3515–3520, 3559.

\textsuperscript{41} Hamilton to Penn, Feb. 9, 1753, \textit{Penn Papers}. 
and that, rather than sacrifice the Proprietor's popularity by avowing them, he had resorted to subterfuge. The Assembly was both right and wrong—right because Hamilton had received an instruction from Penn on paper money which he was concealing with a subterfuge, but wrong in its assumptions about its nature. The instruction did not, as the Assembly assumed, order Hamilton to oppose an expansion of the province's currency (Penn would have consented to an emission of £20,000 in paper); what it did do was order him to demand control over the produce of any paper money bill which he passed. This was the command which the governor cloaked in subterfuge and which contributed, as we shall see, to Franklin's split with Penn in 1755.

When Thomas Penn became the principal Proprietor of Pennsylvania in 1746, he was distressed by the decrepitude of proprietary government in the province. Blaming its infirmity on the Assembly's pirating of its prerogatives, he silently declared war against the House and dedicated his administration to reducing its powers. The Assembly's success in emasculating the Pennsylvania executive he attributed, not to the paralysis of his own family during its interminable quarrel over William Penn's patrimony, but to the House's

42 For the Assembly's suspicion that Hamilton was restrained by proprietary instructions from passing paper money bills, see Richard Peters' letter to Thomas Penn of Oct. 4, 1752 (ibid.). "Most men think, nay speak it openly," Peters wrote, "that the Prop. did give their Governor Instructions about Paper money when he came over: & that he would not have hesitated a moment (if this had not been the case) to have passed a Paper money Bill." The persistence of this suspicion can be documented by Hamilton's letter to Penn, Sept. 8, 1753 (ibid.); in two Assembly reports of Sept. 11, 1753 (Votes of Assembly, IV, 3596-3603; V, 3826-3827), in one of which the House stated that it had "very little Reason to doubt" that the governor was "restricted by the Proprietaries from giving his Assent to the Emission of any further Sum in Bills of credit"; in an Assembly resolve of May 18, 1754 (ibid., 3717); and in a letter from Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Aug. 3, 1754 (Penn Papers).

43 We refer here to Penn's letter to Hamilton of July 29, 1751, which (as will be explained in the text, though not a formal instruction, Hamilton regarded as possessing the authority of one. The letter is in Penn Papers.

44 Penn to Hamilton, July 13, 1752, ibid.

45 One of the major contributions of Professor Hanna's book is its analysis of the political motivation of Thomas Penn. Penn, Professor Hanna argues, was trying to walk a narrow line, attempting to reduce the powers of the Assembly to a parity with his own, thereby creating what he cherished above all else, "a balanced government," but not wishing to render the Assembly so impotent that he could establish a personal despotism in the province. See Hanna, esp. 15-22, 35-44.
control over the provincial currency, to its "disposition of the publick money, without the Governor." What he meant was the Assembly’s control over the produce of money bills. There were two ways in which the House extracted produce from these bills. First, whenever it emitted paper money in peace time, it did not put it into circulation directly, but rather loaned it to the inhabitants in small sums at interest on landed security. As a result the Assembly became the largest creditor in the province and received interest payments which averaged £3,000 annually. This money it spent as it pleased, accounting for its disposition to no one, least of all to the governor. The second way in which the Assembly “made money” from money bills was by rigging excise rates. Consider, as an example of its methods, the excise of 1746. In that year the House voted to emit £5,000 in paper money to purchase supplies for a military expedition against Canada. The £5,000 it voted to sink by extending the provincial excise on spiritous liquors for ten years; during each year £500 raised by the excise and paid into the provincial treasury would be destroyed, so that at the end of ten years the entire sum emitted in 1746 would be eliminated. The catch, from Penn’s point of view, was that the Assembly set the excise rates so high that they yielded £3,000 per year, thus assuring itself of a surplus of £2,500 annually. This sum it pocketed and used with the same freedom as it did the interest payments on its loans of paper money. Consequently, during an average year the Assembly received unrestricted revenues of between £5500 and £6000.

Believing that the Assembly’s financial strength had enabled it to “usurp” the proprietary prerogatives, Penn sought to prevent further encroachments on his powers by attacking the House through its purse. Were he able to regulate its revenues, he was confident that he could restore the Pennsylvania executive to its proper eminence and create the “balanced government” which he craved for the province. He proposed to accomplish his aim by investing his

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46 “There is nothing,” Penn wrote Hamilton on July 29, 1751, “but the power of appropriating the Public Money that can give those People [the Assembly] any weight.” Penn Papers.
47 Penn to Hamilton, July 31, 1749, ibid.
48 This was the House’s own estimate. See its message to Morris, Jan. 3, 1755, Votes of Assembly, V, 3834.
49 See ibid; also the Assembly resolves of Aug. 22, 1751, ibid., IV, 3446.
lieutenant governor with control over the produce of money bills.\textsuperscript{60} To Hamilton he first announced his plan in a letter of July 29, 1751, admonishing him that under no circumstances was he “to pass any Paper Money or Excise Law” unless he was given a voice in the expenditure of its produce.\textsuperscript{61}

Penn’s letter, which Hamilton regarded as an instruction, appalled the governor because of its profound ignorance of the realities of Pennsylvania politics. The Proprietor actually seemed to believe that the Assembly would tamely submit to executive encroachment on its revenues! That this was wishful thinking Hamilton plainly told him on March 18, 1752. At the mere mention of such a prospect the province, he wrote, would be “thrown into a Flame”; the Assembly would “bounce violently, and be very angry” and would retaliate against him by encouraging the inhabitants to withhold their quit rents. With the proceeds which it had accumulated from past money bills the House would be able to initiate and sustain a long legal conflict and in the meantime hold “Every Officer of the Government who relies on the Publick for any thing . . . in Bondage”; worse still, while the conflict raged, “Men of Fortune” would “gradually slide” into the Assembly’s “dirty ways of thinking.”\textsuperscript{52}

Reasonably certain that Penn had not anticipated so furious a response to his projected reform, Hamilton decided to give him the opportunity to reconsider his strategy. Therefore, on March 6, 1752, he gave the Assembly’s bill to emit £40,000 of paper money at interest “the go-by” on reasons suggested by friends— the subterfuges mentioned above—in order to permit the Proprietor to ponder his future course of action.\textsuperscript{53} That Penn would not mistake his own feelings about a confrontation with the Assembly over the control of paper money, Hamilton in his letter of March 18 expressed a “great desire to resign.” He explained that, if he championed proprietary reform, his countrymen would regard him as being “extremely odious” “as having very bad designs upon the People’s Liberties.” Very likely he would become a pariah among his own people.

\textsuperscript{60} Professor Hanna (pp. 40-44) perceptively described Penn’s strategy to break the Assembly’s financial power.
\textsuperscript{61} Penn Papers.
\textsuperscript{52} Hamilton to Penn, Mar. 18, 1752, \textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{53} \textit{Ibid}.
Far from changing Penn's mind, Hamilton's warnings seem to have strengthened his determination to remedy the "great Evil" posed by the Assembly's monetary policies, because on May 30, 1752, he sent the governor formal instructions to pass no bill emitting paper money on loan unless the interest should "be disposed of as We, or either of Us, exercising the Office of Governor [or] the Lieutenant Governor . . . and the Assembly for the Time being shall direct and not otherwise." This instruction created consternation among Penn's supporters in Pennsylvania. To prove that he had not in his letter of March 18, 1752, exaggerated the fury with which the populace would receive it, Hamilton wrote Penn on February 9, 1753, transmitting the prediction of William Allen and Attorney General Tench Francis that an attempt to implement the instruction would "raise such a Flame in the province as would not be quench'd in many Years." The same day Francis wrote Penn in an even more apocalyptic strain, prophesying that "the moment this Instruction should be known it would occasion a downright Civil War in the Province, the people would hold out to the last as pro Aris & Focis . . . The Governor and his Friends would be publickly branded as Deliverers up of the People's Rights . . . In fine it could not be imagined to what Lengths an enraged people might go."
Consequently, both Allen and Francis pressed Hamilton “most ardently”\(^{58}\) to conceal the instruction and to resort to the ruses which he had previously used to deal with any new paper money bill passed by the House. Francis even threatened to resign if his advice were ignored. Reluctantly, the governor bowed to the wishes of his two advisers. A straightforward man, he hated the deceit to which Penn’s instruction drove him\(^ {59}\) and would have risked his future ease and popularity by revealing it had he been supported, as he later told Penn, by as few as three men of weight in the province.\(^ {60}\) No one backed him, however, and in despair at being deserted, he wrote Penn a letter of resignation on Feb. 9, 1753, effective a year after the date of its receipt. Whoever tried to redress “the Balance of Power in the Proprietor’s Scale,” he bitterly remarked, would find himself “standing singly, exposed to the resentment and reproaches of the whole province, and that for a long time.”

When Penn received Hamilton’s and Francis’ letters of February 9 on March 27, 1753, he immediately perceived that he had no choice but to withdraw his instruction of May 30, 1752, because to insist on its implementation might well cause the complete disintegration of the proprietary party in Pennsylvania. Therefore, on March 28, 1753, he sent Hamilton an instruction, rescinding that of May 30, 1752, and leaving the governor at liberty to pass a money bill without insisting on executive control of its produce.\(^ {61}\) This new instruction did not reach Hamilton in time to alter his opposition to a £20,000 paper money bill passed by the Assembly on May 25,

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\(^{58}\) Hamilton to Penn, Feb. 9, 1753, Penn Papers.

\(^{59}\) Curiously enough, what Hamilton had put forth on the advice of his advisers as subterfuge in March, 1752, had been transformed by Lord Halifax into truth by January, 1753. Specifically, the justification which Hamilton used to reject the Assembly’s paper money bill in March, 1752—that the residual dislike for colonial paper money in Great Britain made the passage of a paper money bill unacceptably risky—was invented in Pennsylvania without any knowledge that such in fact was the case. But in interviews with Halifax, reported to Hamilton by Penn on June 5 and July 13, 1752, the Proprietor discovered that the President of the Board of Trade fairly bristled with hostility toward colonial paper and would not permit the passage of a paper money bill for a year. Thus, when Hamilton cited lingering British opposition to colonial paper as the reason for killing the Assembly’s £20,000 bill on Jan. 26, 1753, he was telling the truth; Halifax had made him an honest man. Hamilton to Penn, Mar. 18, 1752; Penn to Hamilton, June 5, July 13, 1752, Penn Papers; Votes of Assembly, IV, 3551.

\(^{60}\) Hamilton to Penn, July 7, 1753, Penn Papers.

\(^{61}\) The instruction of Mar. 28, 1753, and a covering letter of the same date are in Penn-Hamilton Papers, HSP.
1753, but when the House met in the following August he had received it and was at last free to gratify the people’s desire for an expansion of the colony’s currency.

Thus far we have written a kind of secret history of the Hamilton administration, the relevance of which to the Franklin-Penn split in the summer of 1755 is not, perhaps, readily discernible. The events which we have been describing are relevant, however, because had they interacted in a different way they might have provoked the split in 1752 or 1753.

Penn’s grand strategy, his design of recouping the powers which he claimed that the Assembly had “usurped” from the proprietary government in the years before 1746 put him on a collision course with Franklin, who was disposed by his expansive view of the liberality of the British Constitution in the colonies to believe that the extraordinary powers which the Pennsylvania Assembly had acquired were perfectly legitimate. Penn, for example, insisted that the Assembly’s pretension to absolute control over the produce of money bills was illegal and unwarranted, while Franklin believed that the House was exercising (notice the good Whig terminology) a “natural Right, inherent in every Body of Men, antecedent to all Laws,” the right “to dispose of their own Money, by themselves or their Representatives.” The moment Penn or Hamilton publicly tried to infringe this right, they would compel Franklin to oppose them on the grounds of principle. Moreover, since the Quaker party shared Franklin’s feelings about the sanctity of the House’s right to dispose of its own money, any overt attempt by Penn or his deputy to abridge this right would fuse a solid bond between the Doctor and the Quakers. That this did not happen in 1752 or 1753 was owing solely to the persuasiveness of those urging Hamilton to suppress Penn’s paper money instructions. Had the governor heeded his own inclinations, then the split between Franklin and Penn might have been precipitated in one of these earlier years.

It is interesting to speculate whether Franklin was among those advising Hamilton to conceal his instructions. That he knew their

62 See the Assembly’s message to Gov. William Denny, Sept. 23, 1756, Votes of Assembly, V, 4333. Franklin wrote this message, as he wrote every important Assembly message from the spring of 1755 until his departure for England in the spring of 1757; see note 145. For other of Franklin’s assertions of the Assembly’s natural right to the exclusive disposition of the produce of its money bills, see his messages of Aug. 8, 19, 1755; ibid., 3945, 3991-3992.
nature is by no means certain, but his intimacy with Allen, Hamilton, Peters, and Francis—Richard Hockley described him as the latter’s “Crony”—suggests that he may have. If he did, he probably urged their suppression, because the cleavage which their publication would have produced in Pennsylvania society was unthinkable at a time when the Academy of Philadelphia and the Pennsylvania Hospital were barely off the ground and when their fate appeared to depend upon his success in soliciting support from all segments of the population, a task which would be impossible if he were obliged to appear publicly as a partisan of one of the contending parties. Whatever Franklin’s influence with Hamilton, the fact remains that through August, 1753, the terribly divisive issue of proprietary control over the produce of paper money bills, poised just below the surface of Pennsylvania politics, did not emerge and destroy the colony’s comity. In the words of a contemporary writer, all remained “calm and quiet.”

James Hamilton convened the Assembly on August 27, 1753, greatly relieved at being released from Penn’s paper money instructions and anxious to accommodate the province’s desire for an expansion of the currency. Wasting no time, he informed the Assembly on August 29 that he would sign a £20,000 paper money bill, if the members accepted what he considered to be a few innocuous amendments. One of his amendments the Assembly found anything but innocuous, however. In fact, it reminded the House’s history buffs of one of James II’s most infamous assaults on popular liberty and was accordingly dubbed a suspending clause. It stipulated that the money bill “or any Thing therein contained, shall not take Effect, until the same shall have received the Royal Approbation of his Majesty, his Heirs, or Successors.” Hamilton proposed a suspending clause for two reasons: first, he sincerely believed—and he was supported by persons of no less authority than Attorney General Sir Dudley Rider and Board of Trade President Lord Halifax—that a royal instruction, dated August 21, 1740, from the Lords Justices of the Regency to his predecessor, George Thomas, com-

63 Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Aug. 25, 1755, Penn Papers.
64 [Richard Jackson], An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania (London, 1759), 111.
65 Votes of Assembly, IV, 3579.
66 Penn to Hamilton, Jan. 29, 1754, and Penn to Peters, Feb. 21, 26, 1755, Penn Papers; Votes of Assembly, V, 3771-3780.
manding the insertion of a suspending clause in all paper money bills, was still binding upon him; second, the instructions which Thomas Penn had given him, March 17, 1748, when he assumed the governorship, and which he had given a bond of £5,000 sterling to obey, enjoined compliance with the royal instruction of 1740.

The Assembly was incensed by the suspending clause, which it denounced as “destructive of the Liberties derived to the People of this Province by the Royal and Provincial Charters,” and astonished that Hamilton had proposed it. As far as it was concerned, the royal instruction of 1740, which he cited to justify its use, was as obsolete as Peter’s pence. How anyone could consider himself bound by an “additional Instruction, dated in 1740, expressly directed to a former Governor, and which in its own Nature appears Temporary, and the Ends long since answered [by the Currency Act of 1751]” was difficult to comprehend. The only way the House could explain Hamilton’s actions was in terms of its suspicions about his subservience to secret proprietary instructions forbidding the emission of any more paper money. Reasoning that he realized that it would never pass a bill with a suspending clause and assuming that his previous objections to its money bills had become too untenable to be of further service, the members surmised that he had exhumed the royal instruction of 1740 to prevent the passage of the £20,000 bill, the aim being, as in the past, to conceal Penn’s instructions and to shield him from the opprobrium which their disclosure would arouse. In a move designed to show the governor that they knew

67 By the fall of 1753 Penn regretted that he had instructed Hamilton to observe this instruction, because he felt that the insertion of suspending clauses in statutes unjustifiably reduced his power as Proprietor. Consequently, on Jan. 29, 1754, he wrote Hamilton that he would go “hand in hand” with the Assembly agents, Richard Partridge and Robert Charles, to get the instruction “withdrawn or explained.” Penn’s dislike for the instruction increased with the passing months to the point that on May 14, 1754, he instructed Hamilton’s successor, Robert Hunter Morris, “to take no notice of ye Suspending Clause.” By October, 1755, he decided that the instruction was not binding upon him and was happy to learn in December that Speaker of the House of Commons Arthur Onslow and all other authorities whom he consulted agreed with him. Thus, by the end of 1755 Penn had reached the same conclusion as the Assembly had articulated when it was confronted with the royal instruction in September, 1753: it was void and inoperative in Pennsylvania. Penn to Hamilton, Jan. 29, 1754; to Peters, Oct. 25, Dec. 13, 1755; to Morris, Feb. 14, 1756, Penn Papers.

68 This and the following quotation are in Votes of Assembly, IV, 3579, 3585, 3587.

69 Professor Hanna’s contention that Hamilton used the suspending clause “to soften” Penn’s instructions on the “joint appropriation of money” and to transfer to England the
his game, but which actually demonstrated how completely misinformed they were about his motives, the Assemblymen in a message of September 11, 1753, complained of “private Instructions” from Penn which prevented Hamilton “from giving his Assent to the Emission of any further Sum in Bills of credit.” Oddly enough, they did not direct their anger at losing their money bill against these putative instructions; rather they turned it on Hamilton.

Until September, 1753, Hamilton was regarded sympathetically by the people of Pennsylvania. They credited him with favoring currency expansion and with resenting Penn’s efforts to restrain it. They were even prepared to find extenuating circumstances for his systematic use of subterfuge, noting that he himself was unhappy with it and arguing that in employing it he was exhibiting a commendable loyalty to his employer by trying to protect his reputation and popularity. The principal reason why they accepted the practice with so much equanimity, however, was their expectation that in due time he would renounce it and pass a paper money bill with no strings attached. His performance in September, 1753, punctured these hopes, for by springing the suspending clause on the Assembly decision on their applicability to the Assembly’s money bills in order to avoid “conflict” with the House ought to be refuted here. The contention is incorrect because Penn’s instructions were withdrawn, as we have seen above, on Mar. 28, 1753, and Hamilton knew this by July 7, 1753, so that when he used the suspending clause in August there were no obnoxious proprietary instructions still in force that needed softening. In this connection Richard Peters’ shocked reaction to contemporary critics, who, like Hanna, believed that Hamilton was not sincere about the suspending clause, but was using it as a gimmick, is well worth considering. “Tho incredible,” Peters wrote Penn on Sept. 11, 1753, “yet it is true that they think this clause an Expedient contrived by the Governor to put the Bill off till you come and that in his real Judgment he believes the Instruction of no Force.” Robert Hunter Morris was, it is true, advised by local proprietary leaders to use a suspending clause to force British statesmen to wrestle with the problem of Penn’s “appropriating” instruction, but there is no evidence that Hamilton ever entertained such an idea. R. H. Morris to Thomas Penn, Oct. 26, 1754, Penn Papers.

70 Votes of Assembly, IV, 3599, 3600.
71 Richard Peters to Thomas Penn, Oct. 4, 1752, Penn Papers. An Assembly pamphleteer, probably Joseph Galloway, expressed the popular attitude toward Hamilton: “I must, however, do this Gentleman the Justice to acknowledge, that he seemed well inclined to do his Country Service, had he been a Free-agent. . . . Had he not been tied down to Proprietary Instructions, he would have acquiesced in the regular, and constitutional Measures of the Assembly.” The same writer also claimed that Hamilton was “disgusted at the numberless Difficulties imposed upon him by these oppressive Instructions.” [Joseph Galloway], A True and Impartial State of the Province of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1759), 76, 89.
he seemed to indicate that as soon as he ran out of one subterfuge he would concoct another, and then another, so that no paper money bill would pass as long as he was governor. Angry, disillusioned, and no longer in a mood to be charitable, Pennsylvanians reappraised his previous actions. Now they concluded that he had never meant to pass a paper money bill, that he had aroused their hopes by artifice, and that therefore he had knowingly put the Assembly to the expense and trouble of frequent sessions whose failure was foredoomed. It appeared, in short, that Hamilton had deliberately deceived the House in the past and fully meant to do so in the future.

For his unconscionable conduct the Assembly determined to chastise him. Its first thrust against him was a sharp, sarcastic message of September 5, 1753, claiming that the royal instruction of 1740 was a dead letter even before it was promulgated and therefore could not by the wildest flight of the imagination be applicable to the affairs of Pennsylvania in 1753. Miffed by the tone of this message, Hamilton replied forcefully on September 7. To the Assembly’s contention that there had “never been one single Instance” of the passage of a law with a suspending clause “from the first Settlement of our Province to this Day,” the governor called its attention to the “Transaction of the Year 1746.” To refresh its memory he reminded it that in June, 1746, Governor George Thomas had passed a bill emitting £5,000 in paper money to finance a military expedition against Canada without inserting a suspending clause as the royal instruction of 1740 commanded. According to Hamilton, both Thomas and the Assembly believed that he was justified in ignoring the instruction because the province was facing an “extraordinary Emergency” in which its applicability was self-evidently absurd; however, and here was Hamilton’s point, both Thomas and the Assembly agreed that “in ordinary Cases” the royal instruction of 1740 was valid. Since 1753 was an ordinary case and since the instruction had not in the meantime been revoked, Hamilton indignantly asked the Assembly why it was repudiating the position its predecessors had taken in 1746. The Assembly answered Hamilton

72 Peters to Penn, Sept. 11, 1753, Penn Papers.
73 For this message, for Hamilton’s reply of Sept. 7, and for the Assembly’s response of Sept. 11, all mentioned in this paragraph, see Votes of Assembly, IV, 3586–3591, 3593–3596, 3597–3603.
on September 11 with its own account of the episode. It conceded that in its exchanges with Thomas the House had made a distinction between ordinary and extraordinary cases, but this was all it was willing to concede. For the members the important fact was that Thomas had passed a paper money bill without a suspending clause in defiance of the royal instruction of 1740 and from this they concluded, with more passion than logic, that neither the governor nor the Assembly had ever considered the instruction valid. After approving its message of September 11, the Assembly adjourned, but it had not, as it supposed, had the last word on the transaction of 1746, for during the winter session (February 4–March 9, 1754) Hamilton once again harangued it on the episode. Only after he finished did debate on the subject diminish.

The significance of the quarrel over the transaction of 1746 was that, as the vehicle through which the Assembly vented its wrath upon Hamilton, it injected animosity into the legislative-executive exchanges for the first time during his administration. More importantly, the preoccupation of the Assembly with a dispute over an event of the previous decade diverted its attention from Thomas Penn and prevented it from picking a quarrel with him into which Franklin might have been drawn.

The controversy over the suspending clause instruction flagged after the winter of 1754 because of the outbreak of war with the French, signaled in Pennsylvania by Hamilton’s message to the Assembly of February 14, 1754, relaying a report from Colonel George Washington that Louis XV’s soldiers had invaded the northwestern part of the province and that he considered hostilities “already committed.” Since the advent of warfare created an “extraordinary Emergency,” which Hamilton believed invalidated the royal instruction of 1740, he publicly renounced it and in so doing removed it from the realm of contention.

Paralyzed by the pacifism of many of its members, the Assembly did not respond immediately to the French menace. In fact, it did nothing at all until Hamilton’s message of May 7, 1754, reporting the French capture of a British fort at the site of present day Pittsburgh, galvanized it into action. Three days later it appropriated

74 On Mar. 1, 1754, ibid., V, 3656–3667.
£10,000 for defense, which it voted to raise by emitting the sum in paper money and sinking it at the rate of £1,000 per year from the proceeds of the excise on spiritous liquors, which it proposed to extend for ten years. As it had done in the past, it rigged the excise rates so that they would yield a surplus. A proprietary pamphleteer estimated that they would produce at least £3750 per year of which the Assembly would pocket £2750, while Hamilton hinted that the House’s take might run as high as £3000 per year.\(^7\) Here, plainly, was the old problem of the Assembly enriching itself from the produce of money bills. What made the problem even more familiar was that on November 1, 1753, Thomas Penn had reactivated the instruction which he had rescinded on March 28, 1753, and once again ordered Hamilton to pass no money bill unless he received a voice in the expenditure of its produce.\(^6\) Penn’s change of policy put the governor in a most peculiar position. The Proprietor had been induced to rescind his instruction on March 28 by the receipt the day before of Hamilton’s letter of February 9, 1753, criticizing the order and announcing his resignation one year after his letter came to hand as a protest against it. By May, 1754, Hamilton’s resignation had become effective, so that he was merely a private citizen holding the fort until a successor arrived. But how was he to regard Penn’s instruction of November 1, 1753, prescribing a policy which had precipitated his resignation? As a man of honor, he could not flout it, yet he was no more prepared to avow it—and invite public vilification—than he had been in 1752 and 1753. Therefore, he resolved to imitate his actions of these earlier years; he would conceal the instruction and contend against the appropriations bill with a subterfuge.

This took a bit more doing than it had in 1752 or 1753, however. During those years paper money bills could be sabotaged by subterfuges without damaging the province’s security. But defeating the Assembly’s £10,000 paper money bill in May, 1754, meant nothing less than depriving Pennsylvania of the wherewithal to defend itself against a foreign invasion. Hamilton’s problem, therefore, was to

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76 Penn to Hamilton, Nov. 1, 1753, Jan. 29, 1754, Penn Papers.
devise some artifice which would both conceal Penn's instruction and accomplish its objective—the abolition of the Assembly's absolute control over the produce of money bills—and which would at the same time permit the passage of the appropriations bill. He solved it by shifting strategies: instead of trying to obtain a voice in the expenditure of the produce of money bills—Penn's panacea—he sought to eliminate the produce altogether. This he proposed to do by limiting the duration of the excise. Suppose it were allowed to run for four years rather than the ten which the Assembly desired. Assuming that it yielded £4,000 per year, during that time it would raise £16,000; after the £10,000 in paper was sunk and after the governor's salary (£1,000 per year) and the other administrative expenses which the Assembly customarily paid from the excise surplus were discharged, the House would have nothing left and Penn's problems would be solved.

This was the reasoning behind Hamilton's plan which he put into operation on May 14 by adding an amendment to the £10,000 appropriations bill, limiting the life of the excise to four years. To justify his action, he produced what he thought was a most apposite artifice, the Currency Act of 1751, which compelled the New England colonies to sink paper money emissions in five years or less. The Assembly was amazed at Hamilton's presumption in applying the Currency Act to Pennsylvania, which was "neither named" in it "nor intended by it" and convinced that it was every bit as irrelevant as the royal instruction of 1740, which he had recently renounced.

Hamilton's insistence on a time limit for the excise seemed doubly strange when it was recalled that on at least two occasions in the very recent past (September 7, 1753, and March 1, 1754) he had claimed that the ten years which the excise had been extended to sink the £5,000 emitted in 1746 was a "short Space of Time" which did not raise the "least Probability of producing any . . . Inconveniences." Why had the governor reversed himself so suddenly and concocted such a far-fetched justification for his actions? The Assembly, guided by its previous suspicions about the motivation of his conduct, was confident that it knew. It is "the

77 Votes of Assembly, V, 3704-3705, 3708-3713.
78 See the House's resolves, May 18, 1754, ibid., 3714.
79 Ibid., IV, 3593; V, 3659.
receiv'd Opinion of the People," Richard Hockley wrote Penn in August, "and tis part of their Creed, which they believe more than their religious one, that your Governors are bound up to tight Instructions"; accordingly, the Assembly on May 18, 1754, publicly conjectured that private instructions from Penn prevented the passage of its appropriations bill. Hamilton, it reasoned, had proposed the excise limitation, knowing it was anathema to the House, as a subterfuge to kill the bill and divert attention from Penn's instructions. And kill the bill the limitation did. The Assembly would not accept it and Hamilton would not alter it. Irritated by the impasse which developed, the House adjourned on May 18.

Franklin's activities in the wake of the defeat of the appropriations bill reveal a subtle attempt to stave off a confrontation with Penn. On May 28, 1754, he wrote Peter Collinson a long letter attacking the secret royal instructions which were poisoning executive-legislative relations in Pennsylvania. Franklin chose Collinson as a correspondent because he knew that the scientific Quaker was a conduit to Penn, a middleman who laid all of his letters before the Proprietor and who was certain to show him the present one. Thus, Franklin was not concerned with whether Penn would see his letter, but with whether he would draw the appropriate conclusions from his arraignment of secret royal instructions. The only royal instruction which had recently occupied the governor and Assembly's attention was the suspending clause instruction of 1740, but there was certainly nothing secret about it—Hamilton had ceremoniously laid a copy of it before the House on August 31, 1753—and it had ceased to be controversial after he had repudiated it in February. Clearly, secret royal instructions were a fiction, a medium which Franklin was using to attack those secret instructions which were in fact exercising Pennsylvanians, the ones which they assumed that Penn had given Hamilton. Franklin preferred an allegorical style for this reason: hopefully, it would cushion the impact of his strictures on Penn and, by keeping him in a decent humor, make him amenable to reform. His objection to the Proprietor's instructions (the

80 Aug. 3, 1754, Penn Papers.
81 Votes of Assembly, V, 3717.
82 Papers, V, 332-333.
83 Ibid., 59, 188, 190, 231.
84 Votes of Assembly, IV, 3575-3577.
A general outline of which we assume, as before, he knew through his intimacy with the local proprietary leaders) showed a characteristic concern for popular rights, he finding them exceptionable because they aimed at "extending the Prerogative beyond its due Bounds" and "abridging the just Liberties of the people (by which he meant their self proclaimed natural right to spend their own money as they pleased)." His remedy was for Penn to revise the instruction to savour of "Fatherly Tenderness and Affection [rather] than of Masterly harshness and Severity." If this were done, he believed that the growing animosity between the Proprietor and the people could be composed and that his chances of clashing with Penn could be reduced. His advice was not heeded, however.

Hamilton met the Assembly for the last time in August, 1754. On August 7 he broke the ominous news that the French had captured Fort Necessity and was pleasantly surprised when the House promptly voted £15,000 for the King's use. But to sink this sum it still insisted that the excise be extended for ten years. Showing some flexibility, Hamilton offered to extend it for six, but the House, wanting all or nothing, refused to compromise and adjourned on August 17 without passing any measure for defense. Though disappointed, Hamilton did not contest its action, because he knew that a new governor, Robert Hunter Morris, was due in Philadelphia at any moment and recognized that the imminence of his arrival made it pointless for him to continue quarreling with the Assembly.

Robert Hunter Morris, who arrived in Philadelphia on October 3, 1754, was about as welcome in the capital as the infectious distempers which the German redemptioners brought into port each summer. Chief Justice of New Jersey since 1730 and a member of the council since 1740, Morris was no stranger to the people of Pennsylvania, who, because of the large Quaker population in New Jersey, with whom they worshipped, did business, and married, knew political figures in the Garden State much better in the eighteenth century than they do today.

What Pennsylvanians knew about Morris distressed them. To most he was a kind of two-bit Thomas Penn. As one of the leading members of the East Jersey Council of Proprietors, a group which

85 Franklin, for example, had been "intimately acquainted" with Morris before he became governor. Leonard W. Labaree, ed., The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven, 1964), 212, hereinafter cited as Autobiography.
had acquired title to all the land in East New Jersey from its original twenty-four proprietors, his position and interests were identical to Penn's, even if his holdings were not. In trying to make his lands pay he incurred the same odium which Penn aroused and for many of the same reasons. He and his fellow proprietors were accused of following a restrictive land policy, releasing property for sale in driblets and holding the bulk of their best lands for a rise in price. Like Penn, they were resented for the zeal with which they tried to collect their quit rents and like Penn they were hated for their hard dealings with squatters; in fact, in 1754 one of the principal elements of discord in New Jersey politics was the smoldering discontent among thousands of inhabitants of the Elizabeth Town area, whom the proprietors had tried to eject from their habitations in the early 1740's and whose violent resistance had kept North Central New Jersey on the verge of anarchy ever since. In addition to resembling Penn, the avaricious, engrossing landlord, Morris was reputed to share his arbitrary principles of government. A "great stickler for prerogative" was one of the more polite verdicts Pennsylvanians rendered upon him; blunter men called him a "Tyrant" and a "Devil" and predicted that he would "sitt in hott Water" if he showed his "Jersey Airs" in Pennsylvania. Events proved them prescient prophets.

Morris was unlucky in being preceded to Pennsylvania not only by a bad reputation, but also by a secret report to the Assembly from its agent in England, Robert Charles, revealing the contents of his instructions. Penn, Charles disclosed, had placed the new

86 William Penn was one of the original twenty-four proprietors of East New Jersey; his proprietary right descended to Thomas Penn and his brother Richard, so that Thomas Penn and Morris were, in fact, business partners. In 1749 Morris went to England as an agent for various interests—his own, the East Jersey Proprietors', and the New Jersey Council's—and while there collaborated with Penn in a law suit against New Jersey squatters and on various other matters. His appointment as governor stemmed from these joint endeavours. The story of Thomas Penn's considerable influence in New Jersey politics badly needs telling. Traces of it, and of his early relations with Morris, can be glimpsed in Henry Stevens, "An Analytical Index to the Colonial Documents of New Jersey," New Jersey Historical Society Collections (Newark, 1858), V, 201, 246, 249, 270, 238, passim; Donald L. Kenmerer, Paths to Freedom The Struggle for Self-Government in Colonial New Jersey 1703-1774 (Princeton, 1940), 217; John E. Pomfret, "The Proprietors of the Province of East New Jersey, 1682-1702," PMHB, LXXVII (1953). See also William Penn to John Blackwell, Sept. 25, 1689, ibid., XXXIII (1909), 314.

87 Richard Hockley to Thomas Penn, Aug. 4, 1754, Penn Papers.

88 Robert Hunter Morris to Penn, Oct. 26, 1754, ibid.
governor under the same constraints as he had imposed on Hamilton, forbidding him to pass any paper money bill unless he were given a voice in the expenditure of its produce. While the leaders of the Assembly were delighted to receive this information, they had to be careful about how they used it. Charles' refusal to reveal how he had "come at" Penn's instructions suggested that he had not been overly scrupulous in his methods, perhaps using bribery or even the black arts of espionage. To base a formal complaint against Penn on the report of a suborner or a spy would place the Assembly in an embarrassing and untenable position before a British tribunal. Therefore, before proceeding against the Proprietor the House needed an admission from Morris himself that he had, in fact, received the paper money instructions which Charles had described. This proved impossible to obtain because the new governor adopted the same tactics which Hamilton had employed—concealment of the objectionable instruction behind a subterfuge.

The Assembly, naturally enough, was the party most exasperated by the fresh use of this tactic. Thomas Penn was dismayed by it too, however. Before sending instructions to his governors, Penn cleared them with the Board of Trade and the Ministry, thus assuring himself of official support in case the Assembly appealed to England against him. Positive of victory in such an event, he urged Morris to reveal his instructions in order to provoke an appeal which would produce his vindication. But his entreaties were offset by pressure from his supporters in Pennsylvania. William Allen, Richard Peters, Tench Francis, and the other proprietary partisans who had consistently counseled Hamilton to conceal his paper money instruction, besieged Morris with the same advice; they did not scruple to repeat their dire predictions that publication of the instruction would cause a rent strike or perhaps even a civil war and emphasized its unpopularity by repeating rumors that some of the province's firebrands had threatened to cut Morris' throat if he attempted to implement it. Like Hamilton before him Morris reluctantly accepted the advice of Penn's local supporters. He did so, not because

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89 Penn's desire in this matter is most unequivocally stated in his letter to Morris, Dec. 13, 1755, *ibid*. See also Penn to Peters, Feb. 21, Mar. 22, Aug. 14, 1755, to Hamilton, June 10, 1754, and to Morris, Feb. 26, 1755, *ibid*.

of concern for the public peace or for his own safety, but because he feared that if he flouted it they would desert him and destroy the proprietary party. From Allen and company Morris also received advice about the kind of subterfuge to use to conceal the proprietary instruction. What they urged him to do was to insert a suspending clause in the first paper money bill which the House passed. Then, ideally, the bill would be sent to England, where Thomas Penn was expected to pull strings by persuading the members of the Board of Trade to reject it and send orders to the Assembly putting it on notice that they would reject all future paper money bills, unless the governor was given a voice in the expenditure of their produce. This would permit Morris to contend for control over their produce under the aegis of royal orders rather than proprietary instructions and would divert popular anger at such a demand from Penn and his supporters to the Crown.

To Morris' credit he rejected this clever, but irresponsible scheme (Penn did too when he heard about it). The governor's reasons were the same as those which had prompted James Hamilton to repudiate the suspending clause in February, 1754: to insert such a clause in a money bill when the country was actually invaded by a foreign power would be suicidal, because under the best of conditions six months were needed for a bill to make a round trip from Pennsylvania to the King in Council and in the meantime the country, deprived of the money to defend itself, might be overrun. Unfortunately for Morris, he did not make his public position on the suspending clause clear and thus did not garner as much good will from it as he might have.

The first business session of Morris' administration began on December 2, 1754. The next day he harangued the Assembly about its military obligations and produced a letter of November 8, 1754, from Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia, reporting that the House of Burgesses had voted £20,000 for an expedition against the French. On December 12 the Assembly matched the Old Dominion's effort by voting to emit an identical sum in paper money. Except for the

91 Morris to Penn, Oct. 26, 1754, ibid.
92 Penn rejected it because he believed that the Board of Trade had no right to interfere in such a matter; to invite its intervention would, he feared, establish a dangerous precedent for its further encroachment on his authority. Penn to Morris, Feb. 26, 1755, ibid.
size of the grant, the House’s bill resembled in every way the appropriations bills which Hamilton had rejected in May and August: the £20,000 was to be sunk by an extention of the excise for ten years and the rates were set so that the Assembly would receive a surplus which Morris estimated at £2,000 annually.\(^3\) This bill put the governor on the spot, since it created the precise condition which Penn’s paper money instruction was designed to combat. Having resolved to conceal the instruction, Morris was obliged to come up with an appropriate subterfuge without delay. This he did on December 18, when he sent the Assembly a message supporting the royal instruction of 1740 and announcing that he could pass no paper money bill without a suspending clause. To show the House that he did not “entirely rely upon my own judgment as to the validity of that instruction,” he laid before it an opinion handed down on November 30, 1753, by the King’s Attorney General Sir Dudley Rider (in response to a hypothetical case prepared by Penn’s agent Ferdinando John Paris),\(^4\) averring that it was “by no means safe or adviseable or consist” with his duty to ignore it. Having created the impression that he intended to employ the tactics suggested by William Allen and company, Morris did an about face midway through his message and offered to waive the royal instruction and pass the appropriations bill, if the Assembly would limit the duration of the excise to five years, as the Currency Act of 1751 directed. With extraordinary fast footwork the governor had shifted to the strategy which Hamilton had used against the money bills of May and August, 1754, a strategy which, as we have seen, concentrated on curtailing the Assembly’s financial power by eliminating, rather than by controlling, the produce of money bills. Even though a limitation of the excise was Morris’ preference in subterfuges, before closing his message he once again conjured up the suspending clause by pleading the solemnity of “the obligations I am under to pay obedience to his Majesty’s instructions.”

There were two reasons why the governor laid so much stress on the suspending clause instruction. One was to make the Assembly

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\(^3\) Votes of Assembly, V, 3755–3758, 3761, 3766–3768; Morris to Sir Thomas Robinson, Dec. 24, 1754, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II, 222; to Dinwiddie, Jan. 7, 1755, ibid., 227.

\(^4\) Votes of Assembly, V, 3771–3780. Also Penn to Hamilton, Nov. 1, 1753, Jan. 29, 1754, Penn Papers.
amenable to compromise. By underlining the pressure he was under to obey the instruction, he sought to impress the House with the risk he was taking in proposing to dispense with it. If the members appreciated the magnitude of the concession he was offering, then Morris hoped that they would match it by agreeing to a limitation of the excise. The second reason why the governor emphasized the instruction was to ingratiate himself with the Newcastle administration. Morris, who was accused by both the Assembly and Thomas Penn of paying immoderate attention to his image in England, knew that men more influential than Attorney General Rider—he was thinking of Lords Granville and Halifax, Presidents respectively of the Privy Council and Board of Trade—believed that the royal instruction of 1740 was still in force. Since the favor of these worthies was worth winning, he contrived to appear as a great respecter of the instruction. Hence the curious structure of his message of December 18 with its offer to make a deal with the Assembly—repudiation of the suspending clause in return for limitation of the excise—sandwiched inconspicuously between homilies on the inviolability of the royal instruction of 1740. It almost looked as though Morris were trying to hide his offer of a compromise from the scrutiny of English officialdom.

Ironically, the only party which seems to have mistaken his intentions was the Assembly, which inferred from his fanfare for the royal instruction that he was unwilling to waive it (the House may, however, have only affected not to understand his position). Consequently, in replying to the governor on December 20 the members devoted much of their message to discussing the instruction's validity. An excise limitation they dismissed out of hand. In answering the Assembly on December 24, Morris endeavoured to correct its misconception about his message of December 18, claiming that he had then offered and was still prepared to “relax” the royal instruction of 1740 and pass the appropriations bill, if the House would limit the excise to five years. But before closing his message he

95 Penn to Morris, May 29, 1755, Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, II, 334. See also the Assembly's message to Morris, Aug. 19, 1755, Votes of Assembly, V, 3997.
96 See note 66.
97 Votes of Assembly, V, 3785-3791. For Morris' messages of Dec. 24 and Dec. 30, 1754, see ibid., 3795-3799, 3804-3806.
muddied the waters again by twice avowing his obligation to obey the royal instruction. After it became apparent that this message would have no more effect than his former ones in persuading the House to accept an excise limitation, Morris delivered a message on December 30, protesting that he could not pass the appropriations bill because it violated the royal instruction of 1740 which was "in Force, and binding upon me." This time, however, he did not offer to waive the instruction and astonished his auditors by denying that he had ever done so. His disclaimer was carefully conceived. Having ascertained that the Assembly was adamant in its opposition to an excise limitation, he concluded that no paper money bill acceptable to both Penn and the House could be passed. Therefore, he saw no harm in turning the impasse to his own advantage by claiming that it was the royal instruction alone which prevented him from passing the House's appropriation bills, his hope being that his expression of fidelity to royal orders would recommend him to the Ministry in Britain. Thus it was that for several months after December, 1754, Morris, always privately feeling the House's pulse first to be certain that its sentiments on an excise limitation had not changed, claimed on the occasions when it sent him a paper money bill that he opposed it solely because it did not conform to the royal instruction of 1740. Only a lucky discovery enabled the House to drive him from this position in June, 1755.98

Morris' persistence in subterfuge exasperated the Assembly even more than his notorious prolixity because propriety demanded that a formal complaint against Penn be based on an avowal of the contents of his instructions by himself or his deputy; the report of Robert Charles, as pointed out above, simply did not provide a suitable foundation for action. And action was what the Assembly emphatically wanted, for it was no longer willing, as it had been in the past, to suppress its enmity against the Proprietor's instructions or to divert it against his surrogate.

By scrutinizing Morris' messages the House managed to find a peg on which to hang a case against Penn—a casual admission by the governor on December 24 of the universally known fact that the Proprietor furnished all of his deputies with instructions before they came to Pennsylvania. By deciding to proceed against Penn on the

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98 See note 132.
basis of this bare mention of instructions, the House sacrificed part of its case against him. Since it could not appear to know more about Morris' instructions than he himself publicly admitted, and, since he did not descend to particulars about them, it could only protest against them in general; its specific objection to Penn's paper money instruction, that by ordering the governor to demand a voice in the expenditure of the produce of paper money bills it violated the people's natural right to spend their own money in their own way, it was obliged to suppress. The Assembly was not worried, however, that the impact of its indictment would be diminished by the necessity of dealing in generalities, for it felt that the instructions were intolerable from whatever perspective they were considered. Particularly repugnant was the £5,000 performance bond which Penn took from his deputies to compel obedience to them. Exacting such a bond constituted in the members' opinion a clear violation of the royal charter of 1682, a conclusion which they had reached, but had not articulated, as early as September, 1753. Specifically, section four of the charter with its stipulation that the proprietary deputies were empowered to make laws "according to their best Discretion" was held to be violated, because, by imposing a £5,000 penalty for deviating from his instructions, Penn deterred his deputies from exercising their discretion in interpreting them.99

The Assembly also assailed the performance bond for investing the proprietary instructions with a degree of immutability which endangered democracy in the province. Once again this objection was formulated as early as September, 1753, but a committee report in which it was contained was suppressed and not publicized until December 31, 1754.100 The principal premise of the report was that in Pennsylvania, as in any other democratic government, law should be the product of consultation and dialogue between the representatives of the people and the executive. Nothing, it contended, subverted this fundamental process more completely than binding the executive up with inflexible instructions, for this made him no more amenable to persuasion and conviction than a ventriloquist's dummy and reduced the House to the necessity of accepting law on terms

99 Perhaps the clearest statement of the Assembly's contention that proprietary instructions violated the royal charter, section 4, was contained in its message to Morris of Aug. 8, 1755. See Votes of Assembly, V, esp. 3943.
100 Ibid., 3808-3827.
the Proprietor dictated or doing without it. Under such an arrange-
ment “our Meetings and Deliberations are henceforth useless,” the
House complained, and “we have only to know their [the Proprietar-
ies’] Will, and to obey.” Penn, it protested in the fall of 1755, would
not only deny “us the Privileges of an English Constitution, but
would, as far as in his Power, introduce a French one, by reducing
our Assemblies to the Insignificance of their Parliaments, incapable
of making Laws, but by Direction . . . and only allowed to register
his Edicts.”

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The Assembly was unable to remain dispassionate in presenting
these objections and on January 3, 1755, it launched a tirade against
proprietary instructions, declaring its “great Dislike” for them and
denouncing them as “void,” “illegal,” “absurd,” and “impractica-
ble.” Then, on January 7 it adopted a petition to the King-in-
Council, excoriating the instructions for preventing the passage of
its £20,000 appropriations bill as well as for violating its charter
and praying for relief from their oppressiveness. Having fired this
salvo, the House adjourned until May.

How did Franklin react to the Assembly’s split with Penn? If
this paper’s description of him as a Whig is correct, then his response
to the House’s public arraignment of the Proprietor on charges of
violating the people’s charter rights and of attempting to subvert
democratic government in Pennsylvania would have been automatic;
his would have joined it in opposition to Penn and the split between
the two men would have occurred at this time rather than in the
summer of 1755. This did not happen, however, but not for reasons
which will discredit our thesis. The simple fact was that a split was
impossible during the December-January session because Franklin
was hundreds of miles away at the time, having been on a postal
inspection trip to New England since the beginning of September
from which he did not return until the beginning of March.

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101 Ibid., 4177.
102 Ibid., 3832, 3839.
103 The petition of Jan. 7, 1755, is printed in Colonial Records, VI, 448–450. For an account
of its unhappy fate, see Wolff, 165–170.
104 The dates of Franklin’s departure and return can not be precisely pinpointed. On
Aug. 30, 1754, he wrote Peter Collinson that he was “now about” to go to New England,
while on September 17 he wrote Richard Peters from New York on his way northward. On
Mar. 1, 1755, he wrote James Birkett that he had “just returned” from his journey. Papers,
Franklin's long absence from Pennsylvania helped his relations with Morris, too, for he escaped being infected with the consuming animosity which the Assembly developed toward the governor during the December-January session. Thus, he returned to Philadelphia enjoying the confidence and esteem of both the governor, whom he had known "intimately" for some time,\(^{105}\) and the House. This placed him in a singular position which he, ever alert to the possibility of public service, perceived he could use to promote the province's welfare. What Pennsylvania needed, as he saw it, was a broker, or a mediator, who could make the governor and Assembly co-operate in executing the orders of General Edward Braddock, who had arrived in Virginia on February 19, 1755; since his friendship with both parties seemed to qualify him for the role, he did not hesitate to try to fill it.

Franklin was able to play the mediator because of the Assembly's pacific posture during the spring of 1755. Having gratified its desire to castigate Penn and Morris during its December-January session and having also petitioned the Crown against Penn, the House was not disposed to renew a quarrel with him until it received the Privy Council's decision on its case against him. Thus, its forbearance enabled Franklin to escape another round of public polemics in which he surely would have been compelled to take a stand which would have antagonized Penn, Morris, and the proprietary party.

For his own part Franklin repressed all impulses to attack Morris and Penn. As we saw in 1753, when he refrained from denouncing Penn even though he apparently knew the contents of his paper money instructions, Franklin had none of the instincts of the provocateur. Co-operation he always preferred to contention, provided only that co-operation did not compromise the public interest. Thus, just as in 1753, when he chose to seek Penn's assistance in building a college and a hospital rather than expose his paper money reforms (which presented no danger to the Assembly, whose powers were more than sufficient to resist them), so in 1755 he chose to seek Morris' assistance in defending the province against the French rather than add his voice to the chorus of his detractors.

The test of Franklin's efforts to use his friendship with both the governor and the Assembly to mobilize their support for the war

\(^{105}\) See note 85.
effort came when the Assembly convened in special session on March 17, 1755. The next morning Morris sent the House a message,106 relaying requests from Braddock that Pennsylvania contribute to a war chest for his army, cut a road from its western settlements to the Ohio River, and establish postal service between Philadelphia and Winchester, Virginia. Favoring a generous response to all of these requests, Franklin asked his fellow Assemblymen to grant £40,000 in paper money and to sink it by extending the excise for five years.107 Obviously, he had sounded Morris and had been told that he would not deviate from the terms on which he had offered to pass an appropriations bill during the preceding session and therefore he, Franklin, had concluded that the danger from the French was so great that just this once the Assembly must accommodate itself to the governor, regardless of the cost of the concessions he demanded, to keep the province out of foreign hands. He appeared, however, to be asking the House to do the impossible; not only was he asking a group of Quakers, who could hardly bear to appropriate a pittance for defense, to vote £40,000 for military measures, but he was also asking them to capitulate to Morris and to vote it on terms which they knew were formulated as a subterfuge to deprive them of an excise surplus in order to reduce them to financial impotence. The success of Franklin’s plan depended, more than anything else, on Morris himself. Since his slightest misstep would provide the Assembly with an excuse to defeat the bill, it was essential for Morris to conciliate the members. But instead of doing this he provoked them with tactics so egregiously offensive that he destroyed all hopes of passing the £40,000 bill.

Morris began to vex the House on the afternoon of March 18 with complaints about the make-up of its minutes. Having noticed that the most recent printing contained two letters from Secretary of State Sir Thomas Robinson of July 5 and October 26, 1754, which he had sent to the House to expedite its deliberations, he ordered them expunged, alleging that their publication might be “of dangerous Consequence.” In a follow-up message Morris complained that despite repeated requests the House had prevented him from seeing its minutes for fully two months after its adjournment on January

106 *Votes of Assembly, V*, 3857–3859.
10, 1755, an action which he denounced as "very unconstitutional and extraordinary." To prevent a repetition of the practice, he demanded that in the future the House send its clerk to him every evening with a copy of the day's minutes, so that he could keep abreast of what was happening in its chambers.\textsuperscript{108}

Since the House regarded the control of the composition of its minutes in the same light as it regarded the control of the composition of its membership, as a right secured to it by the British Constitution, it was incensed by Morris' interference. Worse still was the gratuitousness of his accusations. The two Robinson letters which he wanted deleted contained nothing of value to the French, that of July 5 transmitting a general order to defend the province against aggressors and that of October 26 announcing that two regiments of regulars would be sent to the colonies from Ireland. The latter information might have been of interest in Quebec had it not been published months earlier in the \textit{London Chronicle} and in practically every other newspaper in the British Empire, not excluding the \textit{Pennsylvania Gazette} and \textit{Journal.}\textsuperscript{109} Hence Morris' demand that the letters be suppressed on the grounds of provincial security was nonsensical. So too was his accusation that the House was secreting its minutes from him. It was the House's custom never to put its minutes to press until they were revised by a committee of members. Revision and printing took time, especially after as long and as argumentative a session as that of December-January. Consequently, even though the House hurried their preparation, the minutes were not finished for two months, whereupon they were immediately put into Morris' hands. To claim, as the governor had, that they were "affected delayed" was preposterous.

The Assembly's response to Morris on the morning of March 19 was a triumph of restraint. Without rancor it rejected his demands that it expunge Robinson's letters and make its clerk report to him every evening; it deplored differing about "Things of little or no moment"; and it entreated Morris to suspend his "irritating Accusations, and novel Demands" in the interest of unanimity and dispatch in serving Braddock.\textsuperscript{110} Franklin was doubtless the principal

\textsuperscript{108} Votes of Assembly, V, 3859-3860.
\textsuperscript{109} See the Assembly's message of Mar. 19, 1755, \textit{ibid.}, 3860-3863.
\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, 3862.
mover in moderating the House’s response, hoping that if Morris were conciliated he would reciprocate, and that sufficient good will would be generated to pass the £40,000 bill. Morris, though, wanted harmony only on his own terms, for as soon as he received the House’s message, he dashed off a note to Franklin in his capacity as Assembly printer, ordering him to expunge Robinson’s letters.  

Franklin immediately carried the note to Richard Peters and urged him to persuade Morris to retract it, explaining that he would be obliged to lay it before the House which would deeply resent the governor’s attempt to go behind its back to circumvent its will. Even though the council unanimously endorsed Franklin’s proposal, Morris refused to retract the note and therefore on the afternoon of the twentieth Franklin was forced to lay it before the House which responded somewhat more temperately than he had expected, ordering him to print the minutes as they stood and confining itself to a dignified statement of its “Right of directing what shall, or shall not, be inserted in the Minutes.” The temper of the members was clearly rising, however.

The wrangle over Robinson’s letters ended on the afternoon of the twentieth, because Morris had run out of people to order to delete them. Nothing daunted, the governor returned to the offensive the next day by challenging the House’s right to deny him daily access to its minutes. He threw down the gauntlet by sending Peters to the Assembly on the morning of the twenty-first to demand to inspect and copy its journals. When the Secretary was rebuffed, Morris sent him back on the twenty-fourth to make another demand to see the journals. Its patience finally exhausted, the House determined to chastise the governor, not by villifying him, but by refusing to concede the excise limitation which he set as his price for passing Franklin’s £40,000 bill. Consequently, on March 28, it passed a £25,000 bill (the smaller sum was also intended as a rebuke) in which the money was sunk by extending the excise for ten years. 

A ten year extension was no more acceptable to Morris now than it had been during the December-January session and, perceiving

111 Ibid., 3864.
112 Colonial Records, VI, 328.
113 Votes of Assembly, V, 3865.
114 Ibid., V, 3869-3870, 3872.
that the House’s insistence on it made the passage of the bill impossible, he rejected it on April 1, pretending to oppose it because it violated the royal instruction of 1740 by not containing a suspending clause—his intention being, as before, to curry British favor by demonstrating fidelity to royal orders.

The conflict over the £25,000 bill ended on a bizarre note. Unable to resist inflaming the wounds he had already opened, Morris refused despite repeated requests from the Assembly to return the bill, a tactic never before employed by a Pennsylvania governor. But none of Morris’ predecessors had ever been so intent on causing trouble over trivia.

Prevented from passing a supply bill at this critical moment in the history of British North America, the Assembly resorted to unorthodox methods, conceived by Franklin, to raise money. The principal beneficiary of his ingenuity was Josiah Quincy, an emissary sent to Pennsylvania by Massachusetts governor William Shirley to solicit support for a New England expedition against Crown Point. On the afternoon of April 1, a few hours after Morris had rejected the £25,000 bill, Quincy presented the Assembly a memorial, drawn under Franklin’s supervision, asking for a contribution of £10,000. The next day Franklin produced a plan to raise this sum which the Assembly adopted immediately and unanimously. His scheme empowered a committee of seven, including Isaac Norris and himself, to draw £15,000 in pay orders on the Trustees of the Loan Office and the Provincial Treasurer, who would pay them off in a year at five per cent interest from the revenues produced in the meantime by the excise and the interest on the Assembly’s loans. Designed to circulate as currency, these orders actually functioned as war bonds, because, as Franklin later related, the province’s “Moneyed Men, knowing the Goodness of the Fund, and confiding in the Justice and Punctuality of the Assembly . . . voluntarily furnished the Committee with Cash for these Draughts, which they laid by in their Chests to receive in Time the Interest.” Of the £15,000 raised, £10,000 went for victualing the New England troops, as Quincy requested. The remaining £5,000 was used to reimburse a

115 Ibid., 3877–3878. See also Autobiography, 215–216.
116 Papers, VI, 3–4.
117 Votes of Assembly, V, 3901.
committee of the Assembly which had borrowed £5,000 in January to buy provisions for Braddock. Franklin and the Assembly next turned their attention to the establishment of postal service between Philadelphia and Winchester, Franklin volunteering on the morning of April 9 to go to the Virginia town to make the necessary arrangements, the Assembly agreeing to pay his expenses. Then, on the afternoon of the ninth the House abruptly adjourned, because Morris and governors Shirley and Delancy of New York, who had arrived in Philadelphia the preceding evening, left town to attend a conference called by Braddock at Alexandria, Virginia.

At the insistence of his friend Shirley, Franklin traveled with the governors as far as Annapolis. There he left them and went westward to Winchester. Then he doubled back to Braddock’s camp at Frederick, Maryland, where he arrived on April 21. The familiar story of how he learned of the general’s shortage of transport and rescued his army from immobility by rushing into the Pennsylvania back country and producing a fleet of wagons from the tight-fisted German farmers needs no retelling here. What does call for comment is the virulence of the prejudice against Pennsylvania which he found in Braddock’s camp. To his astonishment he learned that in a stream of letters to the general and his staff Morris had represented the province as a virtual ally of France. Suppressing all news of its endeavours to assist the army, he pictured it as supplying provisions to the Gallic invader while withholding them from the British. Little wonder that Franklin found the soldiers “more intent on an Expedition against us than against the French.”

When the Assembly reconvened on May 12 Franklin was treated to more of Morris’ misrepresentations. Attacking the House on May 16 for failing to assist Braddock, the governor audaciously ignored his recent feat of collecting a caravan of wagons for the general and made the “amazing Charge” that the army had been furnished with no carriages at all. With equal regard for the truth, Morris accused the House of denying all requests for provisions. He

118 Ibid., 3841.
119 Papers, VI, 53.
120 Ibid., 54. On the army’s hostility toward Pennsylvania, see also Susanna Wright to James Pemberton, Apr. 27, 1755, Pemberton Papers. For Franklin’s and the Assembly’s belief that Morris was the source of the information prejudicial to it, see Colonial Records, VI, 307; Papers, VI, 209; Votes of Assembly, V, 3902, 4038–4039.
did admit that it had raised £15,000 on April 2, but only to reproach it for making money "without the Approbation of the Government." The Assembly's other contributions to the military effort—the establishment of postal service between Philadelphia and Winchester, the cutting of a road from the frontier to the Ohio, the succoring of potentially hostile Indians—the governor ignored just as resolutely as he had Franklin's efforts, so that he was able to close his message, which he twice announced he was sending to the King and his ministers, with the charge that Pennsylvania had "no Design to contribute anything towards the Defence of this Country."

A convincing explanation for Morris' efforts to defame the Assembly was provided by what seemed to some the providential arrival in Philadelphia during the last week of April of a pamphlet, published two months earlier in London, entitled *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania.* 121 Attributed for several months to Morris but actually written by William Smith, 122 the *Brief State* was a diatribe against the Quakers, purporting to detail down to the end of 1754 their refusal to defend the province and proposing that Parliament punish them by imposing oaths on all Pennsylvania officeholders, a step which would drive all conscientious Friends from public service. 123 If a purge of the Quakers was Morris' objective, his reports to Braddock and his message of May 16 made perfect sense, for they served as epilogues to his pamphlet, carrying the allegations of Quaker dereliction of duty down to the spring of 1755 and providing additional ammunition for those wishing to remove them from office.

The *Brief State* also illuminated Morris' high-handed actions during the Assembly's March session. Many members felt that the governor's attempt to censor their minutes was simply the mani-

121 For the arrival of the *Brief State* aboard the *Carolina*, Capt. Stephen Mesnard, whose entry at Philadelphia was reported in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Apr. 24, 1755, see *Papers*, VI, 52.

122 As late as Oct. 7, 1755, Pennsylvanians were unwilling to attribute the pamphlet to Smith. See *Papers*, VI, 169, 216.

123 [William Smith], *A Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania* (2nd edit., London, 1755), 40. On Aug. 27, 1755, Franklin wrote Peter Collinson that the design of the *Brief State* "was to get Quakers out of the Assembly on the Principle, or at least on this Pretence, that they could not or would not do the Duty of Assemblymen in defending the Country." *Papers*, VI, 170.
festation of a despotic disposition. Franklin, on the other hand, believed that his conduct made so little sense that it was the product of a personality in some way deranged, the performance of “half a Madman,” as he later described it. But with his hindsight sharpened by the Brief State, Franklin was able to discern considerable method in Morris’ madness. It now appeared that his conduct, which in March seemed so pointlessly provocative, was designed to promote the purge of the Quakers by bringing them to such a pitch of exasperation that they would refuse to pass the £40,000 bill or any other military measure which he favored, thereby substantiating his accusations that they were averse to defending the province.

Morris’s machinations disgusted Franklin. Employing provocation to prevent the Quaker party from voting a generous military appropriation, he scored as a sacrifice of the public welfare to partisan interest. His strong reaction to Morris’ use of misrepresentation—specifically to his message of May 16—has been described by Israel Pemberton. Upon the governor’s sending the House “a Message full of Falsehoods and the most malicious Representations the satisfaction of serving a People whom he respects and the quick Sense of the Injurious Treatment they meet with, animated Franklin so effectually that I am in hopes,” Pemberton wrote, that “it will engage him to act Steadily and Zealously in our Defence.” Pemberton was mistaken, however, about the real cause of Franklin’s “animation”; while he deplored Morris’ unscrupulous campaign against the Quakers, he was chiefly exercised on his own account.

125 The proprietary partisans resented it when Franklin foiled their strategy by devising ways—the £15,000 “war bond” issue of April 2, for example—to enable the Quaker Assembly to contribute to defense. Thus, on Aug. 27, 1755, Franklin wrote Collinson that “the Governor with his few Friends are angry with me for disappointing them by that means, of a fresh Accusation against the Quakers.” Papers, VI, 171. The proprietary strategy (if such it really was) of preventing Pennsylvania from contributing to Braddock’s campaign was based on the assumption that the general’s army was invincible, a mentality perfectly exemplified by the project, related by Franklin in his Autobiography (228), of Drs. Thomas and Phineas Bond to organize a victory celebration well in advance of any news about the fate of the expedition. Morris and his supporters might also have assumed that Braddock and his officers, confronted with Pennsylvania’s refusal to support them, would have entered the province and impressed men and supplies, an action which would have embroiled them with the Quakers and created impressions much to the Friends’ disadvantage.
126 Pemberton to John Fothergill, May 19, 1755, Papers, VI, 55.
He was vastly proud of his recent contributions to the defense of the British Empire—his successful scheme for raising £15,000 for provisioning Braddock and the New Englanders and his collection of wagons in the Pennsylvania back country—and he considered that, by deliberately ignoring them in his message of May 16, Morris had insulted him personally.

Franklin's anger with Morris on the counts just mentioned contributed materially to his split with Penn in the summer of 1755, a fact acknowledged by William Smith, who claimed that "some personal difference with Governor Morris" helped turn him against the Proprietor. Specifically, Franklin's disgust with Morris' methods and objectives filled him with revulsion for proprietary government which extended to Penn himself. Furthermore, the discovery of Morris' designs against the Quakers convinced him of the impossibility of promoting executive-legislative co-operation on military matters and thus removed his incentive to sweep ideological differences with the Proprietor under the rug, as he had done in the past. Consequently, when the Assembly adjourned on May 17, after having been in session for only six days, Franklin was psychologically primed for the split with Penn which occurred several weeks later.

Precisely when did the split occur? Professor Hanna himself is somewhat vague, dating it simply in the summer of 1755. He does imply, however, that it did not happen before the first of July and is emphatic that "by the autumn of 1755, Franklin and Penn were avowed enemies." Statements of Penn's supporters enable us to be more specific. On August 28, 1755, Morris wrote Secretary of State Sir Thomas Robinson that Franklin had taken the lead in the Assembly and was writing their "very abusive" messages which were "highly reflecting upon the Proprietors, and plainly calculated to render them odious to the people." Three days earlier Receiver General Richard Hockley wrote Penn that Franklin and Tench Francis had "poison'd the people Against your Family to a great
Degree and if they had their Desert should suffer as Incendiarys.” And three days earlier than this, on August 22, Hockley wrote Penn that Franklin had been “the chief instrument in every thing that has been ill natur’dly said or wrote” against him during the past month. The split between the two men must, then, have occurred sometime before this last date, but in trying to update it further, the evidence fails us. We can, therefore, refine Professor Hanna’s chronology to this extent: the Franklin-Penn split occurred before August 22 in the summer of 1755. This means that it occurred during either the Assembly’s June 13-28 session or during its July 23-August 22 session. Is it possible to determine during which one?

The Assembly convened on June 13, summoned by a special writ from Morris. In no time he put the members in a bad mood. Immediately after being called to order, the House sent Franklin’s son, William, its clerk for the past four years, to call on him to make the routine request that he supply a warrant for affixing the great seal to the Assembly’s minutes so that they could be sent to England properly authenticated. Morris pretended that he did not know that young Franklin was the House’s clerk (which was equivalent to pretending that he did not know who was governor) and sent him back to the Assembly to get official proof that he was, an irritating and altogether pointless exercise of executive power. The next day Morris informed the members why he had called them together. He revealed that Braddock had written him, requesting Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland to furnish “Cannon, Ammunition, and Stores” to re-equip Fort Duquesne in the event that the French, retreating before him, abandoned and destroyed it. He refused, however, to release the general’s letter to the Assembly, unless it promised not to publish it, citing in his defense the House’s defiant conduct in March, when it scorned his demand for suppressing the two Robinson letters. By withholding from the Assembly a letter on which its deliberations must be based, Morris was violating a long-standing legislative custom. The House refused to be ruffled, however, because it perceived the operation of his plan to provoke it into rejecting appropriations for defense so that he could accuse

130 This and the following Hockley letter are in Penn Papers.
131 Votes of Assembly, V, 3903-3904. The source of the quotations and information in the remainder of this paragraph is ibid., 3904-3905, 3906-3907, 3914-3915, 3920-3922.
it in Britain of dereliction of duty. Determined not to play into his hands, the members on June 21 passed a bill granting £15,000 for defense, the money to be sunk, as usual, by extending the excise for ten years.

To confound Morris further, the Assembly sent him, along with the text of the appropriation bill, the royal confirmation, dated October 29, 1748, of the £5,000 Supply Act passed by Governor Thomas in 1746. Found in April among the papers of former Speaker John Kinsey, this document acutely embarrassed Morris, who had insisted, as Hamilton had before him, that Thomas, apprehensive about passing a paper money bill without a suspending clause in defiance of the royal instruction of 1740, had not dared send the £5,000 bill to England; now it appeared that neither governor had told the truth. In addition to Morris' credibility another casualty of the royal confirmation was his method of handling the Assembly's paper money bills. In setting the excise rates to sink the £15,000 voted on June 21, the House, as usual, rigged them to yield a surplus, which Morris estimated at £2,000 per year. Here once again was the problem of the produce of the Assembly's paper money bills, which the governor had heretofore skirted by erecting a double screen of subterfuge: the royal instruction of 1740 and the five-year excise limitation, as sanctioned by the Currency Act of 1751. The royal confirmation of the Supply Act of 1746 discredited both devices. No longer could Morris claim that the instruction of 1740 was "in Force and binding" upon him, for by approving a paper money bill which categorically violated it by containing no suspending clause, the King-in-Council had, in fact, repealed it. As for his arguments for a five-year excise limitation, these were fatally undermined by royal approval of a bill which extended the excise ten years to sink the small sum of £5,000. There was no doubt about

132 The document may, in fact, have been discovered earlier; certainly it was found no later than April 5 on which date a copy of it (the Assembly had the original) was "inspected" by the council and entered into its minutes. Isaac Norris formally presented the confirmation to the Assembly on June 13. After being examined, it was ordered to be printed in the House's minutes at the end of the April session, where it can be found following April 9. Colonial Records, VI, 356-357; Votes of Assembly, V, 3887-3888, 3904, 3915-3916.
133 Morris had made this claim on Dec. 24, 1754, Hamilton on May 17, 1754, ibid., V, 3710, 3796.
134 Morris to Dinwiddie, July 4, 1755, Colonial Records, VI, 455.
it—the Assembly's presentation of the royal confirmation of the Supply Act of 1746 had, as Franklin told a friend on June 26, 1755, produced a "clearing up of Things . . . which deprived him [Morris] of all the old Subterfuges." Bereft of his familiar artifices, the governor was forced to deal candidly with the House's £15,000 bill. Consequently, when he returned it on June 25, the House was "pleased," Franklin reported, "to find that the Mask is now forc'd off and that not one word is mentioned of King's Instructions which have long been made a Pretense to harass us." Rather, Morris offered to pass the bill on the condition that the members complied with what they knew from Robert Charles' secret report to be the proprietary instruction, that is, if they gave him a voice in the expenditure of the bill's produce.

The cat was at last out of the bag! After years of concealment the fatal instruction was finally revealed! The result, contrary to the apocalyptic predictions of the Pennsylvania proprietary leaders, was a deafening silence—no civil war, no rent strike, no province in flames, not even a spark. There is no report of how Franklin responded to the public revelation of Penn's instruction. As a Whig, he should have taken umbrage at it, since it proposed to abridge what he and his fellow Pennsylvanians considered their natural right of spending their own tax dollars in their own way. There is strong reason to infer that this was indeed his reaction. In the next two Assembly sessions, both of which occurred before the summer was over, he protested vigorously against Penn's efforts to violate the Assembly's "natural Exclusive Right" of disposing of the people's money as it pleased, while a decade later his feelings on this matter were still so strong that he urged his colleagues in the House to wage "an eternal war" against Penn until he recognized their right to exclusive control over their constituents' money. Inference, however, can never supplant evidence and, since there is no hard

135 This quotation and the one immediately following are from Franklin's letter to James Wright, June 26, 1755, Papers, VI, 90-91.
136 For Morris' amendments, see ibid. Penn was delighted when he learned that Morris had at last brought the matter of executive control over the produce of paper money bills "on the Tapis." Penn to Morris, to Peters, Aug. 13, 1755, Penn Papers.
137 See the Assembly's messages of Aug. 19 and Sept. 29, 1755, both written by Franklin. Votes of Assembly, V, 3991, 4027.
138 William Allen to Thomas Penn, Mar. 11, 1765, Penn Papers.
evidence about Franklin's reaction to Penn's instruction in June, 1755, we are unable to affirm positively that he was scandalized by it and that it precipitated the split with the Proprietor which we know occurred at about this time.

The Assembly was no more willing to agree to Morris' demand for control of the produce of its £15,000 bill than he was to modify it, so that a deadlock developed and on June 28 it adjourned until September 1 without passing a bill to assist Braddock. Within a month it was back in session, convened by special writ from Morris, who shocked the members on July 24 by informing them of Braddock's defeat. Aware that this catastrophe placed Pennsylvania in unprecedented jeopardy, the Assembly responded on July 25 by resolving to grant an unprecedented sum for defense—£50,000—which it proposed to raise by means equally unprecedented, a general land tax. With dispatch matching the province's danger, it passed the £50,000 bill on August 2 and sent it to Morris the same day. On August 5 the governor returned it with a message signifying his refusal to pass it unless Thomas Penn's estates were exempted from the land tax. 139 Morris' demand, which Franklin and practically the whole body politic assumed was dictated by instructions from Penn, 140 astonished the province, for not even the Proprietor's most implacable detractors had ever imagined him

139 See Votes of Assembly, V, 3928-3929, 3933, 3934-3937. The text of the £50,000 bill is printed in ibid., 4072-4078.

140 In responding to Morris on August 5 the Assembly affected to believe that it was impossible that the exemption of Penn's estates "should appear to the Governor a Thing right in itself"; therefore, it asked him "to acquaint us explicitly, whether he is restricted by the Proprietaries from passing the Bill" taxing their lands. Ibid., 3937. Morris replied the next day that he was indeed restricted by Penn, but by his commission, not by his instructions. Ibid., 3938-3939. Although the Assembly believed, as will be explained later in the body of this paper, that Morris' tale about being inhibited by his commission was a subterfuge, it did not challenge it immediately. There was no profit in doing so, since as a target for protesting Penn's method of government, his commission was as good as his instructions, both being regarded as inflexible instruments of remote control which violated the royal charter of 1682 by abridging the proprietary deputy's discretionary powers. Very shortly, however, the Assembly began to assert its belief that Morris' demand for the exemption was dictated by instructions from Penn. On August 19, for example, it expressed it by analogy, declaring that if the actions of its membership were prescribed by instructions from its constituents, enforced by bonds, it would be in a situation identical to Morris' in demanding the proprietary exemption. Subsequently, in messages of Sept. 29, Nov. 11, and Nov. 23-24 (?) , 1755, it specifically stated its belief that Morris' demand for the exemption was dictated by instructions from Penn. Ibid., 3982, 4029-4039, 4113, 4178-4179. Since Franklin wrote all of the messages just cited (see note 145, below), no further evidence is needed concerning his opinions about the
capable of refusing to contribute to the cost of repelling a foreign invader. Many Pennsylvanians actually believed that the royal charter of 1682 obliged him to assume the entire cost of provincial defense and, even though numbers (as well as the authorities in England) did not subscribe to this interpretation, no one doubted that his position as Proprietor and Captain General of the province imposed inviolable responsibilities on him for providing for the defense of his dominions. Penn was also expected to contribute to provincial defense because he would benefit more from the defeat of the French than any other man in the province. The vast tracts of land which he owned in central Pennsylvania were worthless as long as a foreign army was entrenched along their western extremities. But let the French be driven away and their value would skyrocket. Finally, Penn was expected to pay the tax, because no man in the British Empire, not the first peer of the realm, not the King himself, was exempt from levies on land.

On August 6 Morris tried to persuade the Assembly that his demand for the proprietary exemption was not dictated by Penn’s instructions, but rather by a clause in his commission which forbade him to consent to any act “whereby the Estate or the Property of the Proprietaries may be hurt or encumbered.” The House refused to believe him, however, because of his actions a week earlier. On July 29, in an attempt to raise a force of volunteers to march west-

source of Morris’ demand. Actually, Morris was telling the truth. His commission was his sole authority for insisting that Penn’s estate be exempted from taxes; he had no instructions on this point. This did not mean, however, that Penn favored the taxation of his property. On the contrary, the only reason he had failed to give Morris the relevant instructions was because he had not anticipated a land tax. When he learned that the Assembly had tried to pass one, he applauded Morris for resisting it and sent him specific and detailed instructions (which he received by the spring of 1756), forbidding him to consent to the taxation of the great bulk of his estate.

141 In 1742 and again in 1756 the Board of Trade rejected Assembly arguments that Penn was liable for the entire cost of provincial defense. See Pennsylvania Archives, First Series, I, 633-635; Votes of Assembly, VI, 4388-4393. Richard Jackson supported the Assembly’s contention in a legal opinion, delivered to Franklin, Apr. 24, 1758. Papers, VIII, 23. In his pamphlet Cool Thoughts (1764) Franklin made it clear that he thought the argument for sole proprietary assumption of defense expenses was a respectable one. Papers, XI, 167.

142 “We do not,” the Assembly stated on Aug. 8, 1755, “propose to tax the Proprietary as Governor, but as a Fellow-Subject, a Landholder and Possessor of an Estate in Pennsylvania; an Estate that will be more benefited by a proper Application of the Tax, than any other Estate in the province.” Votes of Assembly, V, 3944.
ward to dislodge the French, he had offered, as bounties, gifts of proprietary land, ranging from 200 acres for privates to 1,000 acres for colonels. Here was an offer which would cost Penn hundreds of thousands of acres—hardly an inconsiderable hurt to his estate—and yet the Assembly was apparently supposed to believe that Morris was authorized to make it, but was unauthorized to consent to a land tax which by common estimate would cost the Proprietor little more than £500. This conundrum seemed to be susceptible to only two solutions: either the offer of land bounties was made without authority or the restriction allegedly imposed by the proprietary commission on hurting and encumbering the proprietary property was a subterfuge to mask proprietary instructions prohibiting the taxation of Penn's estates. Franklin and the Assembly, conditioned by long exposure to executive artifice, were convinced that the second answer was the correct one.

Here was the cause of Franklin's split with Penn—his conviction, fixed by Morris' messages of August 5 and 6, that the Proprietor had instructed his deputy to dodge the provincial land tax. For proof of this we need only look at his reaction to Morris' messages, recorded in the messages which he wrote for the Assembly on August 8 and 19 (he had written all of the House's messages since his return from New England at the beginning of March). Before August 5 and 6 Franklin's productions were distinguished above all by their restraint. Though piqued by Morris' provocative conduct, he eschewed polemics and appealed to the governor's instincts for accommodation and fair play in hopes of coaxing him into cooperation with the Assembly. Now consider the messages evoked by the demand for the proprietary exemption. Franklin's admission that they contained "some Appearance of Warmth" conveys no real

143 Ibid., 3932.
144 In its message of Aug. 8, 1755, the Assembly estimated that Penn's share of the £50,000 tax might be no more than "a Hundredth Part," i.e., £500. Morris and the proprietary party considered this a just assessment and on August 16 a group of Penn's supporters offered to pay this sum on his behalf, if such a payment would procure the passage of the £50,000 bill. Ibid., 3946, 3961, 3976-3977, 3995.
145 Franklin admitted this and both his friends and enemies acknowledged it. See Autobiography, 213; William Smith to Penn, September, 1755, Papers, VI, 211; Morris to Sir Thomas Robinson, Aug. 28, 1755, Colonial Records, VI, 600; Richard Peters to Penn, June 5, 1756, Penn Papers; Israel Pemberton to John Fothergill, Nov. 27, 1755, Pemberton Papers.
146 Votes of Assembly, V, 3947. The two following quotations are in ibid., 3947, 3988.
idea of their temper, for they were as indignant as anything he ever wrote for the public. On August 8, for example, he flayed Morris as the “hateful Instrument of reducing a free People to the abject State of Vassalage,” while on August 19 he attacked him for not having “that Spirit of Government, that Skill, and those Abilities, that should qualify him for his Station.” He also branded him a “Knave,” a “Fool,” a “Liar,” and a “Libeller.”

On Penn he was no easier. “How odious must it be to a sensible manly People,” he declared on August 8, “to find him who ought to be their Father and Protector, taking Advantage of Publick Calamity and Distress, and their Tenderness for their bleeding Country, to force down their Throats Laws of Imposition, abhorrent to common Justice and common Reason.”

“Vassals must follow their Lords to the Wars in Defence of their Lands,” he fumed on August 19, but “our Lord Proprietary, though a Subject like ourselves, would send us out to fight for him, while he keeps himself a thousand Leagues remote from Danger! Vassals fight at their Lords Expence, but our Lord would have us defend his Estate at our own Expence! This is not merely Vassalage, it is worse than any Vassalage we have heard of; it is something we have no adequate Name for; it is even more slavish than Slavery itself.” Clearly, the abusiveness of these messages, which foreclosed the possibility of future good relations with Penn, showed how completely Franklin had been repelled by his governor’s effort to exempt his estates from taxes.

Penn’s attempt to procure an exemption alienated Franklin because it violated his moral (one is almost tempted to say religious) convictions, specifically his belief that the fundamental duty of man to himself and to his God was to serve his fellow man. Franklin believed that this precept was especially applicable to public men, because their positions gave them singular powers to implement it. Consequently, any official, not a pacifist, who refused to help his fellow citizens in such a critical matter as protecting their property from a foreign aggressor was guilty of conduct as closely approximating his notion of sin as any action of which he could.

147 William Smith to Thomas Penn, September, 1755, Papers, VI, 212.
148 Votes of Assembly, V, 3947. The following quotation is in ibid., 3998.
149 A good, succinct account of the primacy of this principle in Franklin’s moral-religious outlook may be found in Ralph L. Ketcham, Benjamin Franklin (N. Y., 1965), 69, 70, 77, 166.
conceive. Hence he hated Penn's tax dodging with the ardor which the faithful reserve for heretics. "I have some natural Dislike to Persons who so far Love Money, as to be unjust for its sake: I despise their Meanness," he told Peter Collinson. A fuller expression of his views on Penn's conduct came in a mock epitaph which he composed for the Proprietor in 1764:

Be this a Memorial
Of T[homas] and R[ichard] P[enn]
P[roprietors] of P[ennsylvania]
Who with Estates immense,
Almost beyond Computation,
When their own Province,
And the whole British Empire
Were engag'd in a bloody and most expensive War,
Began for the Defence of those Estates,
Could yet meanly desire
To have those very Estates
Totally or Partially
Exempted from Taxation,
While their Fellow-Subjects all around them,
Groan'd
Under the universal Burthen.
To gain this Point,
They refus'd the necessary Laws
For the Defence of their People,
And suffer'd their Colony to welter in its Blood,
Rather than abate in the least
Of these their dishonest Pretensions

* * *

A striking Instance
Of human Depravity
And an irrefragable Proof,
That Wisdom and Goodness,
Do not descend with an Inheritance
But that ineffable Meanness
May be connected with unbounded Fortune.

150 Franklin to Collinson, Nov. 5, 1756, Papers, VII, 14. In an Assembly message of Sept. 29, 1755, Franklin attacked Penn's claim to an exemption as an "invidious and odious Distinction," while on Nov. 27, 1755, he informed Richard Partridge that by their "mean selfish Claim of a Right to Exemption from Taxes" the Proprietaries had "brought on themselves infinite Disgrace and the Curses of all the Continent." See Papers, VI, 199, 273-274.

151 See Franklin's Preface to Joseph Galloway's Speech (1764) in Papers, XI, 298-299.
After reading these lines, incandescent ten years after the event, can there be any doubt that Franklin's revulsion at Penn's tax dodging was a principal cause of the split between the two men in August, 1755?

No less important in provoking the split were the ominous political ambitions which Franklin discerned in Penn's taxation instructions. As we have seen above, proprietary instructions had for years been the *bête noire* of the people of Pennsylvania. When the mischievousness of one of them was exposed, as it was by Robert Charles' report in the fall of 1754, the whole species was denounced with extraordinary vehemence and was made the subject of a petition to the King. By instructing Morris, as the Assembly believed, to exempt his estates from taxation, Penn aroused a fresh wave of indignation among the members, who believed that he was continuing a flagrantly illegal practice in contempt of their protests and petition. Franklin, who had been absent from Pennsylvania during the December-January session and had therefore missed the opportunity of remonstrating against Penn's instructions then, now did so vigorously, inserting in his message of August 8 that part of the royal charter which guaranteed the proprietary deputy the use of his best discretion in passing laws and asserting that any of Penn's instructions which contravened it (and which one did not?) was "in itself void, and a mere Nullity."152

In his message of August 19 Franklin protested another aspect of Penn's taxation instruction. In amending the £50,000 bill in apparent obedience to it, Morris, he claimed, had violated one of the inestimable "rights of the Freeborn Subjects of England" to which Pennsylvanians were entitled both by birth and by charter, the right of having their executive accept or reject money bills without amendment.153 In subsequent messages Franklin lauded this right as "one of the most valuable" which British subjects possessed, asserted that it was "essential to an English Constitution," and declared that it could not "be given up, without destroying the Constitution." Morris ridiculed the House's attempt to proscribe executive amendment, decrying it as a "new and lofty" claim,

152 *Votes of Assembly*, V, 3943.
153 *Ibid.*, 3979. The quotations in the next sentence are from Assembly messages of Nov. 18 and 25, 1755, *ibid.*, 4124-4125, 4159.
“unknown to former Assemblies.” 154 While there was an embarrassing measure of truth in this contention, the Assembly did not regard the right less or resent its abridgement less because of its recent formulation. If anything, it was more jealous of it because of the novelty of its enunciation.

Though not as unexpected as the demand for the proprietary tax exemption, another of Morris’ amendments on August 5 was every bit as exceptionable: his request that in case the land tax produced a sum in excess of £50,000, he be given a voice in its expenditure. 155 Here he was pressing the proprietary demand, from which he had taken the wraps on June 25, to control the produce of the Assembly’s money bills, While there was no record of Franklin’s reaction at that time, his response now was loud and clear: in his messages of August 8 and 19 he affirmed the Assembly’s “natural and legal Right” to spend the money which it raised without outside interference or dictation and protested any efforts to abridge it. 156

In amending the £50,000 bill on August 5 in obedience to what were assumed to be Penn’s instructions, Morris had violated a trio of popular rights: charter rights, constitutional rights, and natural rights. Since no good Whig could tolerate a threat to any one of them, Franklin could hardly abide an attack on all three. Hence in his messages of August 8 and 19 he castigated the tyrannical designs of Morris and of Penn behind him. Not a little of the shrillness of his messages was produced by the knowledge, imparted by the Brief State of the Province of Pennsylvania, that the triple attack on popular rights was not coincidental. That pamphlet, which had already exposed the motives of Morris’ provocative conduct in March, was no less informative about the amendments of August 5. Most illuminating was the following passage: “But in Proportion as a Country grows rich and populous, more Checks are wanted to the power of the People; and the government, by nice Gradations, should verge more and more from the popular to the mixt Forms.” 157 Since in August the Assembly still believed that the Brief

154 See his messages of Sept. 24 and Nov. 22, 1755, ibid., 4016, 4133, 4139.
155 Morris’ amendments and the text of the bill are printed in ibid., 4072-4080.
156 Ibid., 3945, 3991-3992.
State was written by Morris while he was in England in conjunction with or at the direction of Thomas Penn,\textsuperscript{158} it considered this statement as a declaration of Penn's political ambitions, which in fact it was. The amendments of August 5, a concerted and multi-dimensional assault on popular liberties, seemed to Franklin to be an attempt to realize those ambitions\textsuperscript{159} and therefore he saw them not only as a scheme to beat the province out of its rightful tax dollars, but also as the cutting edge of a proprietary effort to introduce "mixt Forms" of government in the province, which to him meant nothing less than the subversion of popular government in Pennsylvania. Thus, in ordering the proprietary tax exemption, Penn revealed himself to Franklin not only as a tax dodger, but also as an aspiring despot and outraged not only his moral principles, but also his political ones. The cordial relations which for years Franklin had tried to maintain with him in the interest of philanthropy and which fostered the assumption among recent writers that he was a political independent during his early years in the Pennsylvania Assembly were not strong enough to withstand the shock of this double affront to his convictions. Consequently, he and the Proprietor split.

Yet Franklin's action has been represented as being the result solely of a "personal quarrel" with Penn, caused by the Proprietor's failure to thank him for supplying Braddock's army with transport and provisions and by various indignities which his local supporters inflicted upon him. Before examining the evidence which enabled Professor Hanna to arrive at this conclusion, we must be careful not to mistake his meaning. He does not claim that Penn ignored or

\textsuperscript{158} As late as October Franklin believed that Morris was the author of the pamphlet. Papers, VI, 169, 216.
\textsuperscript{159} That Franklin interpreted the proprietary thrusts against popular liberties in the light of the Brief State is proved by his paraphrase on August 8 of a passage from the pamphlet: "Let that novel Doctrine, hatched by their [the Proprietaries'] mistaken Friends, 'that Privileges granted to promote the Settlement of a Country, are to be abridged when the Settlement is obtained,' iniquitous as it is, be detested as it deserves and banished from all our public Councils," by his warning on August 19 that "if the new Politicks prevail, and our distinguishing Privileges are one by one taken from us ... the Province will soon empty itself," and by his statement on September 29 that "there is a Design in the Proprietaries and Governor to abridge the People here of their Privileges is no Secret. ... The Doctrine that it is necessary, is publicly taught in their Brief State." Votes of Assembly, V, 3947, 3986, 4033. It appears, in fact, that after the arrival of the Brief State in Pennsylvania Franklin wrote his messages with it at his elbow.
deprecated Franklin’s assistance to Braddock. On the contrary, he argues that “the Proprietor was pleased with Franklin’s efforts” and that he publicized them among the most powerful politicians in Britain, the Duke of Cumberland, the Lords Justices of the Regency, Privy Council President Lord Granville, Secretary of State Sir Thomas Robinson, and Postmaster General Sir Everard Fawkener. Furthermore, he points out that in a letter to Richard Peters of June 11, 1755, Penn recounted his public relations work for Franklin and asked Peters to convey to him his appreciation for his assistance to Braddock. It can be established that the ship which carried this letter arrived in New York on August 13, so that, if the mails were on schedule, Peters received it on August 15. Evidently, he showed it to Franklin without delay. And when William Smith in an interview with Franklin a few weeks later reminded him of “how heartily you [Penn] was endeavouring to serve him all the while, by representing the Service he did in procuring Wagons, to the Ministry, Sir Everard Fawkener &c.,” Franklin, according to Smith, expressed unfeigned gratitude.

But we are asked to assume that Franklin was unmoved by Penn’s efforts on his behalf, that nothing but a personal letter of thanks from Penn would placate him, and that, when passing months failed to produce one, he reacted “with increasing impatience” and finally turned angrily against the Proprietor. The evidence for this claim is a letter from William Shirley to Robert Hunter Morris, May 14, 1755, in the Mason-Franklin Collection at Yale. It is quoted here in full:

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160 Hanna, 83. Penn to Peters, June 11, 1755, Penn Papers.
161 The letter was sent, according to an endorsement on the letter book copy, by the Irene, Capt. Garrison. For this ship’s arrival, see the New York Mercury, Aug. 18, 1755.
162 This interview can not be precisely dated because Smith’s letter to Penn, describing it (as occurring “Last Evening”), is not dated. Smith’s letter can not, however, have been written any earlier than Aug. 19, 1755, because it mentions an Assembly attack on Morris, as “incapable of Government,” which was clearly a paraphrase of a passage in the Assembly’s message of August 19 (the House’s charge of August 8 that Morris was a “Hated Instrument of Oppression” is also quoted). On the other hand, the letter can not have been written after Oct. 1, 1755, the date of the provincial elections, because it indicates that those elections had not yet been held; an Assembly message, Smith claimed, was “calculated to secure the next Election to the Quakers.” Hence Smith’s letter must have been written, and his interview with Franklin must have occurred, sometime between Aug. 19 and Oct. 1, 1755. For the text of the letter, see Papers, VI, 210–214.
163 Hanna, 84–85, 86.
"Dear Morris,

It is with the utmost difficulty I ever find time to write a Line to you. The Genl wrote you four days ago by Mr. Leslie, in which I doubt not you will give what Assistance you can. This goes by an Express to Franklin of your Province, who has been of the greatest Service in procuring Horses & Waggons for the Forces; He has already done much, but we are oblig'd to have recourse to him for further Assistance, and doubt not that you will help him if he has any occasion for you. Inclos'd is a Receipt belonging to Mr. Alexander, which I ought to have deliver'd to you at Alexandria. We shall stay here, I imagine, a fortnight longer, tho' we shall go as far as is possible for us; If you can send me any Accot of the situation of Military Affairs to the Northward I beg you would let me have it.

I can only add that I am,

Dear Morris,

W. Shirley

I can but honour Franklin for the last Clause of his Advertisement.

Wills's Creek May 14. 1755"

This letter contains not a word, not an intimation, that Franklin desired or expected a thank-you-note from Penn for his assistance to Braddock, and yet it is the only piece of evidence produced to support such a contention. There are, it is true, letters written during the first part of 1755 by Richard Peters and William Smith which state that Franklin was expecting a letter from Penn, but it is indubitable that the letter which he was expecting was a reply to his to Penn of May 30, 1754, concerning the extension of postal service in North America, and not an encomium from the Proprietor for his services to Braddock.

What, then, does the evidence about Penn's response to Franklin's assistance to Braddock actually prove? Precisely the opposite, it

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164 That of Smith to Penn, Aug. 19-Oct. 1, 1755, discussed in the penultimate note. See Hanna, 81.
165 This is made very clear in Penn's responses to Peters, June 11 and July 3, 1755, Penn Papers. Additional confirmation for my claim that the letter Franklin was expecting from Penn was a response to a letter which he had already written him, and not a thank-you-note for his services to Braddock, is contained in Smith's pamphlet, An Answer to Mr. Franklin's Remarks, on a Late Protest (1764). There, Smith stated that in 1755 Franklin resented "some slight which he supposed the proprietors had put him, in not answering one of his letters...." Papers, XI, 507. For Franklin's letter to Penn of May 30, 1754, see ibid., V, 334.
would seem, of what has been claimed for it. Penn was not exaggerating when he wrote Peters on October 4, 1755, that he had done Franklin "great justice in the Articles of Wagons, etc. to several of the Ministers and to Sir Everard Falconer." 166 We have it on William Smith's testimony that Franklin recognized that he had and appreciated it. 167 In fact, few of the Proprietor's actions ever impressed Franklin so favorably, so that far from precipitating a split, Penn's generous response to his assistance to Braddock might have cemented a reconciliation between the two men had Penn not adamantly insisted on exempting his estates from taxation throughout the fall of 1755 and into the years beyond.

Another factor said to have contributed to the split between Franklin and Penn was the assortment of indignities which the Proprietor and his supporters inflicted upon the Doctor in 1755. First, there was the irritating behaviour of proprietary chieftain William Allen. On the strength of what evidence it does not appear, we learn that because Allen had been instrumental in procuring Franklin's appointment as deputy postmaster general of North America in 1753, he patronized the "proud-spirited" printer to the point of making him feel "uncomfortable" 168 and tried to dictate his behavior in the Pennsylvania Assembly. Furthermore, we are told that "some time between Franklin's return from Albany in 1754 and the spring of 1755, Allen evidently tried to force him to declare himself" against the Quakers. Franklin is represented as refusing to make "an open commitment" against the Friends and as declining "to submit to the direction of Allen," but as showing "some willingness to see a number of 'stiff rump* or uncompromising Quakers deprived of their seats in the Assembly" and as nourishing "hopes for an eventual alliance" with the proprietary party. That there is no evidence that these confabulations ever occurred is not surprising when one considers that Franklin was in New England on a postal inspection trip during almost the whole period when they are supposed to have taken place. 169 Hence it appears that the

166 Penn Papers.
168 This and the remaining quotations in this paragraph are from Hanna, 83.
169 On July 29, 1754, Franklin wrote Peter Collinson that he had "just return'd from Albany." He stayed in Philadelphia about a month before setting out for New England, writing Collinson on August 30 that he was "now about to proceed on my Eastern Journey." (We can
exasperation which he is alleged to have experienced in his palavers with Allen is no better supported than his anger at failing to receive a thank-you-note from Penn for helping Braddock.

Franklin is pictured as finding the attempt of proprietary politicians to change the nature of a number of organizations with which he was affiliated quite as aggravating as the actions of Allen. What aroused him, we are told, were the efforts of Penn’s partisans to take control of several of the province’s nominally independent organizations and convert them into appendages of the proprietary party and “avowed instruments of anti-Quaker politics.”170 When Franklin “resisted the blatant intentions of the proprietary leaders . . . they offered him the choice of acquiescing or getting out,” and when he refused to acquiesce he was either purged, as in the Academy of Philadelphia, or isolated, as in the German Charity Schools, or subjected to high and insolent pressure, as in the Philadelphia Common Council. It is suggested that this combination of affronts poisoned his relations with Penn’s supporters in the province and contributed significantly to his personal quarrel with the Proprietor.

That Franklin was purged from the Academy of Philadelphia—dismissed as president of its board of trustees—and that he resented being removed are indisputable.171 But equally indisputable is the fact that he was not dismissed as president until May 11, 1756, fully nine months after his split with Penn.172 His demise in the Academy can not, therefore, have been one of the causes of that split. It must, on the contrary, have been one of its results.

When Franklin’s “isolation” in the German Charity Schools is examined, it, too, appears to have played no part in precipitating the split with Penn. The documentation for it is a letter from Richard Peters to Penn, June 26, 1756, announcing that “Mr. Franklin is

170 This and the following quotation are from Hanna, 84.
171 After taking “full Advantage” of his “Head, Hands, Heart and Purse, in getting through the first Difficulties of Design,” a proprietary faction among the trustees “laid me aside,” Franklin bitterly complained in 1759. See his letter to Ebenezer Kinnersley, July 28, 1759. Papers, VIII, 416.
172 To avoid incorporating a bias in this argument in our own favor, we will, in this and the following pages, use Richard Hockley’s dating of the split, Aug. 22, 1755, rather than our own, Aug. 5, 1755. See above, note 130.
alone in the German Schools." Lest this statement convey the impression of Franklin being stripped of supporters by proprietary machinations and reduced to solitary impotence, we should remember that there never was a time when he was not alone in the Charity Schools. Trustees were selected to administer the schools in the winter of 1754. Thomas Penn personally picked every man except Franklin and without exception he chose his staunchest supporters in the province: William Allen, James Hamilton, Richard Peters, William Smith, and Conrad Weiser. Franklin owed his appointment to Smith, who interceded with Penn to procure it. Thus, as the board of trustees was constituted, Franklin was the only member who was neither a proprietary partisan nor placeman. To say, then, that he was alone in 1755 is quite true and quite as meaningless. His isolation was a constant. It was not produced by a sudden proprietary effort to change his status, and it could not, therefore, have inflamed him against Penn and his supporters.

Finally, there was Franklin's plight in the Philadelphia Common Council. He may well have found its atmosphere uncongenial, but the facts are left to our imagination. The reason for this is that information about the Common Council is almost unobtainable. Aside from its minutes, which a recent student has described as "maddeningly terse" and "noncommittal," records of its operations are virtually nonexistent, so that all conclusions about it, the same student tells us, must "remain speculative." Yet this much can be gleaned from the Council minutes: Franklin attended its meetings as conscientiously as the next member until October 7, 1755, after which date he never again attended. It seems quite likely, then, that proprietary politicians made things unpleasant for him at the council and caused him to boycott its meetings. But we can not fail to notice that it was not until almost two months after his quarrel with Penn that he stopped attending meetings and that, therefore, whatever it was that made him stop, must have been a result of the quarrel, not a cause.

173 Hanna, 84.
174 Bell, 185.
176 Until after he returned from England in 1775. See the Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, 1704-1776 (Philadelphia, 1847), 589, 810.
Next in the series of indignities which Franklin is alleged to have suffered at proprietary hands was an attempt by Thomas Penn to deflate the reputation which he had acquired in England for serving Braddock. Not long after he began collecting kudos in Britain, Peters and Morris “showed their jealousy of the honor paid him” and tried “to diminish his standing in England” by presenting Penn “with fresh evidence of his questionable actions in the Assembly.” Penn is represented as responding “with a stiffer, more critical attitude” and as trying “to reclaim part of the credit that had gone to Franklin for the wagons.” “I wish,” Penn wrote Peters on August 13, 1755, “I had known with more exactness, before, as I gave all the merit of supplying both wagons and forage to Mr. Franklin. When he did it, I apprehend, by the direction of the Governor and in concert with you.” “This,” we are informed, “was typical of the letters Penn sent to Peters, Hamilton, and Morris [no others are cited, however]. Their contents also reached Franklin. There were no political secrets in Pennsylvania; the letters and opinions of one party soon became the property of the opposition.” That Franklin and his followers regularly saw the private letters of Penn we must accept on faith, for there is not an iota of evidence to confirm this claim. Even if Franklin were privy to Penn’s private letters, what is proved thereby? The only letter identified as being written by Penn to belittle his assistance to Braddock is that to Peters on August 13, 1755. A month was the shortest time in which it could have crossed the Atlantic and become public property in Pennsylvania. That means that Franklin could have seen it no sooner than three weeks after the split with Penn had occurred and that therefore the attempt by Penn to damage his reputation in England could not have caused the split, but merely exacerbated it.

Two other incidents are cited as contributing to the split between the two men. One was the efforts of “the Quakers and other enemies of the Proprietor . . . to widen the breach” after it appeared. The only Quaker identified as trying to fan the flames was Peter Collinson, who wrote Franklin that Penn refused to consider him his friend. However, Collinson wrote this letter on July 30, 1754,

177 This and the following quotations in this paragraph are in Hanna, 85-86.
178 Hanna, 86.
179 William Smith in his letter of Aug. 19-Oct. 1, 1755, described Collinson’s letter thusly: “I much fear from a Letter Mr. Franklin shewed me that our Friend Collinson is Part of the
fully a year before the Franklin-Penn quarrel. Therefore, he can hardly be pictured as an incendiary trying to heat it up. Then there is the business of Penn having “threatened” Franklin's postmastership. When Franklin learned about it, we are told that he “thought he had reason enough to take the strongest action against Penn” and “one of his immediate reactions was to associate himself openly with the Assembly’s attack upon the Governor and Proprietor.”

When, in fact, did Penn threaten Franklin’s postmastership? On October 4, 1755, he wrote Peters that he had “lately” seen Franklin’s British superior, Postmaster General Sir Everard Fawkener, but had not taken “any opportunity” to injure Franklin. As late as December 13, 1755, Penn wrote Peters that he had “not spoke to Sir Everard Falkner about him, but I believe I shall very soon do it.” The Proprietor apparently carried out this threat the next month, because on January 27, 1756, he wrote Morris that he had described Franklin’s “real Character” to the Duke of Cumberland, Lord Granville, and Henry Fox and presumably he favored Fawkener with an exposé as well. If this assumption is correct, Penn did not denounce Franklin to his superiors until five months after the split between the two men and thus, like his troubles in the Academy and in the Philadelphia Common Council, the threat to his postmastership was a result, not a cause, of his split with Penn.

We have now presented all of the proof offered to support the thesis that in the summer of 1755 a “personal quarrel” erupted between Franklin and Penn and that it caused the split between the two men which occurred at that time. Upon close examination of the evidence, it appears that a “personal quarrel” did not motivate Franklin. Rather, on the basis of our investigations, it appears that the split was precipitated by Penn’s refusal in August, 1755, to permit the taxation of his estates, a decision which outraged Frank-

innocent Cause of Franklin’s Conduct. He told Franklin that you could not be persuaded to think him your Friend.” In what letter did Collinson mention the Proprietor’s unfavorable attitude toward Franklin? Clearly, from Franklin’s letter to the scientific Quaker of Dec. 29, 1754, it was in his letter of July 30, 1754 (which has not been found), because on December 29 Franklin wrote that he was “much oblig’d to you for the favourable Light you put me in, to our Proprietor, as mention’d in yours of July 30. I know not why he should imagine me not his Friend, since I cannot recollect any one Act of mine that could denominate me otherwise.”

Papers, V, 453; VI, 214.

180 Hanna, 87.

181 This and the following two letters quoted here are in Penn Papers.

182 As Professor Hanna seems to admit in another place (pp. 86-87).
lin's moral and political principles and turned him unalterably against the Proprietor.

Assuming our conclusion is correct, what is its significance? Early in this paper we observed that Franklin's split with Penn was made to serve as a prototype, as a pattern from which was tailored interpretations of his efforts to overthrow proprietary government in 1764 and his decision to support the movement for American independence a decade later. In both of these latter cases Franklin's conduct is represented as an attempt to avenge personal affronts, just as, it is averred, he split with Penn in 1755 because of an assortment of affronts and attempted to avenge them by joining the Quakers to obtain the power to soak his estates with taxes. But having shown that such a prototype was misconceived, we must question accounts, derived from it, of Franklin's motives in the fight against proprietary government in 1764 and for American independence later; a re-examination of both episodes will obviously be necessary.

More significant still is the effect which our interpretation of the Franklin-Penn split will have on the theory about the motivation of Pennsylvania politicians in the score of years before the Declaration of Independence, on the claim that considerations of principle rarely influenced their calculations, that the desire for power was what really motivated them. The career of Franklin was the proof which was offered for this contention. What this paper has attempted to do is to show that the most significant episode in his provincial political career, his split with Penn, came about not because of a desire for the power to punish him, but because the Proprietor had outraged his principles. But we must be careful about how we use this conclusion. We must not set up Franklin as a symbol of provincial politicians and argue that because he acted on principle on one crucial occasion, all Pennsylvania politicians were motivated by principle. Before anyone can answer such a crucial question about the motivation of Pennsylvania politicians, he will have to examine numbers of individual careers in the same detail in which we have examined a single episode in Franklin's political career. Then, and only then, can the motivation of the province's politicians be accurately assessed.

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