Local Politics in Pre-Revolutionary
Lancaster County

Several historians of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania assert that local politics played an important role in the contest for and exercise of political power at the provincial level in that colony. According to Theodore Thayer, "political parties in colonial Pennsylvania were but loosely knit entities. They tended to assume the character of so many county parties, whose leaders when acting collectively formed a provincial party."1 William Hanna contends that control of local offices, especially those connected with the election process, "was one of the most important factors in county politics. With such control, elections and voting qualifications could be regulated to serve the dominant faction."2 David Hawke describes the ways in which political leaders in Philadelphia controlled politics in the back-country counties of Pennsylvania, resulting in "a predictable element to the course of politics in the backcountry."3

None of these historians, however, presents a detailed picture of how local politics operated or how local offices and officials fitted into the scheme of provincial politics, particularly with respect to the struggle for power between the Quaker party and the proprietary party. Fortunately, a fuller picture can be developed on Lancaster County. Although the sources are from proprietary partisans, and thus one-sided, nevertheless, they reveal that control of local offices was indeed important to the political groups in Pennsylvania, that individuals at the local level provided vital leadership and support in the functioning of those groups, and that volatile issues at times stirred local politics.

2 William Hanna, Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics (Stanford, 1964), 207.
3 David Hawke, In the Midst of a Revolution (Philadelphia, 1961), 83. Hawke's discussion of back-country politics is covered in pp. 75-86.
An official of special importance was the sheriff, or his substitute in certain circumstances the coroner. These two offices were filled by the electorate's voting for two candidates for each office and the Governor's appointing one of the two top candidates. A limit of three years' service with no re-election until another three years had passed was imposed on the sheriff, but no such limit applied to the coroner. What made the office of sheriff so significant politically was his control over the election process. He appointed clerks to help with the election; he checked, along with elected inspectors, on the electors to make certain they were qualified; he took charge of the ballot boxes after the election was over; he certified to the proper authorities the names of those elected. It was this kind of power, according to Hanna, that enabled the Quaker party, at least in the three eastern counties of Philadelphia, Bucks, and Chester, to "win elections and keep a majority of seats in the Assembly."

An example of the political interest in the sheriff's office is seen in the 1764 election in Lancaster County. That election was an especially crucial one because the issue of royal government was involved. After many years of discontent over proprietary rule, the Quaker party was attempting to have Pennsylvania transformed into a royal colony. In the 1764 election in Lancaster at least two of the candidates for sheriff, John Barr and James Webb, Jr., as well as one candidate for coroner, Matthias Slough, supported the Quaker party's ticket for assemblymen in that county, and were


5 Hanna, 103. Note also his statement on p. 207: "The Quakers in the eastern counties maintained their power through these local leaders until 1776." In regard to election practices, Hanna writes: "Sheriffs, coroners, and even magistrates . . . could 'influence' voters to appear at the polls or stay away, and as a last resort could seize the stairs to the voting place and regulate the hours when the polls would be open, and thereby ensure the election of approved candidates" (165–166). To what extent such practices were used, however, Hanna does not say; the only evidence he offers (and that only through implication) is a statement that a proprietary leader "circulated a warning that the Presbyterians would 'thrash' any sheriff or county official who tried to prevent qualified men from voting" (166).
probably on the Quaker ticket themselves for the local offices. An effort was made by the proprietary party to contest the Quaker ticket, but there was a problem in unifying the proprietary supporters in the county. Samuel Purviance, Jr., a proprietary leader in Philadelphia, wrote to James Burd, a proprietary leader in Lancaster: "I wish the unhappy Contests abt Sheriff could be reduced to two Competitors, on our side (suppose Coll Worke & Jamy Anderson) [...] it would unite our Friends to act with more Spirit & prevent their hurting the public Cause." This unity, however, was evidently not achieved, for a week later Burd reported: "We Judg'd it most proper to leave the Shiriffs Blank." The lack of a contest probably contributed to the success of Barr and Webb as the two highest vote-getters for sheriff and Slough as the highest vote-getter for coroner.

On other occasions, however, the proprietary group did run candidates for sheriff. In 1770 Samuel J. Atlee wrote to James Burd about "my setting up this next Election for Sheriff [...] it has been often mentioned to myself and Friends, by the Principal Men of the new party." Atlee decided to run and solicited the support of those "Principal Men of the new party." "After Consulting among themselves they one and all solemnly engaged me their full Interest." However, he was unsuccessful, not even being the runner-up. In 1773 John Ferree and Andrew Graaff were placed on the ticket for sheriff. Ferree received the highest number of votes in the election and won the appointment. His success may have been due partly to his finishing second in the previous three elections, for this was the pattern in Lancaster with Ferree's two predecessors. If his election was

6 Joseph Shippen, Jr., to James Burd, Oct. 6, 1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 113, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).
7 Purviance to Burd, Sept. 10, 1764, ibid., 107.
8 Burd to Purviance, Sept. 17, 1764, ibid., 109.
9 Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 11, 1764. The election results are also evident from reading Joseph Shippen's letter of Oct. 6, 1764, referred to above. Although failing at the local level, the proprietary party did succeed in keeping Isaac Saunders in the Assembly.
10 Samuel J. Atlee to Burd, June 30, 1770, Burd-Shippen Papers, II, 61, American Philosophical Society (APS).
11 Jasper Yeates to Burd, Sept. 20, 1773, Shippen Papers, VII, 60, HSP; Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 6, 1773. Frederick Stone, sheriff from 1770-1773, had been runner-up in 1767 and 1769; no returns were found for 1768. James Webb, Jr., sheriff from 1767-1770, had been runner-up in 1764, 1765, and 1766. See election returns in the Pennsylvania Gazette and/or the Pennsylvania Packet.
also due to his proprietary identification, such identification did not aid the other proprietary candidate, for Graaff failed to come in second. But, for whatever reason, a proprietary-backed candidate became sheriff.

Besides running its own candidates, the proprietary party could exert its influence through the Governor’s exercising his power to appoint one of the two top candidates. In the aftermath of the 1764 election John Barr was appointed sheriff over James Webb, Jr., because the former was at least not the son of a Quaker, whereas Webb was, and “The Governor could not possibly think of appointing the Son of a Quaker to be Sheriff. . . .” Further weakening Webb’s position was the fact that he “had taken infinite pains in riding about the Country to secure the Interest of the Germans in favour of the violent measures of the late Assembly against his [Governor John Penn’s] own Family and Government.” Barr had also favored “the old Ticket” but not to so great a degree. In fact, in regard to both Barr and the top candidate for coroner, Matthias Slough, “the Governor has been well assured by several Gentlemen, that they privately pushed [Isaac] Saunders [the Proprietary candidate for the Assembly] in the Tickets of many of their Friends, by which Means alone he was kept in.” In addition to these advantages for Barr, he “has a better pretence to the Sheriffs Office, from his having been on the Return twice before & now highest in Votes. . . .” As a result, “the Appointment of Barr is approved of by all the Governor’s Friends here, without Exception.”

The question may be raised of whether the Governor really would have dared to appoint the second-highest vote-getter, for, in spite of all his objections to Webb, three years later, when Webb was the top vote-getter, he was appointed sheriff, and reappointed for the following two years even though the runner-up, Frederick Stone, would seem to have been more acceptable to the proprietary group. This might suggest that the Governor’s power was really rather empty. However, in examining the election returns in the newspapers in the 1760’s and early 1770’s, the person whose name appears second

12 Joseph Shippen, Jr., to Burd, Oct. 6, 1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 113, HSP.
was in several instances appointed to the office rather than the first person listed. If the newspaper listings were in the order of voters’ priorities, as seems to be the case, this indicates that the Governor did indeed exercise his prerogative. Even so, of course, his selectivity was limited to the two top choices of the electorate, and if the electorate’s inclination was antiproprietary, the Governor could do little about circumventing that inclination, except to appoint an individual whom he might regard as the lesser of two evils. In the case of Webb’s appointment in 1767, it may have been the result of a policy of reconciliation which Proprietor Thomas Penn was recommending at this time; indeed, by 1770 Governor John Penn, the nephew of Thomas, was considering the appointment of Webb’s father as a Justice of the Peace.\(^\text{14}\)

In addition to withholding appointment, a subtle pressure that could be applied by the proprietary group was the withholding of bond for performance as sheriff. In 1774 an important proprietary leader threatened the sheriff of Northumberland County over the latter’s tolerance of and involvement in illegal gambling: “I told Nagle it was well for him that this was the last year of his office. Otherwise it would be impossible that he could either get Security for his performance of it or that the Governor could intrust any Men with the Office of Sheriff who played for half Joes.”\(^\text{15}\) As with the power of appointment, this also was probably a limited coercive power, since there surely were wealthy Quaker supporters who could provide, and must have provided, security for the Quaker party candidates. Nevertheless, it was another means by which the proprietary group could exert influence.

The offices of the three county commissioners and the six county assessors also became involved in provincial politics. These officials were the only ones at the county level over whose selection the electorate had complete and final power; in contrast to the offices of the sheriff and the coroner, the Governor had no part in the selection process. One commissioner and all six assessors were elected every year, and a commissioner’s re-election was forbidden for at least one

\(^{14}\) Joseph Shippen, Jr., to Edward Shippen, June 22, 1770, \textit{ibid.}, 105. See also Hanna, 190–191.

\(^{15}\) Edward Shippen, Jr., to Burd, May 28, 1774, Papers of Edward Burd, HSP, quoted in Hawke, 81.
year after his three-year term ended. The primary responsibility and function of the commissioners and assessors was handling the financial business of the county, for they levied and collected the taxes and disbursed the revenue to pay county expenses. Thus, these officials held positions of great significance in the operation of local government and in the lives of the county's inhabitants.\textsuperscript{16}

In the late 1760's the proprietary group in Lancaster County began a determined effort to gain control of these offices. The group started in 1767 (at the latest) and evidently met with some success. In 1768 a ticket for commissioner and assessors was drawn up which, if successful, would give the party "the command at the board. . . ."\textsuperscript{17}

The Plan begun & now pursued is to gain the Majority at the Board[,] we last Year got a good footing there & if our present Ticket carries we have it & may then do something more, indeed I think if that point is carried something more will be done next Year.\textsuperscript{18}

The "something more" was to re-elect Isaac Saunders to the Assembly. He was a strong proprietary supporter who had been defeated for that office in 1765.\textsuperscript{19} The short-range hope for moving toward that goal, however, was not fully realized in the 1768 election, for the proprietary candidate for commissioner, Adam Orth, was defeated by the candidate of "the lower side," John Carpenter.\textsuperscript{20} Absence of information on the assessors elected that year prevents any statement on whether the one particular candidate being pushed by the proprietary party, James Keimer, was successful. In


\textsuperscript{17} William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 20, 1768, Shippen Papers, VI, 213, HSP.

\textsuperscript{18} William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 26, 1768, \textit{ibid.}, 215.

\textsuperscript{19} William Atlee wrote to Burd in his letter of September 20, 1768: "I make no doubt but [we] shall be able to give I: Srs a lift at a future Day."

\textsuperscript{20} Reference to Carpenter as Commissioner is found in the Minute Book of the County Commissioners, Lancaster County Court House. Reference to him as the lower side's candidate is found in the letter from William Atlee to Burd on Sept. 20, 1768 (see note 17).
any case, the following year another attempt was made, with Adam Orth again as the candidate for commissioner. The “new Ticket” also included six candidates for assessors. A strenuous campaign was evidently waged, for Jasper Yeates, a Lancaster lawyer who was a member of the proprietary group, commented: “Electioneering goes on with Vigour on all Sides & both Parties are eager to shew their Generalship, by every Manoeuvre in the Art of Parliamenteer ing.” He also noted that “the Struggle seems to be chiefly about the Board…” This time all of the proprietary candidates won, a notable success for that party.

Once entrenched, the proprietary group maintained its control of the board of commissioners and assessors for the next several years. Six of the seven elected in 1769 remained on the board for the next three years; five for the next four years; four for the next five years; three for the next six years; and two until the end of the provincial government in 1776. Five of the assessors elected in 1769 moved up to commissioner during the next five years: Casper Shaffner, Jr., in 1770, Thomas Clark of Drumore in 1771, Samuel Bear in 1772, Alexander Martin in 1773, and Thomas Clark of Hanover in 1774. Whether their replacements as assessors were also proprietary supporters could not be determined, but proprietary dominance of the board is clearly indicated by the participation of the commissioners and assessors in drawing up the ticket for the 1773 election. What explains their victories when usually elections went against proprietary candidates is unclear. Nevertheless, it is evident that these

21 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, Shippen Papers, VII, 19, HSP. This ticket seems to have been genuinely that of the proprietary party rather than a joint one with the Quaker party as sometimes occurred, for William Atlee noted in a letter to Burd on Sept. 19, 1769, that “the lower side still keep their Ticket private.” Ibid. For references to the joint tickets, see Hanna, 114 and 165, and William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 20, 1768, Shippen Papers, VI, 213, HSP.

22 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, ibid., VII, 21.

23 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 17, 1769, ibid., 17.

24 Minute Book of the County Commissioners, Lancaster County Court House; Pennsylvania Gazette, Oct. 12, 1769. It is because Adam Orth won in 1769 that I assert that he was the candidate for commissioner again on the proprietary ticket.

25 See the Minute Book of the County Commissioners and election returns in the Pennsylvania Gazette.

26 Yeates wrote to Burd on Sept. 20, 1773: “the Board of Commissioners & Assessors with Myer & Bachman, and several leading Men from different Townships proceeded to Stophel [?] Reigart’s, where a Ticket was to be Formed.” Shippen Papers, VII, 69, HSP.
local offices were regarded as important in the exercise of political power and that the proprietary party succeeded in dominating those offices for a period of time, although this success was never translated into the return of Isaac Saunders to the Assembly.\textsuperscript{27}

The contests for the offices of sheriff, commissioners, and assessors support Thayer's contention that "the elections of local officers . . . often excited more interest and were more highly contested than the seats in the provincial assembly."\textsuperscript{28} They also, however, raise some doubts about William Hanna's assertion that following 1766 tranquillity returned to the political scene in Pennsylvania with the breakdown of the proprietary coalition and the policy of reconciliation urged by the Proprietor.\textsuperscript{29} This may have been true at the provincial level, in the contest for Assembly seats, but, in view of the efforts made for the sheriff's office in 1770 and 1773 and for the board of commissioners and assessors in the years 1767-1769, that assertion does not seem applicable to the local level.

Certain appointive officials at the county level were drawn into provincial politics because they were under the control of the executive branch of the provincial government and thus provided an obvious opportunity for the proprietary party to establish its power within a county. The most numerous of these officials were the justices of the peace, who, on the eve of independence, numbered more than 200 in Pennsylvania's eleven counties. They, along with the clerks of the three courts formed by the justices (the Court of Quarter Sessions, the Court of Common Pleas, and the Orphans' Court), were appointed by the Governor.\textsuperscript{30} The recorder of deeds also received his appointment from the Governor, while the deputy

\textsuperscript{27} Edward Shippen wrote to Burd on Sept. 23, 1770: "Jno Millar of Bethelhousen was with me yesterday and told me he should use his Interest with his friends to get Mr. Sanders put into their assembly ticket [.] I hope you will also befriend him." \textit{Ibid.}, 25. Nothing came of this, however.

\textsuperscript{28} Thayer, 7.

\textsuperscript{29} Hanna, 189-191.

\textsuperscript{30} William Henry Lloyd, \textit{The Early Courts of Pennsylvania} (Boston, 1910), 93-94; \textit{Statutes at Large}, ch. 255 (May 22, 1722), III, 298. Joint commissions were issued for the Common Pleas Court and the Quarter Sessions Court during the colonial period. An attempt in 1759 to split the composition of the two courts was disapproved by the King in 1760. Lloyd, 98, 102; \textit{Statutes at Large}, ch. 450 (Sept. 29, 1759), V, 462. The justices of the Quarter Sessions Court acted as the Orphans' Court. An unsuccessful attempt was made in 1759 to transfer jurisdiction to the Common Pleas Court. Lloyd, 57, 230-231; \textit{Statutes at Large}, ch. 197 (Mar. 27, 1712/3), III, 14; ch. 450 (Sept. 29, 1759), V, 463-464.
register of wills was an indirect appointee since he was selected by the register general, a provincial-level official named by the Governor.\footnote{Stevens and Kent, 166–168, 258; Statutes at Large, ch. 133 (Jan. 12, 1705/6), II, 197; ch. 136 (Jan. 12, 1705/6), II, 206; ch. 208 (May 28, 1715), III, 56. The Assembly had stipulated in 1715 that the prothonotary or county clerk should act as recorder in each of the counties except for Philadelphia where a specifically named person was appointed by the Assembly. Replacements were to be named by the justices of the Quarter Sessions Court. From the minutes of the Provincial Council, however, it seems that succeeding appointments were made by the Governor. Whether the justices had any role at all is unclear. Usually the recorder was grouped with the prothonotary and clerk of the Orphans’ Court in the same commission.}

Usually the same person held the positions of clerk of the Quarter Sessions Court, clerk of the Orphans’ Court, prothonotary of the Common Pleas Court, recorder of deeds, and register of wills; only in Philadelphia County did five different individuals hold these offices.\footnote{Stevens and Kent, 464, 490–491; Statutes at Large, ch. 73 (Nov. 27, 1700), II, 88.}

The justices were especially important officials. An individual justice could handle civil suits involving amounts under forty shillings. Collectively, the justices as the Court of Common Pleas handled “all manner of pleas, actions, suits and causes, civil, personal, real and mixed . . . ,” while as the Court of Quarter Sessions they tried minor criminal cases, such as assault and battery, breach of the peace, drunkenness, and as the Orphans’ Court had jurisdiction

With respect to the clerks, the appointment of the clerk of Quarter Sessions was made, it seems, after a recommendation from the justices of the Quarter Sessions Court, sometimes of three names, following the practice prescribed in the Charter of Privileges regarding the clerk of the peace. Thorpe, V, 3079. In the case of the prothonotary, as the clerk of the Common Pleas Court was called, no evidence was found that the justices first made recommendations to the Governor. The commission of appointment for the prothonotary almost always included appointment as clerk of the Orphans’ Court. The commission of appointment for clerk of Quarter Sessions was issued separately.

Two other local officials appointed by the executive branch were the sealer of weights and measures, an appointee of the Governor, and the county surveyor, an appointee of the surveyor general. It is unclear, however, how regularly such appointments were made. Stevens and Kent, 464, 490–491; Statutes at Large, ch. 73 (Nov. 27, 1700), II, 88.

One appointive official at the local level, the collector of excise, was appointed yearly (after 1756) by the Assembly. Statutes at Large, ch. 85 (Nov. 27, 1700), II, 105; ch. 181 (Feb. 28, 1710/1), II, 382; ch. 313 (Feb. 24, 1729/30), IV, 159; ch. 370 (June 24, 1746), V, 49; ch. 412 (Sept. 21, 1756), V, 260.

See the lists of the county officeholders during the provincial period. Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX, 673–800. Note also Stevens and Kent’s statement: “There has always been a close connection between the office of prothonotary, clerk of the court of quarter sessions, clerk of orphans’ court, register of wills, and recorder of deeds, and in many cases one of these officers holds more than one of these positions” (272).
over the estates of orphans in the county. In addition to their judicial power, the justices exercised administrative and appointive power when sitting as the Quarter Sessions Court, for it was that court which made recommendations to the Governor regarding the granting of tavern licenses within the county, decided on the laying out of roads within the county, and appointed certain officials of subdivisions of the county: a constable in each township from the two top candidates popularly elected every year; two overseers of the poor for each township and two for each borough when such a unit existed; and, until 1762 when the position was made elective, an overseer of highways for "precincts" within the county.

Because of their functions and their large number, one would expect the justiceships to be used by the proprietary party as a power base in the counties. Indeed, Theodore Thayer contends that "around this department of government centered Proprietary politics in the counties." "In checking the names of the justices of the peace, notaries of the public, and county clerks, few but Proprietary partisans are to be found." Unfortunately, his statements are sus-

33 Lloyd, 52, 105, 230; Statutes at Large, ch. 197 (Mar. 27, 1712/3), III, 15; ch. 211 (May 28, 1715), III, 63; ch. 255 (May 22, 1722), III, 306.

With regard to the appointment of the constable it is very difficult to find information. Under the Duke of York's Laws, provision was made for the selection of the constable (see George, Nead, and McCamant, 22-23). No information, however, is given in the various Frames of Government or the Charter of Privileges of 1701 or any statutes of the provincial government. In the Lancaster County Miscellaneous Papers, 1772-1816, HSP, there is a printed excerpt on Lancaster County which mentions the justices meeting on March 25, from 1731-1741, to appoint a constable (147). Also, in the Quarter Sessions Docket of Philadelphia County, the returns and the commissioning of the constables for that county are noted.

Regarding the overseers of the poor, see Stevens and Kent, 409; Statutes at Large, ch. 635 (Mar. 9, 1771), VIII, 75. The first general poor law providing for the appointment of these officials was on Jan. 12, 1705/6. Statutes at Large, ch. 154, II, 251.

Regarding the overseer of highways, see Statutes at Large, ch. 57 (Nov. 27, 1700), II, 73. In 1762 the position was made elective: freeholders in a "district" were to choose two supervisors of highways for the district. Ibid., ch. 479 (Feb. 17, 1762), VI, 186. In 1765 this was changed to the election of one or two supervisors for each township. Ibid., ch. 526 (May 18, 1765), VI, 424. By an act of Mar. 21, 1772, they were given authority to lay a limited tax to finance care of the roads. Ibid., ch. 653, VIII, 185.

35 Thayer, 7, 91-92.
pect since Thayer does not indicate how he was able to identify with such certainty the allegiance of so many of those largely-obscure figures. Moreover, he does not take into account a complaint by William Peters to Proprietor Thomas Penn in 1764: "By your having always given the Preference to the Quakers in the Commissions of Peace and every Favour you could bestow on them they have obtain’d great Influence in the Country which they have always and now especially so ungratefully make use of against you."[36] In fact, it seems that not until the mid-1760's were appointments as justices of the peace used as patronage, according to one historian of pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania; and even after that the practice of which Peters complained may have continued, or at least was contemplated, as seen in the Governor's considering the appointment of James Webb, a Quaker, as a justice in 1770.[37]

Despite Thayer's lack of evidence and the existence of contrary evidence, there is a certain validity in his statements, for the appointment of the justices by the Governor did identify those offices with the proprietary party and caused some men to be reluctant to accept such appointments for fear of alienating voters and thus threatening their aspiration for elective offices, especially the Assembly. In 1751 Governor James Hamilton wrote: "It is inconceivable what an inveteracy there is in those people against the Magistracy, to which they so much prefer a seat in the Assembly, that tho there are several in the House, whom I put into commission of the peace, yet they will not qualify for fear of losing their popularity."[38] And in 1770 when Governor John Penn was considering James Webb's appointment, he first wanted to have Webb consulted, for "as it may injure his Interest with the People so as to affect his Election as a Representative, his Honour does not know whether such an Appointment would be agreeable to him or not."[39] This evidence, plus the logic of

[36] Quoted in Hanna, 166.
[38] Hamilton to Thomas Penn, Feb. 22, 1750/1, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, HSP, quoted in Hanna, 45.
[39] See reference in note 37. Webb evidently turned down the invitation since he was never appointed. Nor was he re-elected to the Assembly, but it could not be determined whether this was due to his being defeated or his retiring.
the Governor’s appointing at least some friendly persons to such offices, gives credibility to Thayer’s contention. Even the appointment of Quakers indicates that the Governor and the proprietary party had an instrument which could be used in an attempt to woo enemies and to effect reconciliation within the colony.

The offices of the clerks of the three courts, the recorder of deeds, and the register of wills seemed to be more suitable for the building of a power base than the justiceships. Those offices were “Lucrative Posts,” as Edward Shippen, the holder of those positions in Lancaster County, put it, and thus were highly desirable. It was their remunerative nature that, in part at least, motivated Shippen’s interest in them, for when he received his appointment, he made a point of mentioning to his son that “These Posts are worth four or five hundred a Year.” Shippen’s son-in-law, James Burd, was also interested in such an appointment for the same reason. In 1762, at the end of the French and Indian War in which he had faithfully served in the military, Burd solicited Lynford Lardner, a member of the Governor’s Council who was going to England, to recommend him to the proprietary family for an appointment.

But now as peace & Tranquility is Restor’d to the Country, I should be glad to settle in some way suitable to the Interest of my Family, which I find a very difficult matter to accomplish with my small stock; But perhaps through your good offices I might be assisted to a settlement by His Honr. our Proprietor in some Post in this Province, such as a Prothon-atory etc. . . .

Another attractive feature, besides the fees, was the tenure that came with the offices. When Shippen expressed concern shortly after his appointment about his possible removal, a well-placed friend responded that “The office of Prothonatory is in its own

40 An account of the Estate possessed by Edward Shippen at Lancaster—1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 137, HSP. This substantiates Thayer’s statement that “The local offices . . . generally yielded a sizable income from fees and other emoluments” (7).

41 Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Mar. 28, 1753, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, 1750–1778, APS. William Allen in a letter to Edward Shippen on July 25, 1753, noted that when Shippen applied for the office “you very hansomely said that your view in asking for it was that you might have it in your power to do something for your children. . . .” Shippen-Balch Papers, I, 34, HSP.

42 Burd to Lardner, June 21, 1762, Dreer Collection, HSP.
nature an office during good behaviour and untill a person is legally convinct of ill behaviour he in my opinion cannot be divested of the office.” He noted that “Sam Blunston was the only Prothonatory that ever was removed in the Province as far as I can learn and it was for his setting himself against and insulting the Government to a high degree.” In Shippen’s particular case he could take comfort not only from the precedent of tenure in officeholding but also from the presence of several friends in the provincial government, as his correspondent reminded him:

But in case the Proprietor should incline to take such a step can you believe that your interest with the present Governour [James Hamilton] and his friends [ , ] your alliance with Mr. Francis [Attorney General 1741–1754] [and] his family to say no more would not be sufficient to prevent any thing of the sort being put in execution. believe me I think you are safe from any danger of a removal as I am from being dispossessed of the house I live in. Your prudence is such that I am quite assured you will ever recomend yourself to the Proprietor and his friends.43

For Shippen the most meaningful reassurance, however, was undoubtedly the letter he received in 1753 from Thomas Penn in which the Proprietor stated his approval of Shippen’s appointment.44

Because of the advantages offered by these offices, appointment to them provided a way for the Proprietor and his Governor to reward proprietary supporters and, by so doing, to incur an obligation on their part to the proprietary family and interest. When James Burd was seeking an appointment, he wrote: “if He [the Proprietor] should be pleased to Confer such upon me, He may depend upon the outmost Exertion of my Facultys for The Interest of the Family, & punctuall discharge of my duty.”45 Likewise, when Edward Shippen offered his services to Thomas Penn in 1752, he informed Penn “that I can give you Sufficient Security for the

43 William Allen to Edward Shippen, July 25, 1753, Shippen-Balch Papers, I, 34, HSP. The expression of Shippen’s concern is found in a letter from Shippen to Edward Shippen, Jr., Apr. 7, 1755, Dreer Collection, HSP. Referring to a reply from William Allen to his letter, Shippen noted: “I had Said that I could not tell how Soon the Proprietor would chuse to put Some relation or friend into my Station. . . .”

44 Edward Shippen to William Allen, Nov. 5, 1753: “I receivd the Favour of a Letter from the Honble Thomas Penn Esqr. acquainting me that he had let the Governour know he approved of my being in this Station.” Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS.

45 See note 42.
faithful Discharge of my Trust, in any Employment you may think me Capable of; and I Shall have the more Time to attend the Business, as I have Some thoughts of quitting the Indian trade."

Writing to Shippen in 1754, the Proprietor indicated that he expected service from the recent appointee: "your attachment to the Interest of my Family I shall estimate by the zeal with which you act in anything recommended to your care. . . ."

Although he was not typical because of his special connections, nevertheless, the example of Edward Shippen illustrates how the local political scene operated in Lancaster County, especially on the proprietary side. Already at the time of his appointment in 1753 as a justice of the peace, prothonotary, clerk of the Quarter Sessions Court, deputy register of wills, and recorder of deeds for Lancaster County, he was a man of prominence and wealth. His grandfather had come from Yorkshire, England, in 1668, first settling in Boston before moving to Philadelphia in the 1690's. Shippen was born in Boston on July 9, 1703, but his father moved to Philadelphia the following year. In 1732 Edward went into business with James Logan, and then in 1749 joined with Thomas Lawrence in the fur-trading business. He was also active in politics. In 1732 he began his service as a common councilman in the city of Philadelphia and in 1743 was selected as an alderman. From 1744-1745 he was the Mayor of Philadelphia and in 1745 was appointed a justice of the peace for Philadelphia County. During the years 1746-1748 Shippen's interest in education involved him in the founding of the College of New Jersey, becoming one of its first trustees in 1747 and continuing in the position for twenty years. Shippen's wealth stemmed mainly from landholdings in Philadelphia, Lancaster County, including the borough, and Cumberland County, where he had laid out the town of Shippensburg in 1733.

46 Shippen to Penn, Mar. 21, 1752, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence, V, 231, HSP.
47 Penn to Shippen, Aug. 12, 1754, Penn Letter Book, III, 373, HSP.
48 Biographical information on Edward Shippen is drawn from the PMHB, I (1877), 213; XXIV (1900), 257-259, 261-266; XXVIII (1904), 396-397, 399; XLIII (1919), 28-33, 241; L (1926), 26-27; Charles Keith, Provincial Councilors of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883), 52-54; Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX, 708, 729, 732, 735; Chronologies of Edward Shippen, 1639-1712, and Edward Shippen, 1703-1781, in Peale Papers, Mills Collection, APS; An Account of the Estate possessed by Edward Shippen at Lancaster—1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 137, HSP.
His position in Lancaster was enhanced by the connections he had with proprietary leaders in Philadelphia. William Allen, the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania from 1751-1774 and the dominant proprietary leader in the period from the 1740's to the 1770's, was the first cousin of Edward's first wife and the nephew of Edward's stepmother.\textsuperscript{49} In fact, it was through "Cousin Allens Friendship," according to Shippen, that he received his appointment to the various posts in Lancaster.\textsuperscript{50} James Hamilton, one of the foremost political figures in Pennsylvania, who served as a member of the Governor's Council from 1746-1776 and as Deputy Governor twice from 1748-1754 and from 1759-1763, was responsible for appointing Shippen and was probably at least an acquaintance of his during the latter's residence in Philadelphia. Whatever the bond, it was undoubtedly strengthened by Shippen's service as Hamilton's agent in Lancaster after 1753, managing the latter's extensive property there.\textsuperscript{51} Benjamin Chew, Attorney General from 1754-1769, Register General from 1743-1762, member of the Governor's Council from 1755-1776, and Chief Justice from 1774-1776, was referred to by Shippen as "our good Friend."\textsuperscript{52} With the appointment of Shippen's younger son Joseph as Provincial Secretary and clerk of the Governor's Council in 1762, succeeding Richard Peters, and of

\textsuperscript{49} The mother of Edward's first wife, Sarah Plumley (1706-1735), was Rose Budd M'William Plumley; Rose's half-sister, Mary Budd Allen, was the mother of William Allen. (Keith says Mary Budd Allen was Rose's sister, but he also says that Rose's mother was named Sarah and Mary's Susanna.) Rose Plumley became the second wife of Joseph Shippen, Edward's father, following the death of Joseph's first wife in 1716. Probably at the time that Edward Shippen and Sarah Plumley were married she was his step-sister and Edward's new mother-in-law was also his stepmother. Keith, 52, 53, 140.


\textsuperscript{50} Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Mar. 28, 1753, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, 1750-1778, APS. Further evidence of Allen's friendship is seen in his statement to Shippen in 1756: "I have a sincere desire to serve you & all that you have Connexions with..." Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Aug. 17, 1756, \textit{ibid}.

\textsuperscript{51} Keith, 130-134; \textit{PMHB}, XXIV (1900), 261; Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Aug. 28, 1753, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS.

\textsuperscript{52} Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, May 6, 1774, \textit{ibid}.; Keith, 326-328.
his older son Edward, Jr., as prothonotary of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in 1765 and a member of the Governor's Council in 1770, Shippen had members of his own immediate family at the top level of the provincial government.\textsuperscript{53}

These contacts provided useful channels for conveying, or at least trying to convey, Shippen's views and recommendations to the Governor. There does not seem to have been any standard procedure by which the Governor always consulted with Shippen about local appointments before making them, nor does there seem to have been much direct solicitation of the Governor by Shippen. In only one instance in the extant letters did Shippen make a direct recommendation, and that was to a Governor who was his friend or acquaintance, James Hamilton.\textsuperscript{54} Usually, the efforts to influence appointments were directed through those high officials close to the Governor whose advice he might seek. On at least two occasions, Shippen wrote to William Allen regarding such matters. One was in 1755 not long after a new Governor, Robert Hunter Morris, had assumed office. Concerned about the possibility that Morris might appoint a new commission of justices during Shippen's absence from Lancaster on a trip, he asked Allen to "hint" to the Governor, "if he should happen to Say anything to you on the subject . . . that I should take it as a great Favour if he would not encrease them [the magistrates] till I could hear of ye Persons recommended to him; because I am sure I know the People of this County as well as any Body, nay I had like to have said better."\textsuperscript{55} The other occasion was in 1770 when Shippen and Isaac Saunders wrote to Allen supporting Frederick Stone's appointment as sheriff.\textsuperscript{56} In 1757 it was Richard Peters, then Provincial Secretary and clerk of the Governor's Council, to whom Shippen expressed the hope that the Governor, William Denny, "will not take Mr Edwards our Presedent [of

\textsuperscript{53} PMHB, XXXVI (1912), 367; VII (1883), 11-33.

\textsuperscript{54} Shippen wrote to Hamilton after an act had been passed separating the Common Pleas from the Quarter Sessions Court: "I take ye Liberty to inclose a List of ye Justices of this County & would recommend the first four mentioned as proper persons to be ye Judges of the Court of Common Pleas according to a late Act of Assembly of this Province and I shall be obliged to you if you'l please to appoint me for the fifth. . . ." Nov. 17, 1759, Shippen-Balch Papers, I, 73, HSP.

\textsuperscript{55} Shippen to Allen, June 17, 1755, Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS.

\textsuperscript{56} Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Oct. 2, 1770, Shippen Papers, X, 109, HSP.
the County Court] at his word but Continue him old as he is lest he might be greived.” He went on to say that he saw no reason to replace certain justices who were being dropped from the new commission but that “whenever there is a necessity for others in their room I will let him know it.”

Following the appointment of his sons to provincial posts, Shippen directed recommendations to them. In 1763 he wrote to Joseph about a justiceship for Shippen’s son-in-law and Joseph’s brother-in-law, James Burd:

Lest it Slips our Memory When His Honour Governor Penn is giving out his Commissions for the Justices of the several Countys I leave this to put you in mind that as Colonel Burd has bought a Plantation to live on in Chester County I should take it as a favour if he would be pleased to nominate him a Justice of the Peace and if it is not done at first it may be neglected for a great While.

In a June, 1767, letter to Joseph, Shippen took “the Liberty to Recommend one Michael Hubley our Burgess as a fit Man for a Magistrate of this County. . . .” Joseph informed his father that “there is no Intention at present of making any new Magistrates; whenever there is likely to be any new Commission for Lancaster, I shall notify it to You, and shall mention the Person in the Borough whom you have heretofore recommended in your Letters.” In a 1773 letter to James Burd, Shippen indicated that he would speak to Edward Shippen, Jr., “about getting Mr Peter Grubb a Magistrate’s Commission as soon as it can in point of prudence be done.”

Because of his offices within the county and his access to leaders in Philadelphia, Shippen’s support was sought for and by aspiring officeholders, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. In 1767 a promoter of James Bickham for an appointment as justice solicited Shippen’s aid because the person “imagined if I would have written to the Governor in favour of their Man, the point would have been

57 Shippen to Peters, June 5, 1757, Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS.
58 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Nov. 18, 1763, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS.
60 Joseph Shippen to Edward Shippen, Feb. 9, 1768, ibid.
61 Shippen to Burd, Nov. 3, 1773, Shippen Papers, VII, 73, HSP.
gained.” Shippen, however, “gave no direct answer” and evidently never did. In 1755 Emanuel Carpenter, a justice since 1737 and a soon-to-be-elected assemblyman (1756), urged Shippen to recommend two men, Sebastian Graefe and John Hopson, to the Governor, but Shippen did not approve of them. “I don’t object against them so much on Accot. of their being Moravians; but as great Bigots, and men not of a suitable turn for such a Station.” In 1763 the Rev. John Elder, a Presbyterian minister in Paxtang Township, wrote to Shippen objecting to two candidates who were being mentioned as likely for recommendation, and promoting the interest of another person, Henry Rennicks. Shippen did not feel he could support Rennicks, but he did send Elder’s letter to his son Joseph “for his prudent use . . . and if Mr Rennicks Should not be appointed, neither may either of the others meet with the Governor’s approbation, as I could Say nothing in their Praise, in Case his Honor Should direct his Secretary to write me on the Subject.” In 1773, after emerging as the top vote-getter in the contest for sheriff, John Ferree asked Shippen to recommend him to the Governor for appointment. In this instance Shippen used the leverage of his position to extract certain agreements from Ferree before recommending him: the new sheriff had to promise “to live frugally, & Settle his accounts with me at every Court, & pay me The Governors fees or fines & my fees etc etc.”

The extent of Shippen’s influence in Philadelphia is difficult to determine precisely, for Shippen’s promotion of a candidate did not mean automatic appointment, nor did his disapproval mean rejection. His suggestions for the magistracy in 1767 of Michael Hubley and in 1773 of Peter Grubb, who had recently married one of his granddaughters, were not translated into appointments, and his lack of support for James Bickham in 1767 did not prevent Bickham’s receiving a justiceship. In fact, Shippen complained

62 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 5, 1767, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS.
63 Shippen to William Allen, June 17, 1755, Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS.
64 Shippen to Rev. Elder, Dec. 16, 1763, Shippen Papers, Miscellaneous Correspondence, APS; Commemorative Biographical Encyclopedia of Dauphin County (Chambersburg, Pa., 1896), 169-170.
65 Shippen to Burd, Nov. 24, 1779, Shippen Papers, VIII, 65, HSP. Ironically, in the 1770 election when Ferree was the runner-up, Shippen regarded him as the less fit of the two men that year. Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Oct. 2, 1770, ibid., X, 109.
with regard to Bickham that “I was never consulted about the Recommendation of Mr. Bickham.” Even in those cases where Shippen’s voice might seem to have carried weight, there is no evidence to indicate that it was the determinant, or that it had any effect at all. Other factors besides Shippen’s unenthusiastic response to Graefe, Hopson, and Rennicks may explain why none of them attained the office of justice. Likewise, John Ferree’s appointment as sheriff in 1773 may have been due more to his having the most votes in the election than to Shippen’s recommending him.

Moreover, others within the county besides Shippen suggested names and politicked for their particular candidates. A Dr. Adams seems to have been mainly responsible for promoting Bickham’s candidacy, both in Lancaster and Philadelphia. It was he who got several of the justices in Lancaster to sign a letter to the Governor making that recommendation and who asked for Shippen’s support, although never telling Shippen about the letter. In 1769 Dr. Adams, along with a “Mr B—n,” was suspected by Shippen of “plotting under Ground, to get Bowseman upon the Bench. . . .” If true, however, the effort was unsuccessful, for Bowseman was not appointed. Also active in the 1769 scramble to fill a vacancy on the court was John Philip De Haas, a justice since 1765, who, Shippen wrote, “will take upon him to Recommend some Creature of his.” All of this maneuvering caused Shippen to complain: “as this business has been managed of late Years, everything is to be carried Over the heads of the old Magistrates.”

Besides Adams and De Haas, two other figures emerge from the extant letters. The Reverend Thomas Barton, the Anglican minister in Lancaster, pressed the Governor to appoint James Clemson as

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On one occasion, Shippen’s aid seems to have been sought to prevent rather than promote an appointment. An inhabitant of Hanover Township wrote to Shippen to protest, because of supposedly immoral conduct, the reportedly pending recommendation of Timothy Green as a justice. Either Shippen took no action or else it was disregarded because Green was appointed in 1770. Letter to Edward Shippen, Aug. 6, 1770, Lancaster County Miscellaneous Papers, 1724-1772, HSP.

66 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, June 12, 1767, Edward Shippen Papers, 1727-1783, LC. Although Burd was not appointed a justice for Chester County, as his father-in-law had recommended in 1763, he was for Lancaster County in 1764.

67 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 5, 1767, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS; Colonial Records, IX, 386.

68 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 7, 1769, Shippen Papers, X, 91, HSP. A magistrate was appointed in June, 1769, but it was Robert Boyd of Lancaster. Colonial Records, IX, 601.
a justice and was supposedly involved in the politicking for Bickham, although he denied it. Moreover, the "Mr B——n" Shippen suspected of collaborating with Dr. Adams in 1769 may have been Barton.\textsuperscript{69} The second figure was Isaac Saunders, the long-time proprietary supporter in Lancaster, assemblyman from 1757–1761 and 1763–1765, and a justice of the peace since 1761. Unlike the others, he worked closely with Shippen regarding recommendations: both sent a mutual letter supporting Frederick Stone for sheriff in 1770; both consulted, along with Edward Shippen, Jr., in 1767 about the opening that Bickham eventually filled (after Saunders had earlier succumbed to pressure and signed the letter supporting Bickham, an action which he regretted); and in 1768 Shippen passed along a note from Saunders which, it would appear, contained a recommendation for an appointment.\textsuperscript{70}

Whatever limitations there may have been upon his influence in Philadelphia, the fact that aspirants sought Shippen’s backing implies that it was thought to be of value. Certainly, proprietary leaders in Philadelphia saw Shippen’s role in Lancaster as an important one, for he performed various functions, official and unofficial, on behalf of the proprietary government and party. As an officeholder he was instructed to convey a request from the Governor to the justices of the Quarter Sessions Court, to send copies of an official proclamation to the ministers of the county, to forward writs summoning assemblymen to Philadelphia, and to form a special hearing board on a particular case.\textsuperscript{71} Outside his office he played a role in the party politics of the county. In September, 1756, Shippen attended a meeting for the selection of candidates

\textsuperscript{69} Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 5, 1767, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS; Edward Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 7, 1769, Shippen Papers, X, 91, HSP; \textit{PMHB}, XLIII (1919), 240. The date of Clemson's appointment in the provincial records is 1770, but the letter implies it had been made in late 1766 or early 1767. Since no evidence was found to support the latter, perhaps what Barton meant in his conversation with Shippen was that he had recommended Clemson to the Governor.

\textsuperscript{70} Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Oct. 2, 1770, Shippen Papers, X, 109, HSP; Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Feb. 5, 1767, Shippen Papers, Correspondence of Edward and Joseph Shippen, APS; Joseph Shippen to Shippen, Feb. 9, 1768, Edward Shippen Papers, 1727–1783, LC.

\textsuperscript{71} James Hamilton to Edward Shippen, Apr. 27, 1753, Burd-Shippen Papers, I, 6, APS; Rev. Richard Peters to Edward Shippen, June 9, 1755, Peters Papers, IV, 18, HSP; James Hamilton to Edward Shippen, July 24, 1754, Burd-Shippen Papers, I, 10, APS; Richard Peters to Edward Shippen, Mar. 22, 1758, Shippen Papers, III, 123, HSP.
to run for the Assembly and proposed Alexander Stedman and Edward Shippen, Jr., "as agreeable to Cous. Allen & ye other Gentlemen in Philada. . . ." Five years later, although he does not seem to have participated in the selection of the party ticket, he planned to campaign for Isaac Saunders' re-election to the Assembly, informing William Allen that

As soon [as] I have sealed up this Letter I shall mount my horse & go down to Mr Work & others & endeavour [to] engage their Votes & Interest & on my Return shall proceed to Donnegal & talk with Mr Tate ye Minister & Some of ye leading Men there and shall write to Mr Elder ye Minister at Paxton & to Jno Harris to do all they can in ye Affair and these whom I have An Opportunity to see & can confide in I Shall mention Your Name but shall leave it out in my Letters.

In 1770 it was Edward Shippen whom the Governor requested to consult with James Webb about the latter's accepting a justiceship.

In addition to carrying out these governmental and party tasks, Shippen was at the beck and call of the Proprietor. In August, 1754, Thomas Penn indicated that he expected Shippen to use "your utmost endeavours to serve Mr Hockley in his Affair with Trent and Croghan. . . ." Richard Hockley, who "had been under the Proprietor's virtual guardianship for years," had formed a fur-trading partnership in 1748 with William Trent and George Croghan, but the enterprise had failed by 1752, largely due to questionable practices by Croghan and Trent, and Hockley was left with a sizable loss. Now Shippen was asked to aid Hockley in recouping this loss suffered at the hands of the latter's partners. Shippen's position was a delicate one since the Hockley, Trent, and

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72 Shippen to Joseph Shippen, Sept. 13, 1756, Shippen Papers, II, 71, HSP. Stedman and Shippen, Jr., were chosen as proprietary candidates but lost the election.

73 Shippen to William Allen, Sept. 15, 1761, Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS. Actually, no addressee is given, but the letter is signed "Dear Cousin Your Affectionate Kinsman," an expression used frequently in letters to Allen.

74 Joseph Shippen to Shippen, June 22, 1770, Shippen Papers, X, 105, HSP.

75 Thomas Penn to Shippen, Aug. 12, 1754, Penn Letter Book, III, 373, HSP.

Croghan partnership owed him money and he was pressing for repayment. In his reply to Penn’s letter, Shippen described the plight of Trent and Croghan and the unsuccessful effort he had made in May, 1754, to recover the debt to himself. Shippen ended with this apology and pledge:

As the Affair of Trent & Croghan with Mr. Hockley is ye only thing which you have recommended to my Care I am very Sorry it has not, nor, I am afraid ever will be in my Power to serve him in it [.] however I hope if you Shall hereafter be pleased to Honour me with any of Your Commands that I Shall be able to Succeed in the execution of them. And I do assure Your Honour that no pains or Industry Shall ever be wanting in me to promote ye Interest of Your Honble family.77

By the mid-1760’s Shippen seems to have withdrawn from active leadership of the proprietary group in Lancaster and to have been replaced by his son-in-law, James Burd. Burd had immigrated from Scotland in 1747 and shortly thereafter had married Shippen’s daughter, Sarah. During the early 1750’s he served as manager of Shippen’s affairs in Shippensburg. Following military service in the French and Indian War, during which he rose to the rank of colonel, he settled in Lancaster, was appointed a justice of the peace in 1764, and was elected Chief Burgess of the borough in 1765, a position he held for a year. He participated in the proprietary politicking in the county during the elections of 1764 and 1765, receiving suggestions and advice from Samuel Purviance, the proprietary party’s organizer in Philadelphia, and in turn keeping Purviance informed of the party efforts in Lancaster to set up and push a proprietary ticket.78

In 1766 Burd and his family moved from the borough and settled on a farm in the northwestern frontier area of the county, Paxtang

77 Shippen to Thomas Penn, Nov. 25, 1754, Shippen-Balch Papers, I, 37, HSP. If Shippen made any further efforts, they were not effective, for Hockley’s “attempts to get restitution from Croghan and Trent . . . were continued by his executors after his death in 1774.” Wainwright, “An Indian Trade Failure,” PMHB, 372.

78 Biographical information is drawn from the PMHB, L (1926), 29-37; William Henry Egle, History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883), in the section on Dauphin, 471-472; Lily Nixon, James Burd, Frontier Defender (Philadelphia, 1941); Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, IX, 773; Edward Burd to Sally Burd, Oct. 5, 1765, Shippen Papers, VI, 129, HSP. For the contacts between Burd and Purviance, see Purviance to Burd, Sept. 10, 1764, ibid., 107; Burd to Purviance, Sept. 17, 1764, ibid., 109; Purviance to Burd, Sept. 20, 1765, ibid., 127.
Township. There he continued to serve as a justice and became the proprietary party’s outpost in the backcountry. In 1768 Burd’s son-in-law, Jasper Yeates, in the borough of Lancaster, told Burd of the impending retirement of one of the county’s assemblymen and mentioned two candidates for his replacement, Isaac Saunders and George Ross. “I make no Doubt,” he wrote, “but your Department will unanimously declare in Favour of the former, as having by far the most Merit to represent the County. I barely give you this Hint, that you may sollicit his Interest, if you judge proper. . . .”

However, Saunders either decided not to run or lost out to Ross, for Ross was placed on the proprietary ticket as well as the Quaker ticket. Even though Burd had objections to the inclusion of Ross, his interest in favor of the ticket was asked, and he was urged to “influence as many in your parts to turn out as possible.” At election time the next year Yeates reported to Burd that Peter Bachman, a proprietary leader in Lancaster, “places great Dependence on you, in which I assured him he will not be disappointed.” Another proprietary partisan, William Atlee, also wrote to Burd that there was the hope “you will encourage the upper People to turn out.”

Burd’s important role in the backcountry continued into the 1770’s. In 1773 several men from the nearby township of Lebanon requested him “to Countenance the Ticket, so far as it relates to the Assembly, to Recommend it to the People, under Your extensive Influence, and Encourage them to attend at the Election.”

In 1774 another letter writer said: “I beg it as a favour to encourage your Neighbors to Come down without fail,” for “If they Turn out up your way we shall carry the day with ease.”

Because of his influence in the area, aspiring officeholders wanted Burd’s support. In 1770 when Samuel J. Atlee ran for sheriff, he wrote to Burd: “I am vain enough to expect if yours [i.e., interest]

79 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 8, 1768, Shippen Papers, VI, 211, HSP.
81 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, ibid., VII, 19.
82 William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, ibid.
83 J. P. De Haas, Nichl Haussegger, Philip Marsteller, John Thome to Burd, Sept. 21, 1773, ibid., 69.
84 Paul Zantzinger to Burd, October, 1774, ibid., 101.
is not already engaged to some other Candidate that it will be employ’d for me from which I expect to reap great advantages in the Matter I have undertaken, As I am confident a great number in your Quarter will be rulled by you in their Votes.”

In 1773 John Ferree solicited “my little Interest to help him to succeed Ston[e] in the Shirrifship.” Burd assured him of support only after Ferree had agreed to retain the present Deputy and to “have one other Clever honest man as a sub Deputy that I liked.” In turn, Burd asked for Shippen’s “Interest and our Familys Int: in fav. of Ferree.”

After Burd’s departure from Lancaster borough, the active leadership of proprietary politics in the county was exercised by two men—Peter Bachman and Martin Myer. In the Shippen correspondence of the late 1760’s and early 1770’s the names of these two men appear frequently and mostly together in references to the drawing up of tickets for elections and the organizing of support. In 1769 Jasper Yeates wrote from Lancaster: “a new Set of Assessors has been fixed on by Messrs. Myer & Bachman. . . .” At the same time William Atlee in a letter to James Burd specifically mentioned those two names in reference to a consultation on changes in the ticket for the upcoming election. In 1770 Samuel J. Atlee, seeking support for the sheriff’s race, said he “called several of [the] Principal Men together amongst whom were Baughman & Myer. . . .” In 1773 Edward Shippen wrote to his sons: “Our County Ticket was settled on the 15th Instant by Baukman & Myer at the Mill.” That these men were directing the proprietary politics of the county is revealed further in William Atlee’s letters to James Burd in 1768 and 1769; in the former, Atlee related that “Peter Bachman desires me to request your Interest . . .,” and in the latter, that “Bachman & Myer requested me to give [you] the earliest advice of this alteration. . . .”

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85 Samuel J. Atlee to Burd, June 30, 1770, Burd-Shippen Papers, II, 61, APS.
86 Burd to Edward Shippen, Sept. 11, 1773, Shippen-Balch Papers, II, 18, HSP. Shippen, however, was not too happy with Ferree. See Burd to Shippen, Sept. 18, 1773, Shippen Papers, X, 163, HSP.
87 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, Shippen Papers, VII, 19, HSP.
88 William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, ibid.
89 Samuel J. Atlee to Burd, June 30, 1770, Burd-Shippen Papers, II, 61, APS.
90 Shippen to Joseph Shippen and Edward Shippen, Jr., Sept. 17, 1773, Shippen Papers, X, 161, HSP.
91 William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 26, 1768, ibid., VI, 215; see note 88.
The two leaders were not the only ones, however, involved in the ticket-formation process. In Yeates’ 1769 letter he stated that “A Number of Persons of Weight assisted in the framing this new Ticket. . . .”\(^92\) Likewise, William Atlee wrote that the alteration in the ticket had been made “upon a fresh consultation between Baughman, Myer, Eaby, and a great many of the reputable People in Town. . . .”\(^93\) Shippen, in 1773, noted that “they [Bachman and Myer] took in Mr. Hopson & two or three more to their Assistance. . . .”\(^94\) Also referring to the 1773 election, Yeates reported: “the Board of Commissioners & Assessors with Myer & Bachman, and several leading Men from different Townships . . .” formed a ticket.\(^95\) Yet clearly Bachman and Myer played the primary role, while the others assisted, in the choosing of party candidates.

It would be desirable to know more about these two men, especially since they seem to be examples of the “political bosses” William Hanna mentions.\(^96\) Unfortunately, only a little can be learned. Bachman resided in Manheim Township, located immediately north of the borough of Lancaster, and ranked in the top 10 per cent of both taxables and landholders within the township and the county. Of the three Martin Myers found in the tax lists, Bachman’s colleague probably was the one who also resided in Manheim and also ranked in the top 10 per cent of taxables and landholders within the township and the county.\(^97\) Both men confined their political activities to behind-the-scenes direction, for neither held a county office. Their involvement in the county’s politics, however, strongly annoyed some people. After the 1773 election, in which a candidate they had selected for the Assembly was defeated, it was noted that “Many People are much pleased at

\(^{92}\) See note 87.

\(^{93}\) See note 88.

\(^{94}\) See note 90.

\(^{95}\) Yeates to Burd, Sept. 20, 1773, Shippen Papers, VII, 69, HSP.

\(^{96}\) Hanna, 166.

\(^{97}\) Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 428, 430. A Martin Myer is also listed in the 1773 tax list for Cocalico Township and one in the 1772 tax list for Brecknock Township, with the former ranking in the lower 50 per cent of both taxables and landholders and the latter in the fourth decile of both categories (based on the 1773 tax list). For the economic stratification of Lancaster County upon which the above assertions are made, see Appendix XIV of Wayne L. Bockelman, “Continuity and Change in Revolutionary Pennsylvania: A Study of County Government and Officeholders” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1969).
the Defeat of Bachman & Myer, who have taken the Lead for these three Years past. . . .” No references are found to them in the extant correspondence of the Shippens after that, which suggests that their dominance may have ended with the 1773 loss.

Although information on the Quaker party in Lancaster is sparse, that party seemed to have a counterpart to Bachman and Myer in the person of “Christian Hare,” or Herr. His name appears twice in the Shippen correspondence in relation to the local political situation. In 1761 Shippen wrote: “Our Ticket [this time he seems to mean a general ticket for the county rather than a particular proprietary ticket] probably are settled at Young Christy or Christian Hares whose father had [has?] great Influence at Elections and generally speaking turn out as they would have it.” In 1768 William Atlee referred to “the Ch: Hare Ticket” which “the New Ticket,” meaning the proprietary ticket, was “in opposition to . . .” Like Bachman and Myer, Herr is an obscure figure. A “Christ’n Herr, Sen’r,” “Christ’n Herr, Jun’r,” and “Christ’n Herr, miller” appear in the 1773 tax list as residents of Manor Township, which was located directly west of the borough and the township of Lancaster. Which one of these was the Christian Herr of the previous decade is hard to say. In any case, all three ranked within the upper 40 per cent of landholders and 20–25 per cent of taxables in the township and within the upper 50 per cent of landholders and 20 per cent of taxables in the county. In fact, two of them ranked within the top 10 per cent of taxables in the county. A county history of Lancaster lists the Herrs as one of “the early German Mennonite families who settled in the Conestoga Manor. . . .” Christian Herr, again like Bachman and Myer, did not hold a county office during this period, preferring, instead, to remain in an unofficial capacity.

88 Yeates to Burd, Oct. 6, 1773, Shippen Papers, VII, 71, HSP.
89 Shippen to William Allen, Sept. 15, 1761, Edward Shippen Letter Books, APS. See note 73. This statement suggests that the Herrs were part of the Quaker party since the Quakers usually won the elections.
90 William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 20, 1768, Shippen Papers, VI, 213, HSP.
91 Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 401.
92 Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883), 950. This further strengthens the identification of Herr with the Quaker party, for the “Menonists” were allies of the Quakers and made “a powerful Party. . . .” Purviance to Burd, Sept. 10, 1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 107, HSP.
Various factors influenced the politics of the county and of the proprietary party in Lancaster. One of these was the desire of the northern and northwestern area of the county, present-day Dauphin and Lebanon Counties, to be recognized and to have its share of political power. After a ticket was formed for the 1768 election, the hope was expressed to James Burd, who lived in one of the northwestern townships, that "the Ticket will be agreeable to your part of the County. . . ." Whether it was or not is unknown, but it is clear that the proposed ticket for the following year's election was unacceptable and that the backcountry did not hesitate to show its displeasure. Jasper Yeates related the story to Burd:

The Deputies from the upper Part of the County attended here on Friday last to give their Assistance in forming a Ticket for the ensuing Election. In what Manner that Assistance was given, I know not nor whether their Concurrence was required by Myer & Bachman at the Settlement of Measures. Ben Wallace informs me they were not consulted & seemed disgusted; but I wont pretend to determine whether this might not proceed from other Disappointments. In the Evening of the Congress, Dr Boyd & myself called at Little's to see how Matters went on, and after I had spoke with Wallace, I mentioned to Martin Myer that I feared the proper Steps had not been taken to secure an Unanimity. Mr Atlee tartly replied, that a Ticket had been framed, & if Paxtang Hannover &c did not agree to it, they might 'em stay at Home. After some little Altercation, we parted, not very satisfied with each other, I believe.

In this particular instance the geographical question was connected with another influential factor—the sensitivity of certain ethnic and religious groups in the county. According to Yeates,

The Current Objections against the Ticket . . . are, that no leading Men among the Presbyterians are introduced therein, which might be a Lure to Others of the same Persuasion to join the Party; And that the intended Alteration stands not sufficiently on the broad Bottom, but regards chiefly those to the Northward of Lancr. I am told by the knowing ones, that this last Omission will knock up the Ticket as the other Parts of the County will look on themselves as slighted; and consequently if they do turn out, will do it in Favour of the other Side, unless there is a speedy Change.

103 William Atlee to Burd, Sept. 20, 1768, *ibid.*, 213.
Two days later Yeates informed Burd that “a new Set of Assessors has been fixed on . . . to obviate one of the Objections mentioned in my last. . . .”\(^{106}\) The new ticket (which Yeates gives in the letter) had at least one person who was probably Presbyterian, which should have helped to appease the dissidents. Insofar as proper geographical representation had been a problem, that would also seem to have been remedied, for the ticket now included one candidate, possibly two, from East Hanover in the “upper part” of the county; one from Derry in the northwestern part; one from Drumore in the south; one from the borough; one from Manheim, just north of the borough; and possibly one from Earl, to the east.\(^{107}\)

The attempt to balance geographical areas and ethnic-religious groups affected elections to the Assembly as well as local offices. Samuel Purviance wrote from Philadelphia in 1764 that the existing ticket for assemblymen in Lancaster should be altered to include two Germans “to draw such a Party of them as will turn the scale in our Favor. . . .” Concern was also expressed regarding “the Irish”: “it would be imprudent to offend them by rejecting one of their proposing.”\(^{108}\) The following year Purviance recommended to Burd “to run Dr. Chune [Kuhn], or some other popular Lutheran or Calvinist. . . .” In his scheme for the campaign which accompanied his letter he said: “If you can run Doctor Chune or any

\(^{106}\) Yeates to Burd, Sept. 19, 1769, ibid., 19.

\(^{107}\) It was Thomas Clark of Drumore who was probably Presbyterian since his family came from Ireland and the township of his residence was heavily Scotch-Irish, as the name, which is from a place in County Down, Northern Ireland, would indicate. Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (Chicago, 1903), 997; Ellis and Evans, 790. Thomas Clark of (East) Hanover was also probably a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian since that township’s early settlers were Scotch-Irish. Egle, Lebanon, 178.

Alexander Martin may have been from (East) Hanover or Earl Township; if the latter, he was probably German since Earl was settled by “principally Germans from the Palatinate” and the name Martin is listed among “the familiar names” of the Swiss and Palatines who settled there. Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 410, 449; Ellis and Evans, 804. Casper Shaffner was from the borough of Lancaster and was German. Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 463; Lancaster County Historical Society, Historical Papers and Addresses, XXI (1917), 5-7. Frederick Hummell was from Derry township, where he laid out Hummeltown in 1762, and was evidently German Lutheran or Reformed. Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 341; Egle, Dauphin, 417. Samuel Bare, or Bear, was from Manheim, which seems to have been primarily German from the name of the township and the names of the early settlers. Pennsylvania Archives, Third Series, XVII, 428; Ellis and Evans, 979.

\(^{108}\) Purviance to Burd, Sept. 10, 1764, Shippen Papers, VI, 107, HSP.
other popular German and keep Mr. Saunders in you will do great things.”

Discontent in the backcountry took the form of an effort in 1773 to create a separate county. That year several men from the area participated in the ticket selection “with a View to prevail on the Persons appointed to settle the same to Insert the Name of some fit Person in the back part of the County for an Assembly Man.” They succeeded in replacing Isaac Whitelock, an incumbent assemblyman, with Curtis Grubb, who, it was believed, would push more strongly for the new county since he was from Lebanon Township while Whitelock was from the borough of Lancaster. Grubb was defeated, however, and so was the campaign to form a separate county. Part of the explanation for Grubb’s defeat seems to lie in the resentment generated by the way in which Whitelock had been dumped from the ticket. Jasper Yeates noted that “The Displacing of Friend Whitelock has given Umbrage to some, who think him very undeserving of the Treatment shewn him.” Even before the election Yeates had commented that “The Removal of Friend Whitelock gives no small Uneasiness to the Brethren—& is indeed censured by very many of the County. He came in without any Kind of Solicitation on his Part, & has attended the House constantly, behaving with Credit during his Year of Probation.” Because proprietary “bosses” Bachman and Myer had had a hand in Grubb’s candidacy, his failure to win the election also reflected upon them, and indeed may have caused their downfall as the unquestioned leaders of proprietary politics in Lancaster.

At times the focus of discontent was specifically the borough. In December, 1774, Edward Shippen, writing to James Burd about the election in mid-month for the county’s committee of observation and inspection, related that

there was a little Clashing: Some of ye Country people disapproved of our Borough proceedings; because we had formed a Ticket, which we assured them, was only ye Ground work for ye whole to begin upon, that it ap-

109 Purviance to Burd, Sept. 20, 1765, ibid., 127.
110 J. P. De Haas, Nichl Haussegger, Philip Marsteller, John Thome to Burd, Sept. 21, 1773, ibid., VII, 69.
111 Yeates to Burd, Oct. 6, 1773, ibid., 71.
112 Yeates to Burd, Sept. 20, 1773, ibid., 69.
peared from our printed Tickets, we had left room enough between every proposed name, to put in new names, scratching out such as were not agreeable to their minds.\textsuperscript{113}

In his reply, Burd affirmed the antagonism felt toward the borough: "the Borough has been much Reflected upon some time past by the Country on sundry Accounts."\textsuperscript{114} The possible basis for such a feeling is not hard to understand. As seen above, the direction of county politics was very much centered in the borough or nearby townships. Moreover, residents of the borough dominated the county offices; in 1775-1776, the last year of the provincial government, ten of the thirty county officeholders resided there.\textsuperscript{115} While such dominance might be expected, nevertheless, it also could and did create resentment.

More information about the issues, the personalities, and the offices at the local level is desirable, especially with respect to the Quaker party and its activities, for some of the previously stated assertions about and impressions of local government and politics still remain largely unsubstantiated. These include Theodore Thayer’s characterization of provincial parties as collections of county parties, William Hanna’s statement that control over election procedures was used “to serve the dominant faction,” and David Hawke’s description of the predictability of backcountry politics. Yet what clearly emerges from this limited study of Lancaster County is the vitality of politics at the local level and the important relationship that existed between local politics and provincial politics in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania.

\textit{Rutgers University, Camden} \hspace{1cm} WAYNE L. BOCKELMAN

\textsuperscript{113} Shippen to Burd, Dec. 27, 1774, \textit{ibid.}, 109.
\textsuperscript{114} Burd to Shippen, Dec. 31, 1774, \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{115} Bockelman, 150.