The Myth of the "Middle Colonies" An Analysis of Regionalization in Early America

CRITICS REPEATEDLY CHASTISE HISTORIANS for neglecting the middle colonies and middle states. Early American histor- ians in particular receive this criticism because of their apparent fascination with the neighboring Chesapeake and New England.[1] In the past decade, however, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware have finally attracted to their early histories numerous and skilled scholars.[2] But as a result of this inquiry do we know more about an entity, "the middle colonies?"

How strongly did the four middle colonies, and later states, share social, economic, and political patterns? If we *assume* their uniformity, we may carelessly ascribe local, or at best regional characteristics to

[1] See Richard H. Shyrock, "Philadelphia and the Flowering of New England," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB)* LXIV (1940), 305ff; *idem.*, "Historical Tra- ditions in Philadelphia and the Middle Atlantic Area," *ibid.*, LXVI (1943), 115-143; David Ellis, "New York and Middle Atlantic Regionalism," *New York History (NY Hist)*, XXXV (1954), 3-13; Frederick B. Tolles, "The Historians of the Middle Colonies," in Ray Allen Billington, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Early American History* (San Marino, Calif., 1966), 65-80; Milton Klein, "New York in the American Colonies: A New Look," *NY Hist*, LIII (1972), 132-156; and *idem.*, "Shaping the American Tradition: The Microcosm of Colonial New York," *ibid.*, LIX (1978), 172-197.

[2] For a thorough review of these works see Douglas Greenberg, "The Middle Colonies in Recent American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly (WMQ)*, 3rd series, XXXVI (1979), 396-427. John M. Murrin has suggested that even this increasing body of scholarship has had little impact. ("Pluralism and Predatory Power: Early New York as a Social Failure," *Reviews in American History*, VI [1978], 473-479.) Michael Zuckerman has hypothesized that this inattention has been due to historians' reluctance to legitimize pluralism and conflict by acknowledging their existence in the middle colonies. "Puritans, Cavaliers, and the Motley Middle," in Zuckerman, ed., *Friends and Neighbors: Group Life in America's First Plural Society* (Phila., 1982), 3-25.

inappropriate parts of the middle colonies or to the section as a whole. Indeed, the subtle thrust of some recent scholarship has been to project characteristics from early New York onto Pennsylvania.[3] But more is at stake here than state chauvinism: in identifying sections overbroadly there is a risk of misrepresenting the extent to which early Americans had overcome local attachments and identified with large territorial groupings.[4] As a result, we overlook more important regional divisions *within* sections in early America, misunderstand the significance for later American history of the important patterns which first appeared in the different regions of the middle colonies, and possibly even mis-identify the sections themselves. In sum, it may obscure more than clarify to talk about "the middle colonies."

This article will argue that the best way to understand the middle colonies is as two regions. New York, parts of western Connecticut, eastern New Jersey, and the northeast corner of Pennsylvania comprised one region. Most of Pennsylvania, part of Maryland, and all of western New Jersey and Delaware formed another.[5] Each region had peculiar characteristics, and the inhabitants of each interacted mostly

[3] Some scholars imply the existence of a pattern throughout the middle colonies by demonstrating its existence in part of the section See, e g , Greenberg, "Middle Colonies," 424-427, and Patricia U. Bonomi, "The Middle Colonies Embryo of a New Political Order," in Alden T. Vaughn and George Athan Billias, eds , *Perspectives on Early American History* (New York, 1973), 79-87, for the transposition of New York characteristics onto Pennsylvania For a transposition of Pennsylvania characteristics onto New York see, *ibid.*, 74-79 and 87-92, and Martin Lodge, "The Crisis of the Churches in the Middle Colonies," *PHMB,* VC (1971), 195-220. (Lodge briefly admits this possibility, see 195, n. 10) Similarly, seven of the eight essays in *Friends and Neighbors* focus on aspects of the Philadelphia region, and at least five of these discuss patterns that could not have been found outside the region.

[4] For a statement that there was a "unique" degree of unity in the middle colonies, see Larry R. Gerlach, *Prologue to Revolution: New Jersey in the Coming of the American Revolution* (New Brunswick, 1976), 33-36. See also D.G. Brinton Thompson, *Gateway to a Nation: The Middle Atlantic States and Their Influence on the Development of the Nation* (Ridge, N H , 1956), esp. the preface by Allan Nevins, 15-16, and John A. Neuenschwander, *The Middle Colonies and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Port Washington and London, 1973), esp 9-27, 210-211

[5] For previous suggestions about fundamental differences between Pennsylvania and New York, see F. Grave Morris, "Environment and Regional Development in the Colonial Period," *Social Forces,* XVI (1938), 663, Thomas B Cochran, "The Middle Atlantic Area in the Economic History of the United States," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* CVIII (1964), 156-157, Brooke Hindle, "The Historiography of Science in the Middle Colonies and Early Middle States, *ibid.,* 158-161, Tolles, "Historians of the Middle Colonies," 65-66, Simeon Crowther, "Urban Growth in the Mid-Atlantic States," *Journal of Economic History* (JEH), XXXVI (1976), 624-644, esp 626.

with themselves. What inter-regional contacts they did have tended to be with the South, for the Philadelphia-centered region, and with New England, for the New York-centered region. Each region was different from the South and from New England in important respects, to be sure, but for different reasons and in different ways.

Establishing the criteria for spatial boundaries and identifying where they actually exist are difficult tasks. Among geographers as well as historians, there is still no agreement about their definition.[6] But almost all would agree in principle with Lewis Mumford's belief that "between the continent and the village is an area sometimes larger, sometimes smaller than the state. It is the human region."[7]

Some geographers define regions by physiographic features ("natural regions") while others stress cultural characteristics. Some scholars try to establish single-feature areas, others use lengthy lists of variables to establish boundaries. Homogeneity of the crucial variables throughout the entity is a requisite for geographers who seek "formal regions." Others look for "functional regions," in which the parts work together as a whole and the residents interact among themselves. One variety of this sort of analysis is the "nodal" region, in which the intensity of defining characteristics is greater at the center than at the extremities. In contrast, other scholars look for sharp boundaries, usually physiographic or political.

Regardless of the criteria used to describe early America, the South and New England appear as more coherent sections than the middle colonies. They were not internally uniform, but religion for the former and slaveholding for the latter provided a single factor that helped to

[6] My ideas about the bases for defining regions have been informed by general works including James R. McDonald, *A Geography of Regions* (Dubuque, 1972); Roger Minshull, *Regional Geography: Theory and Practice* (Chicago, 1967); Derwent Whittlesey, "The Regional Concept and the Regional Method," in Preston James and Clarence F. Jones, eds., *American Geography: Inventory and Prospect* (Syracuse, 1954) 19-68, esp. 45-55; and Raymond D. Gastil, *Cultural Regions of the United States* (Seattle and London, 1975), 25-46.

[7] Cited in Minshull, *Regional Geography*, 26. The region is of increasing interest to economic historians. For a discussion focusing on the territory that is the subject of the present article, see Joseph A. Pratt, "Regional Development in the Context of National Economic Growth," in Glenn Porter, ed., *Regional Economic History: The Mid-Atlantic Area Since 1700* (Wilmington, 1976), 25-40.

shape the lives of their residents.[8] The characteristics invoked to define the middle section, by contrast, are numerous and mixed: social heterogeneity, religious pluralism, conflicting interest-group politics, and an economy based on the export of wheat products.

This article will argue that these characteristics were not unique to the middle colonies and that Pennsylvanians and New Yorkers shared some of them with Southerners and New Englanders. One or more of these characteristics were absent from important parts of the middle colonies and the section, therefore, was less uniform than its neighbors. Alternatively, since there was neither a single nucleus for the section nor clear residential boundaries, these characteristics did not necessitate interaction among the residents of the middle colonies. By contrast, the two regions *within* the middle section were more uniform internally, contained the focus of their residents' activities, and possessed boundaries which set them off from one another. People in the eighteenth century, aware of these patterns, showed it by what they wrote, or did not write, about the middle colonies and by how they grouped colonies and states together for functional purposes. By studying contemporary practices, modern historians have pointed to the utility of analyzing the area as two separate regions. The conclusion of the article briefly suggests the importance of this diversity for the subsequent history of both the middle states and the nation as a whole.

Eighteenth-century writers did not regularly identify New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania as a unit. The tripartite division into the New England, middle, and southern sections developed only slowly. Other divisions were more common. Certainly early Americans and contemporary Europeans were more conscious of the South and New England than they were of the middle colonies and states. And when they did think about the middle colonies they applied the term to different areas. Daniel Flenning and Joseph Collyer typified mid-eighteenth-century British geographers in dividing their nation's possessions in America into five sections. Two of their sections were

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[8] If, as Carl Bridenbaugh suggested three decades ago, there really were three rather than one "South" in early America, surely the time has come to acknowledge the lack of unity within the middle colonies. *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (paper ed., New York, 1963).

"Nova Scotia, Canada, New England, New York, the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, and Maryland," and "the Southern Part of the British Colonies of the Continent of America, particularly. . .Virginia, Carolina, Georgia, and Florida."[9] In 1755 an American, Lewis Evans, published *Geographical, historical, political, and philosophical essays: The first, containing an analysis of a general map of the middle British colonies. . .*, the title of which seemed to suggest the existence of a distinct middle section.[10] But Evans at first presented the Ohio country as the "middle colonies," then expanded the section to include the colonies from New York to Delaware. However, the map that accompanied the text depicted the territory from Rhode Island to Virginia.

The idea of a distinct middle section emerged only partially in the work of Jedidiah Morse, the "father of American geography." In his 1789 edition of *The American Geography*, Morse treated only "New England" as a separate section, discussing the other states individually in order from north to south. The text, however, included two maps which bifurcated America. In a 1793 edition Morse did spell out three "grand divisions" for America: the "northern" or "eastern" states, the "middle" states, including the territory northwest of the Ohio, and the "south."[11] In organizing his text, Morse followed the same pattern he had used in 1789, discussing only the New England states collectively. Only a vague sectional conceptualization emerged a decade later in the contribution on the United States in the American edition of a British work on world geography. The author began his discussion by observing that America had been classified into "three grand divisions" —north, middle, and south—but that there were "many objections" to this division.[12] Unfortunately, he did not identify these objections for his readers.

[9] This work is conveniently summarized in Fulmer Mood, "The Origin, Evolution, and Application of the Sectional Concept, 1750-1900," in Merrill Jensen, ed., *Regionalism in America* (Madison, 1952), 5-98, esp. 15. See also William Guthrie, *A New System of Modern Geography*, (Phila., 1794-1795), II, 403, 550-552. Guthrie's work was first published in London about 1770.

[10] (Phila., 1755). Evans also published a much less-well-known map six years previously which was limited to the four colonies from New York to Delaware.

[11] Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography* (Elizabethtown, N.J., 1789); *idem., The American Universal Geography. . .* (Boston, 1793).

[12] John Pinkerton *et al., Modern Geography*, (Phila., 1804), II, 422.

When Englishmen and Americans looked to maps to clarify sectional divisions in eighteenth-century America, they did not find a clearly delineated group of middle colonies. On general maps of the British colonies in North America and later of the United States, such as the influential Mitchell map of 1755 and the Faden map of 1777, map makers explicitly identified "New England" about 80% of the time; rarely if ever did they mark off an area as the "middle states" or "colonies."[13] Furthermore, other than Evans's effort already discussed, there appear to have been few separate maps of the middle colonies. By comparison there were numerous separate maps of other sections. On such maps the middle colonies often appeared grouped with New England.

Almanacs furnished another perspective on how early Americans grouped together colonies and states. Almanacs abounded for the New England colonies collectively. There was also at least one almanac published for "the southern states." But no almanac seems ever to have appeared with "middle colonies" in its title or even covering the four-colony area. Instead, separate almanacs were published for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Alternatively New York was sometimes yoked with New Jersey, a pattern which at least once also included Connecticut.[14] New York was never linked with Pennsylvania. Instead, Pennsylvania and New Jersey were frequently grouped together, often joined by Delaware and Maryland.[15] The scope of the latter category of almanac sometimes included Virginia and in at least two instances was described as covering "the middle states."[16] Almanacs that covered only Pennsylvania and states southward, at least once even

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[13] This conclusion is based on an examination of about 50 eighteenth-century maps covering all of eastern North America. The Mitchell and Faden maps are conveniently reproduced in Emerson D. Fite and Archibald Freeman, comps., *A Book of Old Maps Delineating American History from the Earliest Days Down to the Close of the Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1926; reprint, New York, 1969), 180, 232.

[14] Abraham Shoemaker, *The New Jersey and New York Almanac for. . .1800* (Newark, 1800); *The New York, Connecticut, & New Jersey Almanac. . .for. . .1799* (New York, 1799).

[15] *The New Jersey and Pennsylvania Almanac. . .*was published at Burlington for 1793, 1796-1801. A *New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland Almanac. . .*was published at Philadelphia for 1796.

[16] See *The New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia Almanac. . .*published at Baltimore for the years 1789-1793 and at Philadelphia for 1799-1801.

North Carolina, made even clearer the southern orientation of Philadelphia.[17]

Americans were no more clear about sectional divisions in their private writing than they were in publications and maps. This was evident in the correspondence of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. Adams referred freely to the North, New England, and the South, but the printed editions of his writings show no sign he was conscious of a group of "middle colonies." Franklin showed particular awareness of New England, occasionally referred to the northern colonies, but seems to have mentioned the middle colonies only once. Washington and Jefferson, understandably, alluded to the South more frequently than Franklin, but their printed writings contain only three references to the middle colonies.[18] Rather than a tripartite division, Adams, Washington, and Jefferson frequently identified a north-south split as fundamental in the country.[19] When Jefferson chose to give the Marquis de Chastellux "my idea of the characters of the several states" he assigned pairs of characteristics ("cool"/"fiery," "laborous"/"indolent") to "the North" and "the South."[20] In his *Farewell Address* Washington warned that divisions between "the North" and "the South" posed the greatest danger to the unity of the new nation.[21]

The delegates to the Continental Congress displayed similar ambi-

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[17] Evans listed but the American Antiquarian Society did not locate *Ellicott's Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania Almanac. . .1788* and *The Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, and North Carolina Almanac. . .1781-1784* published at Baltimore by Andrew Ellicott.

[18] *Papers of John Adams*, Robert J. Taylor, ed., 4 vols. to date (Cambridge, Mass., 1977-); *Works of John Adams*, Charles Francis Adams, ed., 10 vols. (Boston, 1850-1856); *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Leonard Labaree, et al., eds., 22 vols. to date (New Haven and London, 1956-); *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Andrew Lipscomb, ed., 20 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1905); *Thomas Jefferson Papers*, Julian Boyd, ed., 19 vols. to date (Princeton, N.J., 1950-); *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., 39 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1931-1944).

[19] Adams to James Lloyd, 11 Feb. 1815, *Adams Works*, X, 116-119; Jefferson to Chavalier de la Luzerne, 12 April 1781, *Jefferson Papers*, V, 442; Jefferson, "Autobiography," *Jefferson Writings*, I, 40; Washington to David Stuart, 28 March 1790, *Washington Writings*, XXXI, 28-30; same to Catherine Macaulay Graham, 9 Jan. 1790, XXX, 497; same to Alexander Hamilton, XXXII, 98-99.

[20] Jefferson to Marquis de Chastellux, 2 Sept. 1785, *Jefferson Papers*, VIII, 467-468.

[21] Henry Steele Commager, ed., *Documents of American History*, 7th ed., (New York, 1963), 169-175.

guity. They made about 47% of their geographical allusions to New England, 17% to the north, 28% to the south, and 8% to the middle states.[22] They were also sensitive to a fundamental north-south split in the country.[23] The delegates, furthermore, were inconsistent in placing states in specific sections, often identifying Delaware and on at least one occasion Pennsylvania with the South.[24] Maryland sometimes found itself placed among the "middle states."[25]

The delegates to the Federal Convention of 1787 used similar ideas about sectionalization. They made a few references, to be sure, that implied a tripartite division.[26] But alternative conceptualizations were also clearly in their minds. At one point Charles Pinckney outlined five groupings: "New England," "New York," the "middle states" of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, "Maryland and Virginia," and "South Carolina and Georgia."[27] In other delegates' minds, the north-south split was fundamental. James Madison, for instance, argued that in the convention "a distinction had been set up & urged, between the N[orthern] & Southern States." Madison warned that if too much emphasis were placed on the distinctiveness of these two sections, then "the middle states" in turn might become conscious of their own peculiar interests.[28] It is revealing, for our purpose, that Madison spoke about the middle states as a unit in terms of futurity. In arguing for the adoption of the proposed constitution in *The Federalist Papers,* Alexander Hamilton admitted that some men were speculating about "three confederacies" emerging from a possible "dismemberment" of the

[22] See Edmund Burnett, ed., *Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress,* 8 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1921-1936). I found almost 200 references to parts of the country throughout this material, mostly unindexed. I no doubt overlooked other references, but there is no treason to believe that they referred disproportionately to the middle states.

[23] See, e.g., Titus Hosmer to Jonathan Trumbull, 31 Aug. 1778, *ibid.,* III, 395; Samuel Dick to Thomas Sinnickson, 18 March 1784, VII, 472; Richard Henry Lee to unknown, 10 Oct. 1785, VIII, 247.

[24] For Pennsylvania see William Bingham to Thomas Willing, 7 Aug. 1788, *ibid.,* 773. For Delaware see William Grayson to Richard Henry Lee, 22 March 1786, 333; and Samuel Osgood to John Adams, 7 Dec. 1783, VII, 379.

[25] Samuel Chase to the Maryland Council of Safety, 31 Jan. 1777, *ibid.,* II, 227.

[26] *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* Max Farrand, ed., (New Haven and London, 1911-1937), I, 113, 572-573; II, 221, 251-252, 363, 524, 533, 573. I may have overlooked other references.

[27] *Ibid.,* II, 449.

[28] *Ibid.,* I, 604; see also I, 476; II, 362, 364, 634.

United States. He judged, however, that it was "more probable" that two groupings would develop in such a situation. "If we attend carefully to geographical and commercial considerations, in conjunction with the habits and prejudicies of the different states," he explained, "we shall be led to conclude that in case of disunion they will most naturally league themselves under two governments."[29]

Visitors to early America gathered their ideas about sectionalization from maps and geographical guides, from printed material, and from conversations with Americans. Not surprisingly, therefore, they were confused and generally did not stress the existence of a group of middle colonies or states. J.F.D. Smyth, for instance, implicitly divided the country into five sections—New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina, with intermediate areas apportioned to their neighbors.[30] The most common division identified by visitors, however, was between the "north" and the "south."[31] But they did not agree where the boundary existed between the two sections. Some identified the Maryland-Pennsylvania line, others the New York-Pennsylvania line, still others the border between New York and New England. Andrew Burnaby believed in the north-south division, although the title of his book, *Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America,* could lead one to think otherwise. Actually Burnaby's "middle settlements" ranged from Virginia to New Hampshire. Regarding basic divisions he made clear that "our colonies may be distinguished into the southern and northern; separated from each other by the Susquehanna and that imaginary line which divides Maryland from Pennsylvania."[32]

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[29] Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers,* Clinton Rossiter, ed., (New York, 1961), 97-99 (Number Thirteen). Hamilton espoused similar views in the New York ratifying convention, in his private writings, and in the Report on Manufactures. See *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton,* Harold Syrett *et al,* eds. 22 vols. to date (New York, 1964-), V, 22-23, 142, 186, 209; X, 293-295.

[30] *A Tour in the United States of America. . .*(London, 1784; reprint, New York, 1968), 395, 396.

[31] See, e.g., Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America, 1793-1806,* Carl S. Driver, ed., (New York, 1935), 33; *Moreau de St. Mery's American Journey (1793-1798),* Kenneth and Anna M. Roberts, trans. and ed. (New York, 1947), 269.

[32] *Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America in the Years 1759 and 1760* (Ithaca, 1960), 110.

Administrative groupings of colonies and proposals for groupings seldom clustered the middle colonies into a separate group but tended instead to bifurcate America. The Post Office, Land Survey, and Indian Superintendency districts created by the British divided America into northern and southern components (with boundaries in different locations).[33] After trying various ad-hoc groupings for military purposes during the eighteenth century, in 1757 the British finally created a "southern district" extending as far north as Pennsylvania and grouping New York with New England under the direct command of General James Abercromby.[34] Given this common approach to dividing colonial America, it is not suprising that Benjamin Franklin entitled his proposal to the Albany Conference of 1754, which became the basis of the Conference's recommendations regarding colonial unity, "a scheme for uniting the Northern colonies."[35] Franklin probably thought of a union of the colonies from Virginia north; in 1752 Governor Robert Dinwiddie of Virginia had urged the Board of Trade to establish two confederacies in the mainland colonies, north and south.[36]

Political practices during and after the Revolution continued this pattern of groupings. The delegates to the Continental Congress from the middle states did not vote as a separate bloc to the same extent as delegates from other sections. As H. James Henderson has shown on the basis of roll-call analysis, the middle states' delegates had an "ambiguous stance" toward the voting blocs from the neighboring sections. "They were constantly pulled," he has concluded, "toward a dichotomization of the Congress around the New England and southern extremities."[37] As these two extremities faced off with increasing intensity between 1783 and 1785 over the question of commercial regulation, the middle states could not even vote as a bloc on such obviously

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[33] Lester J. Cappon, et al., eds., *Atlas of Early American History: The Revolutionary Era, 1760-1790* (Princeton, 1976), 32, 40, 108, 120; Harry M. Ward, *"Unite or Die": Intercolony Relations, 1690-1763* (Port Washington and London, 1971), 32-33, 144, 160.

[34] Ward, *"Unite or Die"*, 43.

[35] *Ibid.*, 13-14.

[36] *Ibid.*, 12; Richard Frothingham, *The Rise of the Republic of the United States,* 10th ed. (Boston, 1910), 116-117.

[37] Henderson's argument is summarized in "The Structure of Politics in the Continental Congress," in Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (New York and Chapel Hill, 1973), 157-196; quoted, 171.

sectional questions as the location of the national capital.[38] Statistically, the middle block disappeared by 1786.[39]

Political dynamics in Congress at this time were sensitive to the regionalization *within* the middle section. For instance, when seeking support to meet the possible loss of Mississippi navigation threatened by the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty, Southern delegates explicitly sought allies in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, but never in New York.[40] Discouraged by the possible dissolution of the Confederacy into two parts as a result of this issue, James Monroe wanted to make sure that if the nation did split, "Pennsylvania if not Jersey should be included in ours."[41]

There were, of course, some interregional connections among middle states politicians. In the colonial period Benjamin Franklin lent the cooperation of Pennsylvania's Assembly Party to Sir William Johnson and the DeLancey interest in New York in opposition to the Morris-Livingston faction. But this sort of cooperation remained inchoate before Independence[42] and does not seem to have led in the 1780s to the formation of a group of politicians who consistently asserted the interests of the middle states. Gouverneur Morris became politically active in both New York and Pennsylvania, but more as part of a *protonationalist* movement than as part of a middle states alignment *per se*. The strongest group of *nationalist* is in Congress in the early 1780s, the men around Robert Morris, tended to come from the middle states perhaps because they did not have distinctive, coherent *sectional* interests to represent.

Why did people in the eighteenth century not treat the middle colonies and states as a clearly defined section? From the perspective of the twentieth century, we can see that few uniquely middle colony interests or characteristics were strong enough to distinguish the area from other sections. Indeed, the possible distinctiveness of the middle section was

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[38] Joseph S. Davis, *Sectionalism in American Politics, 1774-1787* (Madison and London, 1977), 59-75.
[39] Henderson, "The Structure of Politics," 165-166, 170-173.
[40] Davis, *Sectionalism*, 121-126, 155-156.
[41] Cited in *ibid.*, 142.
[42] Alison Gilbert Olson, *Anglo-American Politics, 1660-1775* (New York and Oxford, 1973), 153.

blurred by a tendency to be like its northern neighbors in some respects, its southern neighbors in others. The middle colonies resembled the South, for example, in their percentage of English colonists and in the tendency of their settlers to live on dispersed farmsteads. But they closely resembled New England in their percentage of city dwellers and the percentage of their population under fifteen years of age.[43]

Physical geography did little to unify the middle colonies and middle states or set them off from the rest of early America.[44] The middle colonies did not possess distinctive soils, vegetation, climate or landforms; they differed from other areas in ways that were small and not uniform. For example, colonists who settled in East Jersey, on Long Island, and in Delaware farmed red and yellow podzol soils, as did southerners throughout the coastal plain and Piedmont. In West Jersey, most of Pennsylvania, and New York the settlers farmed gray-brown podzols, which also covered parts of Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and New England.[45]

Climatic changes along the east coast of the United States are gradual, and they overlap the different sections and do not mark off the middle states as distinctive. The boundary between major climate groups, the mesothermal climates and the microthermal climates, actually splits the middle states, with a humid subtropical climate extending from New Jersey and southeast Pennsylvania south to Florida and a humid continental climate extending from New York northwards across New England. But almost all eighteenth-century farmers in the middle states had between 160 and 200 frost-free days to grow their crops; they shared a growing season of this length with over half of the population of New England—the residents of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and

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[43] United States, Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, D.C., 1975), Series Z20-23, A195-209; Glenn Trewartha, "Types of Rural Settlement in Colonial America," *Geographical Review,* XXXVI (1946), 568-596.

[44] For information on the features of physical geography, I particularly followed Charles B. Hunt, *Physiography of the United States* (San Francisco and London, 1966).

[45] In the Great Soils Group classification system, podzols are a group of soils marked by an organic surface layer above a gray leached layer resting upon dark illuvial horizon. Red-yellow podzols are more susceptible to surface layer nutrient loss through leeching than are gray-brown podzols.

eastern Massachusetts—and a majority of Southerners—the inhabitants of Maryland, western Virginia, and western North Carolina.[46]

The middle colonies possessed no striking physiographical barriers such as rivers or mountains to divide them from New England and the South. Instead the rivers and coastal waterways helped to divide the section into two regions oriented in opposite directions. The southward-flowing Susquehanna connected much of central Pennsylvania with the Chesapeake area. Parts of Delaware lay in the drainage basin of the Chesapeake Bay and thus developed a southern orientation. In the other region of the middle colonies, the Long Island Sound formed a long, calm, east-west approach to New York harbor that encouraged trade and movement between that city and southern New England.

In the eighteenth century, New York and Pennsylvania belonged to different cultural areas. The distribution of traits that identified these cultural areas suggested a closer association of New York with New England than with Pennsylvania. Henry Glassie's "southern and eastern New England cultural area"—delineated by features like architecture, furniture, agricultural implements, and food—extended in the eighteenth century over northeastern Pennsylvania, northern New Jersey, and all of New York. A second major culture area in early America was centered in southeastern Pennsylvania, with extensions into Maryland. Two other areas were located farther south.[47]

The cumulative impact of these physical and cultural differences was to make the residents of each region associate among themselves much more than among their neighbors in the other region. They also tended to make both their social and economic contacts and their more formal political groupings with Americans from different sections outside the middle colonies—the South for Philadelphians, New England for New Yorkers. The remainder of this section will explore the specific political, social, and economic differences between the regions and identify

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[46] The key factor distinguishing the humid continental from the humid subtropical climate is the temperature of the coldest month—above or below O_2C. For the period of frost-free days, see *Goode's World Atlas*, 15th ed., Edward B. Espenshade, Jr., ed., (Chicago, 1978), 81.

[47] Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Phila., 1968), 35-37, 39, 159. See also Robert D. Mitchell, "The Formation of Early American Cultural Regions: An Interpretation," in James R. Gibson, ed., *European Settlement and Development in North America* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1978), 75.

their patterns of extra-regional contacts. Finally, brief attention will be given to New Jersey, the part of the middle colonies in which the two regions met.

Style of politics was one factor that defined the New York region. Politics in New York, a royal colony, were intertwined with British politics longer than were Pennsylvania's.[48] New York officials sought to strengthen their positions by rallying support in Britain, and British patronage policies in turn strongly affected politics in New York.[49] New York was the hub for much of the British administrative machinery in the colonies, the terminus for transatlantic communications, and, alone of all the mainland colonies, the major garrison for British regulars throughout the period of royal government.[50] In Pennsylvania, by contrast, as early as the first decade of the eighteenth century, the controversy between Proprietary Secretary James Logan and Assembly Speaker David Lloyd was entirely local, and after 1720 royal influence on politics was negligible.[51]

This greater involvement by British authorities in New York was one reason why "chaotic factionalism" characterized that province's politics to a much greater degree than it did the politics of Pennsylvania; indeed, Jack P. Greene has argued that it lasted longer in New York than in any other colony.[52] Disputes in New York had different bases at different times, while the interrelated questions of proprietary authority, defense appropriations, and taxation of proprietary lands pro-

[48] Michael Kammen, *Colonial New York: A History* (New York, 1975), 199-200.
[49] Stanley N. Katz presents the details of these transatlantic political activities in *Newcastle's New York* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).
[50] Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 307.
[51] For details of the Logan-Lloyd dispute see Gary B. Nash, *Quakers and Politics: Pennsylvania, 1681-1726* (Princeton, N.J., 1968), 249-273. The efforts beginning in 1755 to transform Pennsylvania into a royal colony reintroduced some British involvement in Pennsylvania affairs, with supporters and opponents of royal government both attempting to marshall support in London. But the campaign for royal government failed, of course, and Pennsylvania *did not* adopt New York's form of government. Events, especially the election of 1764, in Pennsylvania, not Britain, were decisive in this outcome. See James H. Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1746-1770: The Movement for Royal Government and Its Consequences* (Princeton, N.J., 1972).
[52] Jack P. Greene, "Changing Interpretations of Early American Politics," in Billington, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Early American History*, 176.

vided a fairly consistent structure to public affairs in Pennsylvania. English-versus-Dutch tensions, the clash of pro- and anti-Leisler factions, disputes over restricting the fur trade with Canada, efforts to secure lucrative land grants from governors, personality clashes, conflicts between Churchmen and dissenters, quarrels between landed and overseas trading groups, and persistent family rivalries were all more important politically in New York than in Pennsylvania and provided various bases for alignment. As Philip Livingston wrote in 1737, "We Change Sides as Serves our Interest best not ye Countries."[53] The well-known Livingston and DeLancey parties, which came to resemble the more stable groupings in Pennsylvania, were at best products of the 1760s and contested only during the last two colonial elections, in 1768 and 1769.[54]

Throughout the colonial period New York contained many discordant elements, including areas like eastern Long Island and Vermont that repeatedly wanted to secede; so by necessity it developed a stronger and more effective government than Pennsylvania. By contrast, until the middle of the eighteenth century, state authority in Pennsylvania was remarkably impotent. Pennsylvania had no province-wide system of taxation and no militia; settlers took up land as they pleased, and the proprietors' efforts to collect quitrents were circumvented. The rioting Paxton Boys, revealingly, reached the outskirts of Philadelphia, while the rebellious Hudson River tenants of the 1760s were effectively repressed on the spot (with the timely intervention of the British troops whose presence characterized New York). In time Pennsylvania was threatened with dissolution, and its territory was coveted by Maryland, Virginia, and Connecticut.[55] In turn, lack of government chores for political leaders to squabble about may have contributed to the existence of more durable political factions in Pennsylvania than in New York.

New York's unstable political factionalism resembled Virginia's pattern during its first-half century of representative government more than it did the pattern in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Pennsyl-

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[53] Cited in Kammen, *Colonial New York*, 205.

[54] See Patricia U. Bonomi's comments "On Party Labels" in *A Factious People: Politics and Society in Colonial New York* (New York, 1971), 237-239.

[55] This paucity of functions rather than harmony of interests may account for the "political stability" Allen Tully found in Pennsylvania in the second quarter of the century. *William Penn's Legacy: Politics and Social Structure in Pennsylvania, 1726-1755* (Baltimore, 1976).

vania politics, on the other hand, were like those of neighboring
Maryland, where issues of proprietary power, underlain by religion,
consistently separated two factions.[56] In its vigorous, coordinated,
province-wide campaigning styles from the 1750s on, however,
Pennsylvania more closely resembled Rhode Island than Maryland,
where deferential practices remained stronger. (The competitiveness
and combativeness of Rhode Island politics in the late colonial period
show clearly that "modern" political practices, as measured by turnout,
consistent partisanship, and sophisticated electioneering, were not lim-
ited to the middle colonies.[57])

Characteristics specific to New York or Pennsylvania encouraged
these differences in political styles and resulted in what John Murrin
has characterized as "contrasting styles of pluralism."[58] Most signifi-
cantly, New York's land system included manorial estates in the
Hudson Valley, an estate arrangement unknown in Penn's colony. This
arrangement in part accounted for the significance of the "landed in-
terest" in New York politics and the ability of relatively few families to
dominate New York politics. It also contributed to the difference in
taxation policies between the colonies: unimproved land went untaxed
in New York but not in Pennsylvania, which had the most egalitarian
policies in the colonies.[59] Local government was also more significant in
New York than in Pennsylvania.[60]

Groups settled differently in the two colonies.[61] The pattern in rural
New York was that of a mosaic, with different ethnic and religious
groups settling in separate locations—New England Puritans on Long
Island, English immigrants in Westcester County, the Dutch in the

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[56] Greene, "Changing Interpretations of Early American Politics," 168.

[57] Robert J. Dinkin, *Voting in Provincial America* (Westport, Conn., 1977), 81, 82-86, 94,
104, 107, 161-172, 192-194.

[58] Murrin, "Pluralism and Predatory Power," 478.

[59] Robert A. Becker, *Revolution, Reform, and the Politics of American Taxation, 1763-1783*
(Baton Rouge, 1980), 41-75, 177.

[60] Compare Bonomi, *Factious People*, 28-39, and *idem.*, "Local Government in Colonial New
York: A Base for Republicanism," in Jacob Judd and Irwin H. Polishook, eds., *Aspects of Early
New York Society and Politics* (Tarrytown, N.Y., 1974), 29-50, 118-131; Claire Keller, "The
Pennsylvania County Commission System, 1712-1740," PHMB, XCIII (1969), 372-382.
Government at the township level in Pennsylvania did increase in significance as time passed,
especially by the 1760s.

[61] Lucy Simler, "The Township: The Community of Rural Pennsylvania," *ibid.*, CVI (1982),
41-68, esp. 46-53.

upper Hudson Valley, and the Germans in the Mohawk Valley.[62] In Pennsylvania, by contrast, different religious and ethnic groups were intermixed, at least on the county level.[63] Sooner than New Yorkers, Pennsylvanians accepted the legitimacy of the religious pluralism inherent in the presence of these various groups. The Dutch legacy of a religious establishment, which continued in the special privileges the English accorded the Dutch Reformed Church; the presence of royal officials intent on Anglicanization; the limited influence of Quaker opposition to religious coercion; and the continued formal establishment of the Church of England in part of the colony kept the question of the legitimacy of religious dissent alive in New York—as a destabilizing factor in the province's politics—almost a half-century after it was settled in Pennsylvania.[64]

The difference between New York and Pennsylvania regarding the acceptance of religious pluralism became clear in the 1750s when both colonies established their first colleges. While there was some jockeying between Anglican and Presbyterian interests for position within the College of Philadelphia, the school was officially non-denominational and attracted students and faculty from both religious professions (although not from Quakers).[65] At King's College, on the other hand, the struggle between Churchmen and dissenters was vicious, with the Anglicans emerging victorious to shape the college as a denominational institution.[66] In the following decade President Samuel Johnson of King's College and the Anglican clergy of New York led a renewed call for an Anglican bishop for the colonies (joining, significantly, with the New England Anglican clergy); their brethren in Pennsylvania, on the other hand, did not endorse the proposal for an episcopate.[67]

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[62] Bonomi, *Factious People,* 18-28. See also Kammen, *Colonial New York,* 215.

[63] James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1972).

[64] John Webb Pratt, *Religion, Politics, and Diversity: The Church-State Theme in New York History* (Ithaca, 1967), 49-58, 67-77; Deborah Mathias Gough, "Pluralism, Politics, and Power Struggles: The Church of England in Colonial Philadelphia, 1695-1780" Ph.D. diss., (University of Pennsylvania, 1978), 51-72.

[65] On the mixed religious affiliations of the students of the early College of Philadelphia, see Ann Dexter Gordon, "The College of Philadelphia, 1749-1779; Genesis of an Institution" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1975), 118-121.

[66] Milton M. Klein, "Church, State, and Education: Testing the Issue in Colonial New York," *NY Hist,* VL (1964), 291-303.

[67] Gough, "Pluralism, Politics, and Power Struggles," 432-506.

New York's economy also distinguished the colony from Pennsyl-
vania and was an element in the unstable political factionalism which
characterized the province. The importance of the fur trade to New
York's economy created a distinct "fur interest" which was responsible
for not a little of New York's political volubility. Partly because of the
importance of the fur trade, New York had significantly more com-
merce with Great Britain than Pennsylvania did, and its commerce
accounts in part for the greater interest and involvement by British
officials in the affairs of New York. The Quaker colony, by contrast,
sent more of its exports to the continent and the Caribbean.[68]

Residents of the Pennsylvania region in the eighteenth century had
good reason to think of New Yorkers as strangers since they had limited
opportunities to come into personal contact with New Yorkers. The
border areas of the two colonies were largely unsettled throughout most
of the colonial period. Between 1700 and 1740 New Yorkers concen-
trated on developing the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys, which led
them *away* from Pennsylvania.[69] After 1740 some settlers moved into
the upper reaches of the Susquehanna valley, closer to Pennsylvania;
however, Indian troubles and the border warfare of the Revolution
checked extensive growth in this area.[70] Most of the settlers attracted to
this locale and, subsequently, to the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania,
furthermore, were New Englanders, not New Yorkers.[71] After the
Revolution, the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna in New
York and Pennsylvania remained so unsettled that it was the focus of
William Bingham's land speculations.[72]

Instead of facing toward one another, the New York and Pennsyl-

[68] Thomas Elliot Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York* (Madison, 1974), esp.
101-102; *Historical Statistics*, Series Z266-285.

[69] Ruth L. Higgins, *Expansion in New York, With Especial Reference to the Eighteenth Century*
(Columbus, Ohio, 1931), 47-69.

[70] *Ibid.*, 98-99; William Brewster, *The Pennsylvania and New York Frontier* (Phila., 1954),
43-45.

[71] Higgins, *Expansion in New York*, 69, 75, 90, 101-109; Brewster, *Pennsylvania and New
York Frontier*, 151-155; *The Susquehanna Company Papers*, ed., Julian Boyd, vol. 1: *1750-1755*
(Ithaca, 1962), ix-lxxxix.

[72] Higgins, *Expansion in New York*, 105-109; John Florin, *The Advance of Frontier Settlement
in Pennsylvania, 1638-1850: A Geographical Interpretation* (University Park, Pa., 1977), 73-
81; John F. Walzer "Colonial Philadelphia and Its Backcountry," *Winterthur Portfolio*, VII
(1973), 165.

vania regions turned in opposite directions. New York was much more involved with New England than with Pennsylvania. New York's economic hinterland extended into Connecticut. Settlers came to New York from New England—onto Long Island in the seventeenth century, towards the east bank of the Hudson early in the eighteenth century, and into central New York at the end of the century.[73] New York's major boundary disputes were with Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.[74] Yankees, not Pennsylvanians, attracted the scorn and hatred of New Yorkers. "As New England was the scum of the old world," wrote Lewis Morris, so its immigrants to New York "were the scum of the new."[75]

Pennsylvania sent its emigrating population southward, to Maryland, Virginia, and even North Carolina.[76] The Philadelphia region increasingly attracted settlers from Maryland, especially from the Eastern Shore.[77] The Dickinson family, for instance, was prominent in Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania into the nineteenth century. But there was also hostile contact: Maryland and the Quaker province had a serious quarrel regarding the boundary between the territories of the Penn and Calvert families. Communications followed similar lines. The circulation of the *Pennsylvania Journal* on the eve of the Revolution, for example, was much greater in the South than it was in New York. About 26% of the subscribers of the *Journal* from outside Philadelphia lived in Maryland or Virginia, fewer than 2% in New York.[78] The 1780 efforts by patriotic women to raise funds for the Revolution spread from Philadelphia to West Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia but no farther.[79]

[73] D.W. Meinig, "The Colonial Period, 1609-1775," in John H. Thompson, ed., *Geography of New York State* (Syracuse, 1966), 133-134.

[74] Philip J. Schwartz, *The Jarring Interests: New York's Boundary Makers, 1664-1776* (Albany, 1979). On conflicts with Connecticut see 5-73, with Massachusetts, 74-81, 97-131, 191-221, with New Hampshire, 168-174. There was a less important dispute with New Jersey, 81-88, 133-161, 179-190, and only an "insignificant" dispute with Pennsylvania, 175-178.

[75] Quoted in Dixon Ryan Fox, *Yankees and Yorkers* (New York, 1940), 138.

[76] Wayland Fuller Dunaway, "Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population," *PMHB*, LV (1931), 134-169.

[77] John A. Munroe, *Colonial Delaware: A History* (New York, 1978), 150-152.

[78] Cappon, ed., *Atlas of Early American History*, 35, 112-113.

[79] Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Boston, 1980), 182-185.

Pennsylvania also traded with the South more than with New York. As late as 1816 over 40% of its exports went to Virginia.[80] Meanwhile a diversified economy, centered on wheat cultivation, replaced dependence on tobacco throughout the Eastern Shore during the first half of the eighteenth century, and Philadelphia exported the bulk of the marketable products from this area.[81] By mid-century northern Maryland, as well as the Eastern Shore, was part of the region centered in Philadelphia.[82] The Philadelphia-Baltimore trade rivalry, which erupted suddenly in the 1760s, for the Susquehanna valley indicated this close interconnection between Pennsylvania and Maryland.[83] By contrast, trade between Philadelphia and New York was limited during the colonial period.[84]

During the colonial period, New York's pattern of formal associations linked it to New Jersey, the other colony in its region, and further suggested a northward orientation rather than one towards Pennsylvania. New York (and New Jersey) were part of the Dominion of New England, the most ambitious British effort to unify some colonies.[85] Even after the demise of the Dominion, New York's political association with New England continued. Between 1697 and 1701 Lord

[80] Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region*, 62.

[81] Paul G.E. Clemens, *The Atlantic Economy and Colonial Maryland's Eastern Shore From Tobacco to Grain* (Ithaca, 1980), 174-175, 203-205, 217-218.

[82] Jane N. Garrett, "Philadelphia and Baltimore, 1790-1840 A Study of Intra-Regional Unity," *Maryland History Magazine,* LV (1960), 1-13, Walzer, "Philadelphia and Its Backcountry," 163, 169, 170.

[83] In general the coastal trade in colonial America was limited See James F Shepherd and Samuel H. Williamson, "The Coastal Trade of the British North American Colonies, 1768-1772," *JEH,* XXXII (1972), 783-810, esp. 798-801. Systematic intercolonial trade statistics are not easily available, but see Richard Lawrence Beyer, "Relations of New York and Pennsylvania, 1710-19," *New York Historical Society Quarterly Journal,* XIV (1930), 3-12, and William C Sachs, "Interurban Correspondents and the Development of a National Economy Before the Revolution New York as a Case Study," *NY Hist,* XXXVI (1955), 320-335 For the early nineteenth century see Diane Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850* (New York, 1978), 61-66. Lindstrom's argument that economic growth in the nineteenth-century Philadelphia region came initially from intra-regional development and only subsequently from inter-regional trade further suggests that New York City-Philadelphia trade must have been even less significant earlier.

[84] James Weston Livingwood, *The Philadelphia-Baltimore Trade Rivalry, 1780-1860* (Harrisburg, 1947), Walzer, "Philadelphia and Its Backcountry," 164-167

[85] Viola Florence Barnes, *The Dominion of New England* (New Haven and London, 1923), 223.

Bellomont jointly governed Massachusetts, New York, and New Hampshire.[86] As late as 1754 a proposal for colonial unity resembling the Dominion of New England, probably the work of Jonathan Trumbull and/or Thomas Hutchinson, was circulated.[87] For most of the eighteenth century, furthermore, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut constituted a vice-admiralty district.[88] New York also participated with one or more of the New England colonies seven times between 1690 and 1755 in conferences to discuss common problems regarding defense or Indian affairs. New Jersey joined New York in meetings with New Englanders on three other occasions during this period.[89]

Until 1767, Pennsylvania and Delaware constituted a vice-admiralty district separate from New York.[90] Since Pennsylvania did not face an immediate threat from the French in Canada and since until 1756 she made efforts on principle to avoid involvement in war and exploitation of Indians, the Quaker colony kept away from meetings involving her northern neighbors. There was some contact with New York, to be sure; there were eight meetings beginning in 1709 at which representatives from both New York and Pennsylvania were present.[91] On each of these occasions, however, representatives from at least one New England or Southern colony were present. In contrast to the situation within New England and the South, representatives from just the four middle colonies never met together.[92]

As early as 1743 Pennsylvania began to meet regularly with her southern neighbors—without New Jersey or New York present. Rep-

[86] Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven and London, 1934-1938), IV, 377-378

[87] For a copy of the plan see Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections,* 1st series, VII, 203-207. For a similar scheme see Ward, *"Unite or Die"*, 20

[88] Carl Ubbelohde, *The Vice-Admiralty Courts and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1960), 130-132.

[89] Ward, *"Unite or Die"*, 32-33, 37, 43.

[90] The 1767 reorganization of the Vice-Admiralty Courts finally brought the four middle colonies together into the same district, but one that included Maryland and Virginia as well.

[91] These conferences were in addition to the ones involving New York and New England mentioned in the previous paragraph.

[92] New Jersey and Pennsylvania participated in three meetings in 1757 and 1758 which dealt with Indian affairs. Another partial exception to the lack of political unity among the middle colonies was Benjamin Fletcher's common governorship of New York and Pennsylvania from 1693 to 1695.

resentatives from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, for instance, attended two such conferences in 1757.[93] Unlike New York, these colonies shared immediate concerns about the French and Indians in the Ohio Valley. Washington wrote in 1756, "I wish sincerely the three colonies could be brought to act in conjunction as our frontiers are so contiguous."[94] Furthermore, the Assembly Party in Pennsylvania deliberately sought to circumvent the influence in the Ohio country of New York, in part by formulating a separate Indian policy for Pennsylvania. The opposing Proprietary party in Pennsylvania also had goals basically different from New York's: *remove* the Indians to clear the way for settlement profitable to the Proprietors (and their political allies) rather than keep the Indians in place as a military buffer and source of furs.

When Congress established three departments to handle Indian affairs in 1775, New York was included in the district with New England. One of the three military districts Congress created in 1776 included both New York and Pennsylvania (as well as Maryland), but in the debate over adoption of this measure "some N[ew] England Delegates urged to have N[ew] York in their district."[95] Continuing the trend established in the colonial period, New York also met with New England states in conferences.[96] After the Revolution, the Judiciary Act of 1789 brought New York and New England together in the "eastern" circuit (the "middle" circuit consisted of the states from New Jersey through Virginia). The Judiciary Act of 1801 altered these arrangements but maintained New York's northward orientation: New York, Connecticut, and the new state of Vermont constituted one circuit.[97]

The pattern was similar in non-political organizations and was particularly evident in religious denominations. During the Great Awak-

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[93] Details on intercolonial conferences held before 1763 are found in Ward, *"Unite or Die"*, 52-69, 131-152; and on Ft. Stanwick in James Thomas Flexner, *Lord of the Mohawks: A Biography of Sir William Johnson* (Boston, 1975), 324-326. On the conflicts and rivalries between New York and Pennsylvania over Indian policy see *ibid.*; Douglas Edward Leach, *The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763* (New York, 1966); and Brewster, *Pennsylvania and New York Frontier*.

[94] Washington to Robert Dinwiddie, June, 1756, *Washington Writings*, I, 394.

[95] Mood, "The Sectional Concept, 1750-1900," 26-28; Richard Smith Diary, entry for 27 Feb. 1776, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, I, 365.

[96] These conferences are discussed in Allan Nevins, *The American States During and After the Revolution* (New York, 1924), 617-619.

[97] Modd, "The Sectional Concept, 1750-1900," 35-36.

ening, New Side Presbyterians organized the Synod of New York and maintained a separate existence until they entered an uneasy reconciliation with their Old Side brethren in the Synod of Philadelphia in 1758. By the end of the colonial period three presbyteries subordinate to the reunited synod covered the New York region: the Presbyteries of New York (which extended into New Jersey), New Brunswick (which extended into northeastern Pennsylvania), and Suffolk (which extended into Connecticut).[98] Colonial Anglicans thought in similar terms. As early as 1719 the Rev. William Vessey's jurisdiction as Commissary of New York included Connecticut and New Jersey. In 1764 the Rev. William Smith of Philadelphia proposed to the Bishop of London the appointment of an "agent" for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to be responsible for New York and Connecticut. Anglican clergy from these two colonies and New Jersey met together regularly beginning in 1766.[99] New York was also the center in early America for a Quaker Yearly Meeting, which included Friends from New Jersey.

Philadelphia, of course, was the center of the largest Quaker Yearly Meeting in early America. The geographical scope of this Meeting was almost identical with that of the Philadelphia region and was well described by its official title at the end of the eighteenth century, "The Yearly Meeting of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and parts of Maryland and Virginia." Despite the transfer of some monthly meetings in central Pennsylvania to the Baltimore Yearly Meeting during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, Chester Quarterly Meeting of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting continued to have components in Maryland at the end of the century.[100] Within other denominations, Anglicans from Pennsylvania, Delaware, and southern New Jersey met regularly, and William Smith's 1764 proposal included a separate agent for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Presbyterian polity

[98] Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of An American Tradition A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Phila., 1949), 34, 73, 128-129, 137, 150-154

[99] Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775* (London, 1962), 179-182, 266, 268, Morgan Dix, *A History of the Parish of Trinity Church in the City of New York,* (New York, 1898-1900), I, 193, 313-315, William Smith to the Bishop of London, 17 April 1764, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D ,* H.W. Smith, ed., (Phila., 1879-1880), I, 348-349

[100] For details on Quaker polity see Works Projects Administration, Pennsylvania Historical Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, *Inventory of Church Archives Society of Friends in Pennsylvania* (Phila., 1941)

also illustrated the orientation of the Philadelphia region: the Presbytery of Philadelphia extended into southern New Jersey; the Presbyteries of Lewes and New Castle in Delaware both extended into Maryland; and the Presbytery of Donegal in central Pennsylvania extended into Virginia.

The Pennsylvania region came up against the New York region in New Jersey, which was in a sense the shatter-belt of the middle colonies. "The Jersies" were not turned out of a common middle-colony mold, but rather were formed by characteristics and influences from two different regions. Its resulting dual character was not the inevitable result of having two powerful neighbors, but of having two such different neighbors. New Jersey overlapped two different regions, so it may therefore have been more inclined to embrace a national perspective. She declared independence and ratified the constitution before her neighbors.

Residents of New Jersey generally had ties to one neighboring region or the other but not to both. Quakers in West Jersey interacted with Quakers in Pennsylvania, Puritans in East Jersey with their coreligionists in New York and New England. New York and East Jersey shared a large Dutch community. West Jersey's German and Scotch-Irish population, in Hunterdon County, emigrated from Pennsylvania. There were some cultural traits in each part of the province, consequently, which corresponded with those of neighboring New York and Pennsylvania. West Jersey had better relations with its Indians than did East Jersey, for example, and its inhabitants were much less likely to have been slaveholders.[101]

Leading citizens from the regional centers of the middle colonies usually played roles in different parts of New Jersey. Prominent New York politicians, such as Lewis Morris and William Livingston, were also officials in New Jersey. The Kembles, Skinners, Alexanders, and Rutherfords were among the families with branches in New York and East Jersey. West Jersey, for its part, sent John Kinsey from speakership of the New Jersey Assembly to that of Pennsylvania and received William Franklin, son of a leading Pennsylvania politician, as the last royal governor of New Jersey. From Pennsylvania members of both the Penn and Pemberton families crossed the Delaware and sat on the Council of Proprietors of West Jersey. Samuel Jennings, as well as members of the Coxe and Logan families, were also active in both West

[101] Peter O. Wacker, *Land and People: A Cultural Geography of Pre-industrial New Jersey—Origins and Settlement Patterns* (New Brunswick, 1975), 57-220.

Jersey and Pennsylvania.[102] That a province-wide group of political leaders did not emerge in New Jersey is reflected by the fact that over 80% of the kinship ties among legislators were with representatives from the same county.[103]

Schemes for colonial unity reflected this bifurcation of New Jersey. As early as 1699, Edward Randolph, surveyor-general of customs in America, proposed the union of West Jersey and Pennsylvania. Two decades later Governor Sir William Keith of Pennsylvania suggested joining that colony with Delaware and West Jersey. Meanwhile, there were advocates of unifying East Jersey and New York, and these colonies did share a governor until 1736.[104]

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As Frederick Jackson Turner first pointed out, in many respects nineteenth- and twentieth-century America was the middle colonies writ large.[105] But the important characteristics of the middle colonies were not found in all regions of that section. Each region of the middle colonies was diverse, to be sure, but the diversity had different bases and consequently different results.

The course of history was not identical in each region, a fact in part related to regional differences. For instance, the Revolution brought Pennsylvania government under the most democratic constitution created by the most radical political faction in any American state; in New York conservatives remained dominant and drafted a traditional, balanced constitution.[106] Underlying this divergent development were

[102] John E. Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey, A History* (New York, 1973), 201-203; Gerlach, *Prologue to Independence*, 29-33. Gerlach errs in reasoning that bilateral relationships between some Jerseymen and New Yorkers and other Jerseymen and Pennsylvanians meant that the three colonies as a group were highly unified.

[103] Thomas L. Purvis, "High Born, Long Recorded Families: Social Origins of New Jersey Assemblymen, 1703-1776," *WMQ*, XXXVII (1980), 602-603.

[104] Munroe, *Colonial Delaware*, 134; Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey*, 84; Wacker, *Land and People*, 332. Pennsylvania and Delaware shared a governor until 1776 and a legislature until 1704.

[105] Klein, "Microcosm," 180-181.

[106] For a discussion of the contrasts between the Revolutionary movements in New York and Pennsylvania see Edward Countryman, *A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790* (Baltimore, 1981), 163-169. Gary B. Nash, in *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 362-382, contrasts Revolutionary developments in New York City and Philadelphia, and ascribes much of the difference to the coercive power of "conservative" leaders in New York City.

different experiences in the colonial period. In contrast with New York, in Pennsylvania the experience of diversity encouraged political ineffectiveness, climaxing with the inability of the province's political leadership to take decisive positions for or against Independence.[107] After Independence, the two states continued in different directions: Pennsylvanians spent an unstable decade-and-a-half arguing about constitutional issues, while New York came under the domination of a powerful governor and his political faction. This divergence, again, is related to different practices from the past: in New York social conditions had encouraged political leaders' opportunism, allowing the development of a relatively intrusive state machinery.[108] A good deal of historical development was necessary before the characteristics often emphasized by historians as defining all the middle states finally emerged generally in the mid-nineteenth century. The aggressive factionalism of colonial New York politics had to combine with factors that were much more apparent in colonial Pennsylvania—greater party regularity, more concern with issues, regular annual elections—to produce the political world of Martin Van Buren. Generalizations regarding the entire middle colonies, therefore, should be made with care.

The same caution should be used for subsequent American history, which the middle states and colonies supposedly presaged. The very incoherence of American history may have been a key characteristic, a trait which could have been rooted in the kind of regionalism and localism evident in early America in the middle section.[109] Historians of the middle section will obscure the significance of its pluralism if instead they simply assert that a list of middle colony characteristics (all somehow related to "diversity") were more influential than the pattern they say defined the South or New England in early America. They must deal with the pluralism of the middle section by recognizing that

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[107] I have discussed the social basis for this debilitating hesitancy in "Can A Rich Man Support Revolution? The Case of Philadelphia in 1776," *Pennsylvania History*, 48 (1981), 235-250, esp. 239-240.

[108] Countrymen has argued that under Gov. George Clinton, despite political conflict, New York was basically a single-faction dominant polity. "Consolidating Power in Revolutionary America: The Case of New York, 1775-1783," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* VI (1976), 645-677. See also *A People in Revolution*, 221-252.

[109] Zuckerman has made a similar suggestion, "Puritans, Cavaliers, and the Motley Middle," 24.

each of its two regions has a history deserving close study. Only then will we be able to formulate for all of early America a taxonomy more accurate than the familiar tripartite one. Just as it begins to receive deserved attention, early Pennsylvania should not disappear into "the middle colonies."

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