



*A Looking-Glass for Presbyterians:
Recasting a Prejudice in Late
Colonial Pennsylvania*

THE CONESTOGA MASSACRES in the winter of 1763–64 and the Paxton Boys’ subsequent march on Philadelphia have long been acknowledged as crucial events in the construction of race and the evolution of popular politics in late colonial Pennsylvania. As Peter Silver, Patrick Griffin, and Kevin Kenny have recently demonstrated, these incidents were flash points that encouraged the gradual development of a new discourse of race that competed with older, inherited, ethnic and religious categories.¹ This new paradigm slowly united competing European ethno-religious groups under the moniker of “white folk”—an exclusive grouping closed to all but Euro-Americans. But divisive Old World

The author would like to thank Ian McBride and Melvin Yazawa for their thoughtful comments on earlier drafts of this article. He would also like to thank Peter Silver for sharing his valuable insights regarding anonymous authorship and the Paxton pamphlets, as well as Tamara Gaskell and the editorial staff of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*.

¹ Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York, 2008), 177–90; Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York, 2007), 46–49, 64–68; Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn’s Holy Experiment* (New York, 2009). For a brief examination of the Conestoga massacres in these works, as well as a broader contextualization of the events, see Patrick Spero, “Matters of Perspective: Interpreting the Revolutionary Frontier,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 132 (2008): 261–70.

THE PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY
Vol. CXXXIII, No. 4 (October 2009)

models for collective identity, in which ethnicity, religion, and politics were intertwined, survived—even thrived—alongside emergent perceptions of racial difference in the tense atmosphere that engulfed Philadelphia after the Paxton march. The rioters threatened a cosmopolitan city ridden with religious tension and political faction. As Silver attests, the Paxton murders were not popularly understood by contemporaries in terms of the perpetrators' hatred for Indians because a "ready-made explanation" compelled many to arrive at a different conclusion: the Paxton Boys—commonly believed to be Scots-Irish Presbyterians—had behaved as people of their ethnicity and denomination always had.² The election debates that followed the march on Philadelphia might thus be examined in the context of widespread and long-established uneasiness over both the growth of Presbyterianism and continued Irish immigration. Indeed, it appeared to many Pennsylvanians, especially in the east, that the most pressing threats to the colony's stability came not from violent Indian incursions, but from within. That this should be the case after a decade of warfare on the frontier indicates how entrenched Old World factionalism and biases were in mid-eighteenth-century colonial society.

This article does not address the creation of white identity in opposition to non-European groups. Instead, it exposes the anxieties of a large proportion of the Pennsylvania electorate regarding shifting Euro-American ethnoreligious demographics by examining the phenomenon of anti-Presbyterianism as it was expressed in the pamphlet literature of 1764. Anti-Presbyterianism can be seen, to borrow a concept from the historiography of seventeenth-century English anti-Catholicism, as a "structure of prejudice" by which the members of one group attack those of another through a process of inversion, casting their opponents as binary negatives of themselves.³ These structures of prejudice, inherited from previous generations and influenced by developments in Europe, offered mid-eighteenth-century colonials a framework for making sense of political and religious change at home while simultaneously reinforcing their sense of interconnectedness with the English core of the empire through a belief in a common history. But the colonial anti-Presbyterian stereotype, while modelled on its British counterpart, reflected the unique con-

² Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 203.

³ Peter Lake, "Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603–1642*, ed. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London, 1989), 72–106.

cerns of the groups—in Pennsylvania, Quakers and Anglicans—that used it to attack a diverse community that was itself distinct from its European forebears. In other words, the anti-Presbyterian construct was responsive to colonial conditions. Those who employed it had to draw upon the anxieties of a local audience in order to rally support for their cause. Thus, because the growth of Presbyterianism in Pennsylvania was the result of continual Irish immigration, Philadelphian anti-Presbyterian diatribes commonly contained negative caricatures of the Irish. American writers fashioned demeaning depictions of the Scots-Irish, inspired by selective readings of Ulster Protestant history, the popular British trope of Irish Catholic barbarity, and—by extension—the discourse of antipopy, onto the stereotype. By welding new traits to a century-old ethnic caricature and merging different stereotypes, they demonstrated the adaptability—and primacy—of European conceptions of ethnicity in a period when ideas of racial difference were gaining gradual acceptance.

Anti-Presbyterianism in Assembly Pamphlets

In December 1763, a mob in Lancaster County, soon dubbed the “Paxton Boys,” brutally murdered two groups of innocent Conestoga Indians that it suspected of participating in attacks on western settlements during Pontiac’s Uprising. A few months later, anger over the government’s seemingly preferential concern for the Conestogas above the interests of western whites led the Paxton Boys, whose ranks had swollen in the meantime, to march on Philadelphia. Their leaders met a delegation from the city in Germantown and agreed to disband if their concerns were aired before the legislature. These events initiated a reconfiguration of ethnoreligious political allegiances on the eve of a general election.⁴

⁴The Paxton Boys have a large historiography. For a more detailed narrative of events, see Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost*; Brooke Hindle, “The March of the Paxton Boys,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 3 (1946): 461–86; John R. Dunbar’s introduction to *The Paxton Papers* (The Hague, 1957), 3–51; and Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 177–90. Early studies focused on the political dimensions of the disturbances, viewing them as ugly incidents in a protodemocratic campaign for legislative reform among disenfranchised settlers. See Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Old West,” in *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin . . . 1908* (Madison, WI, 1909), 221–23; and Hubertis M. Cummings, “The Paxton Killings,” *Journal of Presbyterian History* 44 (1966): 219–43. This view was challenged by James Kirby Martin, “The Return of the Paxton Boys and the Historical State of the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1764–1774,” *Pennsylvania History* 38 (1971): 117–33. For the massacres and march in a broader context, see Thomas P. Slaughter, “Crowds in Eighteenth-Century America: Reflections and New Directions,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 115 (1991): 3–34; and Alden T. Vaughan, “Frontier Banditti and the Indians: The Paxton

The colony divided between those who, while perhaps not agreeing with the Paxton Boys' actions, sympathized with western grievances and those who believed that the march on the capital was tantamount to treason.

During the spring and summer of 1764, the quarrels that emerged over the Paxton Boys' activities were transformed into a pamphlet war over the fate of William Penn's proprietary charter.⁵ The Assembly, or antiproprietary, Party, headed by Benjamin Franklin and Joseph Galloway, the speaker of the legislature, attempted to take advantage of the confused situation that arose in the aftermath of the march to drive out the proprietary interest. They proposed to appeal to Westminster for a royal charter that would replace Thomas Penn with a royal governor. Their Assembly Party was comprised of Quakers, Moravians, and Mennonites, among others. Meanwhile, an uneasy "New Ticket"—largely pro-Paxton—confederation of Presbyterians, reformed German churches, and Anglican elites emerged in opposition to a new charter and in favor of an equitable distribution of assembly seats between the eastern and the currently underrepresented western counties.⁶ Both sides hoped that their candidates' victory in the October election would inaugurate institutional change that would, in turn, reduce the other side to political insignificance.

These developments took place within a context of growing religious tension. In 1758, the Presbyterian synods of New York and Philadelphia reunited, making Presbyterianism the largest single denomination in

Boys' Legacy, 1763–1775," *Pennsylvania History* 51 (1984): 1–29. For the Paxton massacres as expressions of white masculinity, see Krista Camenzind, "Violence, Race, and the Paxton Boys," in *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Wood: Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania*, ed. William A. Pencak and Daniel K. Richter (University Park, PA, 2004), 201–20. For the British identity of the Paxton Boys, see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689–1764* (Princeton, NJ, 2001), 168–72. For their frontier preconditions, see George W. Franz, *Paxton: A Study of Community Structure and Mobility in the Colonial Pennsylvania Backcountry* (New York and London, 1989), 7; and Richard R. Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia, 2004), 241–42.

⁵ Alison Olson, "The Pamphlet War over the Paxton Boys," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 123 (1999): 31. For the scale of pamphlet publication, see G. Thomas Tanselle, "Some Statistics on American Printing, 1764–1783," in *The Press and the American Revolution*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench (Worcester, MA, 1980), 330–38.

⁶ The term "confederation," as opposed to "coalition," is used throughout this article because, as James Hutson has noted, the latter "implies a degree of cooperation which the suspicious and antagonistic opponents of royal government could never achieve." James H. Hutson, *Pennsylvania Politics, 1746–1770: The Movement for Royal Government and Its Consequences* (Princeton, NJ, 1972), 164.

Pennsylvania. This development, however artificial it may have been, discomfited outsiders who were concerned about the denomination's increasing strength in the colony and who had become accustomed to two distinct, bickering, Presbyterian blocs. From the 1750s onward, the continent-wide debate between Anglicans and nonconformists over the establishment of an American episcopate found local expression in the confrontation between Presbyterian and Anglican tutors regarding curriculum and administration at the nondenominational College of Philadelphia.⁷ Furthermore, the Paxton Boys were predominantly Presbyterian. Their later demands regarding equitable assembly representation for the five western counties with high Presbyterian populations intensified denominational friction by threatening Quaker hegemony. Widespread sympathy for these demands resulted in increased political awareness among disenfranchised westerners and reinforced popular resentment towards the assembly. This, in turn, facilitated an anti-Presbyterian backlash among those aligned with the legislature. Each side of the election debate perfected histrionic characterizations of the other in print during the spring and summer of 1764. The New Ticket mastered a bumbling Quaker while the assemblymen retorted with the image of a fanatical Presbyterian.⁸ Previous historians have rightly warned against overreliance on these rhetorical pantomimes, and it should be noted that these figures, and the threats posed by them, were often exaggerated.⁹ On the other hand, exaggerated as they were, these Quaker and Presbyterian caricatures did reflect the legitimate, if not paranoid, concerns of the groups that used them; they, therefore, merit serious, though sceptical, enquiry. The Presbyterian construct has received less scholarly attention than its Quaker counterpart, and it is this stereotype that is the subject of this paper.¹⁰

Throughout the spring and summer of 1764, Assembly authors

⁷ Ann D. Gordon, *The College of Philadelphia, 1749–1779: Impact of an Institution* (New York, 1989), 71–101; Edward Potts Cheney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740–1940* (Philadelphia, 1940), 105–11; Joseph E. Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania: A History* (New York, 1976), 254–57.

⁸ Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 212.

⁹ Alan Tully, *Forming American Politics: Ideals, Interests, and Institutions in Colonial New York and Pennsylvania* (Baltimore, 1994), 185–86.

¹⁰ The exceptions are Peter A. Butzin, "Politics, Presbyterians and the Paxton Riots, 1763–64," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 51 (1973): 70–84, in which the New Ticket's anti-Presbyterianism receives attention, and J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660–1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge, 1994), 258–60.

attempted to drive Anglicans and moderates from the New Ticket by employing an established vocabulary of negative Dissenter characterizations. Secondary meanings of the words “Presbyterian” and “Dissenter” are important to understanding both antiproprietary anxiety about the growing influence of Presbyterianism in Pennsylvania and the characteristics they attributed to their constructed Presbyterian stereotype. Often they pejoratively denoted republicanism and roused the historical memory of seventeenth-century religious extremism. The secondary meaning of these terms is apparent in circumstances where they singled out unacceptable or dangerous forms of religious or political unorthodoxy. Thus, in *The Paxton Boys, A Farce*, a Quaker reprimanded a Presbyterian, claiming, “we are Governed by the best of Kings, and how dare thee say to the contrary, thou Disenter.” The Presbyterian observed that, as a non-Anglican, the Quaker was also a Dissenter, leading him to quip, “But my Disenting does not proceed from any dislike to the King, or the Government, . . . but thou art a Desenter from the Wickedness of thy Heart, like the fallen Angels.”¹¹

Assembly pamphleteers—a few of them nonconformists in their own right—were aware of the hypocrisy of criticizing Dissenter loyalty while defending a Quaker-dominated coalition. One pamphleteer went to ridiculous lengths to prove that Quakers had always been loyal—or at least not aggressively disloyal—subjects to the Crown despite their religious nonconformity. Non-Quaker authors overcame this stumbling block, and also avoided offending reformed Calvinist Germans, by attacking Presbyterianism—the most immediate threat at hand anyway—specifically rather than Dissent at large. For others, the fact that Quakers were technically Dissenters was irrelevant. Quakers throughout the empire had long since jettisoned the confrontational practices that had initially informed outside opinions of the sect. As a result, by the middle of the eighteenth century, Quakerism had largely shed the negative reputation acquired during the Commonwealth era and became incorporated into mainstream polite society. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, was even remembered by one pamphleteer, who might have been, admittedly, a member of the sect, as “worthy a Man as . . . the modern Ages hath produced.”¹²

¹¹ *The Paxton Boys, A Farce, Translated from the Original French, by a Native of Donegall*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1764), 15.

¹² *An Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled the Conduct of the Paxton-Men, impartially represented . . .* (Philadelphia, 1764), 13–19.

The wider British trope of anti-Presbyterianism evolved out of the religious turmoil of the seventeenth century and the consolidation of the English confessional state at the beginning of the eighteenth.¹³ Antiproprietary writers borrowed heavily from their British predecessors. Samuel Butler's anti-Dissenter poem *Hudibras* (1663–68), for example, was the model, in both style and content, for *The Paxtoniade. A Poem*.¹⁴ The early eighteenth century was a defining period for the Church of England and its sister institution, the Church of Ireland. Both churches strove to secure their authority in the state against the external menace of religious nonconformity by pressuring Queen Anne's sympathetic Tory ministers to revoke the limited toleration established in the reign of William through coercive measures such as the Penal Laws and the Test and Corporation Acts. These laws barred Catholics and Dissenters from government offices and were jealously protected by the Church of Ireland, which used them to secure domination over the vast majority of the island's population.

During the 1690s, Ireland received a massive influx of migrants from the western Lowland counties of Scotland. This panicked the Anglican elite (Protestant Ascendancy) who had secured a political monopoly at the expense of their Gaelic Catholic (native Irish) and Ulster Presbyterian (Scots-Irish) countrymen following the eventual ratification of the Treaty of Limerick in 1697. The treaty, signed in 1691, ended the Williamite War and originally guaranteed limited recognition of the property and religion of Irish Catholics. The Irish Parliament had these stipulations dropped before the document was ratified, signalling the establishment of Anglican control over the political life of the island during the eighteenth century. Scottish migration ensured that measures taken by the Church of Ireland and the Dublin parliament during the Test Act debates of the 1720s and 1730s were specifically crafted with the northern Presbyterian community in mind. The Test Act (1704) was one piece of legislation in a series of statutes known collectively as the penal laws. These laws were introduced in the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-centuries to counter the growth and influence of Catholicism and Protestant nonconformity. The Test Act required all those who wanted to hold public office to take a religious test to prove their adherence to Anglican doctrine. This

¹³ Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660–1715* (London, 1993), 176–88.

¹⁴ Christopher Gymnast, *The Paxtoniade. A Poem* (Philadelphia, 1764).

meant that conscientious Dissenters were effectively barred from positions of political power in the kingdom. The established status of both the Church of England and Church of Ireland allowed them to dictate the terms of the debate and shielded them from the real or imagined threat posed by aggressive Dissent.¹⁵ Colonial Anglicans, however, lacked the security of establishment enjoyed by their European brethren. The warnings of past generations regarding Presbyterian fanaticism were therefore particularly harrowing to Pennsylvania Anglicans in the aftermath of the Paxton march.

Franklin's push for royal government, consequently, put many Anglicans in an awkward position. The Philadelphia clergy, under the influence of the provost of the College of Philadelphia, Rev. William Smith, sided with the New Ticket and endorsed the counter petition circulated in reaction to Franklin's appeal to Westminster.¹⁶ Others naturally sympathized with Franklin's campaign but feared reprisals from Philadelphia if they supported the move publicly. A western Anglican minister, Rev. Hugh Neill, described the difficulty of choosing between the two petitions. He noted, "if we signed the first we incurred the displeasure of our superiors in Philadelphia; if we signed the second, we affronted such as our parishioners as called themselves Loyal Patriots, and run the risk of being charged with disloyalty to the Crown of Great Britain."¹⁷ Historians have tended to gloss over the complicated loyalties of lay Anglicans during the 1764 election and have lumped them in the New Ticket camp along with their superiors. Neill's comments reveal that such a blanket assumption is problematic and that many Anglicans were not, unlike their clergy, wedded to the proprietary cause. The chosen affiliation of Anglicans largely reflected two factors: how closely they were

¹⁵ In Ireland, the test was largely successful in blocking Dissenters from entering political life, but it came under attack in the 1730s because it was blamed for driving Presbyterians to America and thereby weakening the Protestant interest on the island. David Hayton, *Ruling Ireland, 1685–1742: Politics, Politicians and Parties* (Suffolk, UK, 2004), 251–52.

¹⁶ The previous year Smith had returned from a fundraising venture to Britain and Ireland on behalf of the College of Philadelphia. While in England he had reaffirmed his relationship with Thomas Penn, making it unlikely that he would abandon a friend and benefactor (the Penns had not only secured his position as provost but had also donated five hundred pounds to the college in 1762). For Penn's donations, see Jasper Yeates Brinton and Neda M. Westlake, eds., *The Collection Books of Provost Smith*, (Philadelphia, 1964).

¹⁷ "The Rev. Hugh Neill to the Secretary of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Oxford, Oct. 18th, 1764," in *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, ed. William Stevens Perry (New York, 1871), 2:365.

aligned to their Philadelphia superiors and the Penns and how they believed the dream of an American bishopric could best be realized.¹⁸ A new charter could pave the way for a bishopric, but, as Rev. Thomas Barton believed, so could antagonizing the Quakers over the threat of Presbyterian ascendancy.¹⁹ It was important for the Anglican elite that the bishopric be attained without jeopardizing the authority of Thomas Penn, the font of Anglican influence in the colony. They could support a temporary alliance with the Presbyterians in order to protect the proprietary charter, but this did not mean that the Anglicans should cease to remind the Quakers at a later date that a bishopric would enable the American church to better counter the influence of a common foe.

The temporary alliance with Presbyterians and German reformed churches was a bitter pill to swallow for Philadelphia churchmen tied to the proprietary family. But for a minority of lay Anglicans unwilling to enter into such an unpalatable partnership, the lure of a new charter overcame the fear of ostracism from Penn's circle. It is therefore not surprising that the most outspoken pamphleteer on the Quaker side was a young Anglican, named Isaac Hunt. Hunt graduated from the College of Philadelphia with a bachelor's degree in 1763 and was set to begin his studies in law when the city was crippled by the Paxton march. He was the son of a Barbadian Anglican minister with known Tory sympathies whose congregation directly contributed to his son's education.²⁰ Thus, Hunt had a vested interest in the preservation of Anglican hegemony at the college due to familial attachment to the Church of England. This led to his resentment towards his Presbyterian tutors, especially the vice

¹⁸ For the struggle over the American bishopric, see Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689–1775* (New York, 1962), 116–38, 207–30; Arthur Lyon Cross, *The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies* (New York, 1902); John Frederick Woolverton, *Colonial Anglicanism in North America* (Detroit, 1984), 220–33; Ned C. Landsman, "Roots, Routes, and Rootedness: Diversity, Migration, and Toleration in Mid-Atlantic Pluralism," *Early American Studies* 2 (2004): 304–5; Tully, *Forming American Politics*, 174–76; Illick, *Colonial Pennsylvania*, 241–42, 244–45.

¹⁹ For Barton's position see Perry, ed., *Historical Collections*, 2:368–69. For Barton's background, see Kerby A. Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675–1815* (New York, 2003), 487–99; William A. Hunter, "Thomas Barton and the Forbes Expedition," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (1971): 431–83; and James P. Myers, "The Rev. Thomas Barton's Authorship of *The Conduct of the Paxton Men, Impartially Represented* (1764)," *Pennsylvania History* 61 (1994): 155–84.

²⁰ Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt. A New Edition, Revised by the Author. With Further Revision, and an Introduction, by his Eldest Son* (London, 1860), 5; Gordon, *College of Philadelphia*, 110–11.

provost Francis Alison, against whom he later railed in a series of pamphlets.²¹ He was also relatively young and anonymous, making it unlikely that he was, like many of the city's Anglican elite, tied to the proprietary family through patronage. The electrified atmosphere produced by the march and the October election provided him with the opportunity to voice his resentment towards Presbyterians in several pamphlets.²²

Hunt had more of a hand in shaping the negative image of the Presbyterian republican than any other propagandist among the Assembly Party. His two-part history of Presbyterianism, *A Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, was particularly popular and underwent multiple printings. It was greatly indebted to the Irish debate over the repeal of the Test Act in the 1730s. Earlier Ascendancy fears of an expansionist Kirk spurred by increased Scottish migration into the north of Ireland mirrored Quaker and Anglican concerns over Ulster immigration into Pennsylvania from the 1720s onward.²³ Both the pro-Test Act Anglicans and antiproprietary sympathizers worried about the growing influence of the same ethnic group: Ulster Presbyterians. Also, the historical references to Irish Presbyterian disloyalty common in earlier Anglo-Irish tracts were useful to antiproprietary writers in their attacks on the Scots-Irish Paxton Boys. Hunt was particularly influenced by Jonathan Swift, whose own life-long antagonism towards Presbyterianism in Ireland and pro-Test Act sympathies made him an ideal muse.²⁴ Swift's popularity throughout the British world brought what otherwise would have been a local Irish issue into the literary consciousnesses of metropolitan and, by

²¹ Throughout 1765, Hunt wrote the *Scurrillity Hall* series, in which he lampooned his former tutors, particularly Francis Alison. For more information on Hunt's life, see Cheney, *History of the University of Pennsylvania*, 113–14.

²² Peter Silver has made a strong claim that Hunt was more than likely paid by the Assembly Party for his services. See *Our Savage Neighbors*, 372n41.

²³ Ian McBride, "Ulster Presbyterians and the Confessional State, c. 1688–1733," in *Political Discourse in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. D. G. Boyce and R. R. Eccleshall (Basingstoke, UK, 2001), 169–70. In both Ireland and Pennsylvania, one Protestant denomination (in Ireland, Anglican; in Pennsylvania, Quaker) wielded, or perceived to wield, hegemonic control over other, disadvantaged denominations.

²⁴ As a student at the College of Philadelphia, Hunt had access to the Logan Library, which housed a few pieces of Swift's work, including *A Tale of a Tub* (London, 1711) and the collected *Spectator*, vol. 1 (Dublin, 1728), as well as many Irish histories including Sir John Temple's *The Irish Rebellion of 1641* (London, 1646). See *Catalogus Bibliothecæ Loganianæ: Being A choice Collection of Books, as well in the Oriental, Greek and Latin, as in the English, Italian, Spanish, French and other Languages* (Philadelphia, 1760). For Swift's anti-Presbyterianism, see Joseph McMinn, "Swift's Life," 14–30, and Marcus Walsh, "Swift and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*, ed. Christopher Fox (Cambridge, 2003), 161–76.

extension, imperial audiences. Hunt included selections of Swift's poetry in the front pieces of his three major anti-Presbyterian pamphlets of 1764.²⁵ These poems encapsulated themes employed ad nauseam by Assembly pamphleteers, including the dangers of Presbyterian fanaticism and the denomination's alleged hatred for monarchical government.

Swift's influence reached beyond Isaac Hunt. Assembly writers utilized Swiftian satire against their opponents by recalling a local incident that had heightened tensions between Anglicans and Presbyterians. The first Philadelphia convention of Anglican ministers met in April 1760 to discuss issues facing the American church, including the controversy surrounding a letter from the bishop of London that barred Rev. William McClenachan from accepting a position at Christ's Church. McClenachan was an Ulster-born former Presbyterian minister who had joined the Church of England in 1755 after leaving his post as a chaplain with the British army in Boston. Shortly thereafter he came to Philadelphia, probably at the behest of his brother, the wealthy city merchant Blair McClenachan. Upon arrival in town, he impressed many parishioners at Christ's Church with his emotive sermons, leading a portion of them to endorse his candidacy as an assistant to the aged Rev. Jenney. But these same sermons offended his colleagues at a time when Rev. William Smith was consolidating his influence among the clergy and pressing for greater Anglican cooperation and orthodoxy. Smith and others also doubted McClenachan's doctrinal stability because of his popularity among the city's New Side, or evangelical, Presbyterians.

The convention of 1760, chaired by Smith, was an attempt to consolidate Anglican unity at the expense of mavericks like McClenachan. The event ended in a physical confrontation between Smith and McClenachan in which the latter tore up the convention's dispatch to the archbishop of Canterbury before storming out in protest. Shortly thereafter, Gilbert Tennent and other Presbyterian ministers drafted a letter to the archbishop defending McClenachan and requesting that he be given a post in Philadelphia. This letter was written during the annual Presbyterian synod, giving it the appearance of an official church document. The Anglican establishment accused the Presbyterians of meddling

²⁵ See the collected printing of [Isaac Hunt], *A Looking-Glass, for Presbyterians* (Philadelphia, 1764), 2. Originally, Hunt's first instalment began with an anonymous quote. This quote and a new title page selection of Swift's poetry were included in the collected printing: *A Looking-Glass for Presbyterians, &c., Numb. I*, in *Paxton Papers*, ed. Dunbar, 243. See also [Isaac Hunt], *A Letter From a Gentleman in Transylvania* (New York [Philadelphia], 1764), 1.

in their affairs, forcing the synod to draft a minute during the following year's meeting disclaiming the accusation that the letter constituted a synodical act.²⁶ McClenachan, who had left Christ's Church with many of its parishioners to form St. Paul's, was thereafter accused of crypto-Presbyterianism and of being an agent of the united Presbyterian synod.²⁷

McClenachan was the focus of three pamphlets during the election debates of 1764. Two of these were satirical letters purportedly written by him, the second one being the "real" McClenachan's reaction to the first.²⁸ The earlier pamphlet, *A Letter, From a Clergyman in Town*, referred to Jack, one of the brothers representing the three major religions of Britain and Ireland in Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*. In Swift's work, Jack (Dissent) destroyed his coat (Christianity) by tearing away all its superfluous accoutrements.²⁹ The author of *A Letter*, the fictional McClenachan, claimed that Calvin had gone further than early Anglicans in creating a reformed church "by tearing off all the Lace at once, and denying the Power of Bishops."³⁰ The second false McClenachan replied, "What do they mean 'by tearing of all the Lace at once'? I am afraid they have been dabbling in some heathenish Writer for this Phrase—meer Stuff! a meer Tale of a Tub."³¹ Here the ignorance of the pseudonymous author, and thus his

²⁶ See Guy Soulliard Klett, ed., *Minutes of the Presbyterian Church in America, 1706–1788* (Philadelphia, 1976), 371–72. For more on the Anglican position during the debate, especially among the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG) members, see Perry, ed., *Historical Collections*, 2:302–11, 319–24. The SPG was the missionary arm of the Church of England founded in 1701 in order to spread Anglicanism in Britain's colonial territories.

²⁷ For more information on the McClenachan affair, see Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1879); Guy Soulliard Klett, *Presbyterians in Colonial Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1937), 231–32; Norris Stanley Barratt, *Outline of the History of Old St. Paul's Church Philadelphia, Together with Articles of Agreement, Abstract of Title, List of Rectors, Vestrymen, and Inscriptions of Tombstones and Vaults* (Philadelphia, 1917), 44–48, 66–78; Robert W. Shoemaker, "Christ Church, St. Peter's, and St. Paul's," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new ser., 43 (1953): 191–92; and Albert Frank Gegenheimer, *William Smith, Educator and Churchman, 1727–1803* (Philadelphia, 1943), 184–87. For a brief sketch of his life before arriving in Philadelphia, see Frederick Lewis Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of the Colonial Churches of New England* (Lancaster, MA, 1936), 131.

²⁸ McClenachan's affiliation with St. Paul's was established in a third Assembly pamphlet, allegedly written by a member of his congregation, that included a character assassination of the minister accusing him of giving preferential treatment towards Dissenters and possessing a hatred of bishops. See *True Copy of a Letter, from a Member of St. P[au]l's* (Philadelphia, 1764), 5.

²⁹ Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub: Written for the Universal Improvement of Mankind* (Dublin, 1756), 15–16.

³⁰ *A Letter, From a Clergyman in Town* (Philadelphia, 1764), 3.

³¹ *The Cheat Unmask'd: Being a Refutation Of that Illegitimate Letter, Said to be Wrote by A Clergyman in Town* (Philadelphia, 1764), 4.

inadequacy in the role of a divine in the Church of England, is proven by his uncouth reference to Jonathan Swift, a champion of Anglican interests, as a “heathenish Writer.” By unwittingly employing the name of Swift’s polemic in his dismissal of the reference to lace coats, the character has apparently accepted Swift’s satire at face value. In Swift’s work the “tub” referred to an instrument thrown by whalers to their prey in order to distract it from the real threat. By misunderstanding warnings couched in Swiftian references the second “McClenachan” had mistaken the real threat for a harmless tub. All of this made a mockery of McClenachan and illustrated the folly in letting ignorant Irish Presbyterians into the Anglican fold.

These pamphlets mocked McClenachan’s commitment to Anglicanism while they simultaneously questioned the motives of New Ticket-aligned Presbyterians. It is unclear how involved McClenachan was in Pennsylvania politics by 1764, or if he was even aware of these pamphlets at all. In 1762 he had left the pulpit at St. Paul’s and moved to Maryland. It is also unclear if the intent of the authors of these writings was to force a reaction from a known firebrand in order to damage the New Ticket’s image. What is known is that McClenachan did not answer his attackers in print, thus avoiding a potentially embarrassing pamphlet war between myriad “McClenachans” bickering over the authenticity and meaning of one another’s statements. The pamphlets written in his name, however, reveal Swift’s legacy in Assembly pamphlets and a proficiency in satire among antiproprietary writers that has been ignored by scholars eager to show the effectiveness of New Ticket strategy.³²

Hunt presented one of his printed attacks in the form of a satirical letter, entitled *A Letter From a Gentleman in Transilvania*, written by a travelling English gentleman to his friend in America. A possible connection to Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* is suggested in that both were satirical travel narratives. More concrete evidence of Swift’s influence came in the form of Hunt’s inclusion of a front piece of Swift’s poetry and his claim that the letter was edited by Isaac Bickerstaff—Swift’s alias in his printed attacks against the astrologer and zealous nonconformist John Partridge.³³ The letter described the Balkan leg of an Englishman’s jour-

³² For a study of the role of satire in the Paxton debate and the effectiveness of the New Ticket argument, see Olson, “The Pamphlet War over the Paxton Boys,” 31–56. Olson applauded the author’s attempt to distinguish among Presbyterian ethnic groups but did not explain why he may have done so.

³³ David Nokes, *Jonathan Swift, A Hypocrite Reversed: A Critical Biography* (Oxford, 1985), 79–83.

ney through the Holy Roman Empire, particularly as it related to the province of Transylvania. Coincidentally, the region's history and current state of affairs were remarkably similar to those of contemporary Pennsylvania. The Englishman recounted how the province had fallen under Austrian control following the eastern retreat of the Ottoman Empire and that the emperor had offered the stewardship of the region to a wealthy nobleman and his progeny. This proprietor, or "Waymode," settled the province "with Persons of all Nations, and of every profession under Heaven" by promising them toleration under a charter of privileges and immunities. Eventually these settlers instigated a war with the natives (American Indians) who, allied with the Turks (French), pillaged the countryside and murdered its inhabitants. Some natives, however, did not rebel but instead pledged loyalty to the government and "deliver'd up their Wives and Children as a pledge of their future Fidelity." But the Piss-Brute-tarians, "a bigoted, cruel and revengeful sect, sprung from the Turks; and Adorers of *Mahomet* as to absolute Fate, but nominal Christians in some other respects," murdered the loyal natives and marched on the capital.³⁴ In this selection, Hunt slandered his Presbyterian opponents by pairing them with two recognised threats to Protestantism and European civilisation. By claiming that the Piss-Brute-tarians originated as a Turkish sect and maintained an Islamic understanding of fate, Hunt invited an unflattering comparison to a religion and people considered barbaric by his readership. Because in his allegory the Turks also represented the French, Hunt linked Presbyterianism with Roman Catholicism and Britain's imperial archrival.

More common than comparisons to Catholicism was the association between Presbyterianism and republicanism. Allegations of republicanism and disloyalty rested upon two foundations: Calvinist church organization and seventeenth-century British history. Presbyterian Church infrastructure and hierarchy were based on the congregation model established by John Calvin in Geneva in the 1530s and adopted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland between 1645 and 1648. In this model, a congregation selected a minister through its representatives or elders. These elders assisted the minister in the everyday functions of the congregation. At presbytery meetings, they discussed matters pertaining

³⁴ [Hunt], *Letter From a Gentleman in Transylvania*, 2, 4, 5–6. Hunt again linked Presbyterianism with Islam when he asked, "From whence cou'd they have possibly learn'd but from *Mahomet* to propagate their Religion with the Sword." *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 6.

to neighbouring congregations within a particular region, while issues facing the church as a whole were dealt with at the annual convocation of ministers, or synod. Here, the entire assembly debated and voted on theological, financial, and other practical matters. This structure differed from the Episcopal system of the Church of England and seemed to many within the established church to challenge the prevailing social order. In their view, Calvinist organization and teaching had instilled too much independence in its adherents while the established church inspired loyalty and deference.

Hunt wrote that normality would have returned to Pennsylvania by the summer of 1764 “if the Doctrines of *Peace* and *Loyalty* had been sufficiently inculcated” in the Presbyterians by their clergy.³⁵ At one point he claimed that Presbyterians wanted to refashion Church and State after the “model of a *Geneva Republic*.”³⁶ The narrator, in his satire, also observed that “those of the *Emperors’ Religion*,” or Anglicans, were his most loyal subjects because “their principles in Religion and the maxims by which they and their Ancestors were govern’d for one Thousand Years, were peculiarly adapted to support the *Emperial Family*.” Piss-Brutitarian principles, in contrast, were “diametrically opposite to Monarchy.” They were “not only *sworn Enemies* to the *Emperial Family*, but murder’d one of the *Emperors* before his own palace; and have always been the foremost in all the Rebellions that have been rais’d against his Successors ever since.”³⁷ This obvious reference to the execution of Charles I is an example of the second foundation upon which questions of Presbyterian loyalty rested—seventeenth-century British history.

The Assembly Party turned to the definitive decades of Presbyterian doctrinal and organisational formation between the 1630s and 1660s in order to prove Presbyterian disloyalty. They claimed that during the chaos of the civil wars, the English Independents and Presbyterians took up arms against their monarch and supported Oliver Cromwell for ideolog-

³⁵ [Isaac Hunt], *The Scribler, Being a Letter from a Gentleman in Town to his Friend in the Country* . . . (Philadelphia, 1764), 16. I, in agreement with Peter Silver in *Our Savage Neighbors*, have attributed the authorship of both *The Scribler* and *The Substance, of a Council Held at Lancaster, August the 28th 1764* to Isaac Hunt because, in part, of their stylistic similarity to Hunt’s other pamphlets.

³⁶ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 8.

³⁷ [Hunt], *Letter From a Gentleman in Transilvania*, 7. The link between Cromwell and Scottish Presbyterianism is ironic, given their mutual animosity towards one another. For Irish Presbyterian dissatisfaction with Cromwell’s regime, see Toby C. Barnard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland 1649–1660* (London, 1975), 122–23.

ical reasons. This alleged support for Cromwell underpinned anti-Dissenter rhetoric throughout the eighteenth-century British world. Thus, one antiproprietary tract opened with a Presbyterian prayer: “O! Do thou confound these cursed Quakers, that are endeavoring to bring us under a Kingly Yoke, which thou knowest that neither we nor our Fathers ever cou’d bear!”³⁸

Assembly authors claimed that Presbyterians everywhere flaunted authority and subverted government so as to prove that the body as a whole threatened the British state and, more immediately, the colony of Pennsylvania. In order to do this they ignored theological, historical, and regional distinctions within the denomination, thus presenting Presbyterians as a homogeneous bloc acting under the command of an organized clergy. More often than not, this resulted in a litany of past misdeeds, real or fictitious, that could be attributed to Dissenters from the seventeenth century onwards. The author of *An Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled the Conduct of the Paxton Men* defended early Quakers by contrasting them unfavourably with other Dissenters. In so doing he laid the blame for recent Indian violence on the settling of the contested Wyoming Valley by families from Connecticut. He asked, “Did not a Colony from *New-England* settle on Lands, unpurchased of the *Indians*, in Contempt of Government and contrary to all Rules of Equity?” Here New Englanders, whose region had been a bastion of congregational Dissent from its inception, were linked with the Paxton Boys, for were they all “not *Presbyterians*?”³⁹ Another author cited the 1659 murder of Quakers in Boston, or “*Sodom*” as he put it, and the divine punishment that followed in the form of pestilence and crop failure as a reason to resist western pressure for greater representation in the Assembly. He warned that Pennsylvania could expect similar judgement and exclaimed, “beware, my Countrymen, keep the Reins of Government out of the Hands of *Presbyterians*.”⁴⁰ Hunt claimed that the entire denomination—not just its radical fringes—was culpable for past crimes. He stated: “not only Covenanters, but the whole Body of Presbyterians are actuated by the same rebellious Principles since the *Revolution*, they were before; and

³⁸ [Isaac Hunt], *The Substance, of a Council Held at Lancaster, August the 28th 1764* (Philadelphia, 1764), 2.

³⁹ *An Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled the Conduct of the Paxton Men* (Philadelphia, 1764), 9–10.

⁴⁰ *The Quakers Assisting, To preserve the Lives of the Indians, in the Barracks*, no. 2 (Philadelphia, 1764), 9–10, 8.

that not even the Establishment of their Profession in *Scotland* can make them in Love with *Monarchy*." Any crime or rebellion that took place in Scotland, or any other region or country dominated by nonconformists, could be pinned on Presbyterians. Thus, accountability for the Scottish Jacobite risings of 1715–16 and 1745–46 was, strangely though not surprisingly, foisted on Pennsylvania Presbyterians.⁴¹

Allegations of Presbyterian religious and political fanaticism were widespread in antiproprietary pamphlets. In a short farce depicting the march, two Paxton men discussed their intentions while waiting in Germantown for news from Philadelphia. The first claimed that the march was agreeable to his "Forefathers *Oliverian* Spirit" before declaring that he would gladly die for the cause "rather than those Miscreants [sic] of the Establish'd Church of *England*, or those R[asca]ls, the Q[ua]ke]rs, should continue longer at the head of Government." His comrade agreed and answered, "you know when the Arm of God is with us, and our Counsels, we need not fear what Man can do unto us."⁴² A Philadelphia minister allegedly told his friend that he was not "fearful to brandish the Sword in the Cause of CHRIST" and that this sword was ready "to push at all the Opposers of the true Word of GOD."⁴³ The antiproprietary faction feared that Presbyterian belief in predestined infallibility lay behind the march on Philadelphia and that if the mob had reached the city, it would have "destroyed the Constitution of Government, and settled a Republick, agreeable to their own darling Principles."⁴⁴

It may perhaps be surprising to find that the common view of the fanatical, republican Presbyterian existed alongside depictions of a scheming, hierarchical, and crypto-Catholic Presbyterian ministry. Eighteenth-century British Atlantic patriotism was founded upon the dialectic between the liberty ensured to Britons by their Protestant religion on one hand and the slavery of Catholic superstition on the other.⁴⁵ It may be tempting, then, to consider as nothing more than empty, anti-Catholic rhetoric Hunt's accusations that the New Side leader Gilbert Tennent was "the Presbyterian Pope of *Philadelphia*" and that Francis Alison and John Ewing were his "two *Cardinals*."⁴⁶ But there was more

⁴¹ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 22, 8.

⁴² *Paxton Boys, A Farce*, 7–8.

⁴³ *Letter, From a Clergyman in Town*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled the Conduct of the Paxton Men*, 3.

⁴⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, 2nd ed. (London, 1994), 4–6.

⁴⁶ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 20.

to antiproprietary accusations of Presbyterian crypto-Catholicism than mere mudslinging. Since the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, High Church Anglicans had argued that a tangible link between the two existed. The Pope's claim to depose Protestant princes, enshrined in *Regnans in Excelsis* (1570)—the order for the excommunication and deposition of Elizabeth I—and Dissent's endorsement of the right of resistance were seen as affronts to the civil authority. Both Catholics and Dissenters were united in their hostility towards legitimate monarchs, as was evident in their mutual, and allegedly cooperative, opposition to Charles I. It was popularly believed that monks had fought with the Parliamentarians during the civil wars, that priests had been on the scaffold during the regicide, and that both the latitudinarian Bishop Hoadley and George Whitefield had connections within the Jesuit order.⁴⁷

There was also cause for concern in Pennsylvania about a resident Catholic community, adding immediacy to the Assembly Party's accusations. A Jesuit, Father Joseph Greaton, opened the first Catholic chapel in Philadelphia in 1734, and by 1763 six other churches had been built in the province. Lancaster emerged as a center of Jesuit activity in the West, attracting a former Rector Magnificus from the University of Heidelberg to attend to its growing German Catholic community.⁴⁸ Pennsylvania even experienced its own "Popish Plot" in 1756, in which Philadelphia Catholics were accused of colluding with the French in order to force their religion on the colony.⁴⁹ A fear of popery was clearly very much alive in Pennsylvania during the middle decades of the century, and it could be exploited by comparing Catholic priests to Presbyterian ministers. But how could ministers of the Kirk control their flocks if "[t]o be govern'd [was] absolutely repugnant to the avowed principles of the *Pr[esbyteria]ns*" and "*Opposition Sentiments*" had "almost become a Criterion of *Orthodoxy*" among them?⁵⁰ The answer lay in Presbyterian confidence in their infallibility and righteousness. It was the self-assuredness of the laity

⁴⁷ Andrew Starkie, *The Church of England and the Bangorian Controversy, 1716–1721* (Woodbridge, UK, 2007), 119–21; Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England, c. 1714–80: A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, UK, 1993), 94.

⁴⁸ Thomas Hughes, *History of the Society of Jesus in North America, Colonial and Federal*, vol. 2 (New York, 1917), 500–501.

⁴⁹ Thomas Hughes, "An Alleged Popish Plot in Pennsylvania: 1756–7," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* 10 (1899): 208–21.

⁵⁰ *Remarks on The Quaker Unmask'd; Or Plain Truth found to be Plain Falshood* [sic] (Philadelphia, 1764), 7; [Hunt], *Scribler*, 16.

that made them susceptible to ministers who, by manipulating their vanity, bent them to the will of the synod.

Antipopery discourse evolved throughout the eighteenth century, adapting to suit changing social conditions and in reaction to new threats, most notably the spread of evangelicalism. By midcentury, the aspiring middling orders had subsumed aspects of antipopery within the larger social framework of gentility and “politeness.”⁵¹ Here, politeness is understood as a framework for social interaction, in which the behavior of participants is defined against negative traits, such as individual excess, haughtiness, and, most importantly in the context of this article, “enthusiasm.” Enthusiasm meant a lack of self-control or rational thought and was thus used interchangeably with that common insult applied to both evangelicals and Catholics—superstition. Both lay Catholics’ and New Side Presbyterians’ lack of rational cultivation left them susceptible to the machinations of designing clergy. As George Lavington, the bishop of Exeter, pointed out in the first instalment of his wildly successful pamphlet series, *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, both ministers and priests lured the unsuspecting away from true religion with “something *novel*, or *uncommon*; what the wandering Sheep have not been used to in their *Churches*.” Both also captivated the vulgar with “their affected phrases, fantastical and unintelligible notions, whimsical strictnesses, [and] loud exclamations against some trifling and indifferent things.”⁵² An observation of an emissary to the Carolinas from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), the missionary arm of the Church of England, noted that “in the Shape of New Light Preachers, I’ve met with many Jesuits.” Hunt’s accusation that the Presbyterians at the College of Philadelphia had sent a “treacherous Jesuitical Presbyterian *Bull*” to western congregations instructing them to oppose a royal charter take on deeper significance when considering the contemporary association between popish and evangelical enthusiasts and

⁵¹ For more on politeness, see Paul Langford, “The Uses of Eighteenth-Century Politeness,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., 12 (2002): 311–31.

⁵² George Lavington, *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, 2nd ed. (London, 1749), 17. For more on the link between enthusiasm and Catholicism in the American context, see Timothy D. Hall, *Contested Boundaries: Itinerancy and the Reshaping of the Colonial American Religious World* (Durham, NC, 1994), 18–19. The New Ticket countered accusations of Presbyterian “enthusiasm” by hurling the same insult at the Quakers through a short selection from John Shebbare’s letters, first published in London. See *A Letter, From Batista Angeloni* (Philadelphia, 1764), 2–3.

the enduring fear of Catholic infiltration of dissenting sects.⁵³ Presbyterian support, especially from the New Side, for the preaching tours of George Whitefield and the atrocities committed by the Paxton Boys made it easy to tar both groups with the brush of “enthusiasm” and thus to accuse their clergy of fomenting disorder through the “Catholic” manipulation of their flocks. So far the Anglican establishment’s hierarchical structure—founded on “true” religion and not popish superstition—had guarded against infiltration by designing demagogues like McClenachan. This changed, it was alleged, when the Philadelphia ministry entered into the Presbyterian alliance, thereby becoming puppets of the synod.⁵⁴

Alarmingly, a large portion of the colony’s population seemed to be falling into the trap laid out by these “Ghostly Statesmen” partially because Presbyterian ascendancy was not confined solely to the realm of politics.⁵⁵ Dissenters dominated the colonies’ institutions of learning, allowing them to manipulate the minds of the young. Indeed, it seemed as though they held a virtual monopoly over education; Harvard, Yale, and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) were all nonconforming academies and seminaries.⁵⁶ The new college at Princeton, unsettlingly located in a neighbouring province and not in faraway New England, posed an immediate threat to the stability of the province and stood as a testament to the increasing influence of Presbyterianism in the middle colonies. Isaac Hunt, having recently borne witness to the destabilizing presence of Presbyterianism while a student at the College of Philadelphia, was suspicious about the institution across the Delaware River:

Prince-Town was chosen for the Seat of their College, because it was situated in such a manner that no Place of *Worship* was within many Miles of it, by which means, the Students would be oblig’d to attend *Presbyterian*

⁵³ Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution; The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill, NC, 1953), 42; [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 22; Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-Century England*, 9–11.

⁵⁴ [Hunt], *Substance of a Council*, 6–8.

⁵⁵ [Hunt], *Scribler*, 15.

⁵⁶ Ministers claimed that many colonials sent their children to Dissenting academies due to the lack of local Anglican institutions and the “inconvenience of passing & repassing the dangerous Atlantic.” See Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts records in Perry, ed., *Historical Collections*, 2:318.

Preaching. This was an Artifice to erect *Presbyterianism* on the Ruins of all other Societies, and to instill their Mode of Worship, and Principles of Calvinism into the tender Minds of the Youth, who by the Time, they had taken their Degrees, wou'd either be Converts to *Presbyterianism*, or at least go away with favorable Ideas of it.⁵⁷

This observation pointed to a plot to mislead colonial youth in an effort to propagate Calvinism. Worse yet, the foundation of the College of New Jersey was not the most recent victory for the Presbyterians on the education front. Francis Alison and his fellow tutors at the College of Philadelphia had seemingly overcome the Anglican administration by incorporating the provost of the college, William Smith, earlier one of their most ardent critics, into the proprietary confederation.⁵⁸

The Assembly Party became increasingly nervous about the strength of the proprietary confederation as the October elections approached. Their pamphleteers hoped to sway Philadelphia Anglicans and Germans by showing that the confederation was advancing a secret Presbyterian plot to force their Kirk on the rest of the province. The depth of antiproprietary fear about Presbyterian scheming is illustrated in their depictions of a council of ministers held in Lancaster on August 28, 1764. One author described the province's possible future overlords: "Some in *black*, some in *grey*, and some in no Coats; but all in a *rueful Uniform* of Face." The killjoy appearance of these "reptiles" foretold the fate of the province if a new Puritan commonwealth were founded, which, as it turned out, was the main topic of discussion at the meeting.⁵⁹ Another pamphlet, purporting to be the minutes of the synod, began with a prayer from the moderator, Rev. John Ewing: "Enable us thy Servants at this Time so to settle Matters that *Presbyterianism* may be establish'd among us, and all other Professions crumble before it!" Ewing's prayer revealed that the Germans were also pawns in this Presbyterian plot. He beseeched God: "Do thou turn the Hearts of the ignorant Dutch from *King George* to serve the P[ropriete]r in such a manner as will enable us to establish our Religion upon the Necks of both [the Germans and the Quakers]!" The most useful people to the Presbyterians, however, were the city's

⁵⁷ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 19.

⁵⁸ In actuality, Smith was involved in the proprietary campaign in 1764, and his pamphlets of the 1750s greatly informed New Ticket pamphlets. See Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 192–99, 217–18.

⁵⁹ [Hunt], *Scribler*, 17.

Anglicans. But how could the remaining members of the Church of England, whose principles were “all for Monarchy,” be lured into an alliance with nonconformists? Again, the answer lay in the temporary alliance with Smith, who would use his influence to “make them as good Republicans” as the Presbyterians.⁶⁰

The minutes concluded with a list of laws to be enacted following the New Ticket victory in the October elections. These included new tithes that would be levied on non-Presbyterians because, as it stood, many ministers could “scarce afford a Dram of Whisky in the Morning.” Thus, the nonconformist argument that an American episcopate would result in their paying tithes to a church they did not support was used against Presbyterians who, it was accused, would use their electoral victory to establish *their* church above all others. Other resolutions included a declaration that Thomas Penn be made “*King* in the place of *George*, as *Oliver* had been formerly in the Room of *Charles*,” that the “sole right of civil and ecclesiastical Jurisdiction” in Pennsylvania be given to Presbyterian ministers, and that congregants who voted against their ministers be “excommunicatd [sic] from all Privileges in the *Kirk*, especially the Sacraments.”⁶¹ These imagined laws illustrate, perhaps overdramatically, Assembly fears about the future of Pennsylvania if Presbyterian influence were to go unchecked.

The archetypal Presbyterian created by Hunt and other Assembly writers was not without its contradictions. As much as they publicized the similarities between all Presbyterians and the dangers of a monolithic Kirk, antiproprietary polemicists did allow for one crucial ethnic distinction within the denomination: that between the Irish and all other Presbyterians. This distinction emerged in reaction to their opponents’ successful deployment of the image of a loyal, and self-consciously Irish, Paxton volunteer. Hunt and his comrades contended that Presbyterians from Ulster, common in Pennsylvania after fifty years of sporadic immigration, were to be feared more than all others of the denomination. They were Presbyterian fanatics par excellence, products of a European frontier that, through contact with the British Empire’s first savage subjects, had driven them beyond the pale of civilization.⁶²

⁶⁰ [Hunt], *Substance of a Council*, 2, 6.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 5, 16–18.

⁶² For early eighteenth-century anti-Irish stereotypes regarding the “wild” or “popish” Irish, see Claus-Ulrich Viol, *Eighteenth-Century (Sub)Versions of Stage Irishness: Prevalent Anti-Irish Stereotypes and Their Dramatic Functionalism* (Trier, Ger., 1998), 38–44. For how British imperial

Anti-Irish Rhetoric in Assembly Pamphlets

Early in the election debate, when discussion was centred on the murder of the Conestogas and the questionable legitimacy of the march on Philadelphia, pro-western sympathizers were eager to prove the Paxton Boys' loyalty and peaceable intentions. The marchers themselves were careful to assert their loyalty to the Crown, even after openly defying the authority of the Pennsylvania assembly. In the initial *Declaration and Remonstrance* sent to the assembly and widely printed in Philadelphia, the Paxton Boys' representatives disguised their "sedition" in a declaration of loyalty "to the best of Kings, . . . GEORGE the THIRD." They employed submissive language by asking permission of the legislature to "humbly beg Leave to remonstrate and to lay before you, the following Grievances, which we submit to your Wisdom for Redress."⁶³ When the pamphlet debate intensified in the spring, Paxton sympathizers relied on a technique, one commonly used in Ireland before the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798, to stress the attachment of Irish Presbyterians to the government. They referred to northern loyalty to William of Orange during the Williamite War at the end of the seventeenth-century in order to counter their opponents' references to mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterian fanaticism.⁶⁴ One writer described the meeting between Franklin's delegation and the Paxton leaders. He observed, "they were found a selected Band of Gentlemen, Descendants of the Noble *Eniskillers*, who were the great Means of setting that great and never to be forgotten Prince King *William* on the Throne." Far from being violent fanatics, as characterized by the Quaker Party, the Paxton leaders were

policy towards Native Americans was influenced by previous colonial ventures in Ireland, see James Muldoon, "The Indian as Irishman," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 3 (1975): 267–89; and Muldoon, *Identity on the Medieval Irish Frontier: Degenerate Englishmen, Wild Irishmen, Middle Nations* (Gainesville, FL, 2003). Both Gaelic Irish and Native American societies were conceptualized as barbarous foils to English society. See Nicholas Canny, "The Permissive Frontier: The Problem of Social Control in English Settlements in Ireland and Virginia, 1550–1650," in *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America, 1480–1650*, ed. K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. H. Hair (Liverpool, UK, 1978), 32–34.

⁶³ Matthew Smith et al., *A Declaration and Remonstrance Of the distressed and bleeding Frontier Inhabitants Of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1764), 3–4, 10.

⁶⁴ Kerby Miller has shown that late eighteenth-century Irish migrants, Catholic and Protestant alike, often championed their Irish background because neither group claimed exclusive right to it. See Kerby A. Miller, "Scotch-Irish' Ethnicity in Early America: Its Regional and Political Origins," in *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration* (Dublin, 2008), 133–34.

stoic negotiators. “Their Demands were too reasonable to be rejected, they were Gentle and easy, not farther then Pointing out to the Government such of these Savages as had been guilty of Murder.”⁶⁵

The author of the poem *A Battle! A Battle!* also referred to the garrison at Enniskillen: “THESE, these are they, who always chose / T’engage their King’s and Country’s Foes / Whose Grandsires too were bravely willing / To fight or die at *Ineskillin*.”⁶⁶ The Paxtonians and their supporters distanced themselves from Jacobitism and the memory of Cromwell by citing events in Irish Protestant history.⁶⁷ By asserting the Irish ancestry of the majority of the Paxton Boys, Irish American Presbyterians and their supporters avoided the questions of loyalty that dogged their Scottish coreligionists and countered the argument made by their opponents regarding past Presbyterian treachery.

Hunt and others countered the New Ticket’s image of the loyal Irishman in two ways. First, they appealed to popular fears regarding Irish immigration into the colony by suggesting that these foreigners’ loyalty lay elsewhere. Second, they combined unflattering representations of the two constituent elements of Irish Presbyterian ethnicity (Scottish and Irish) in the expectation that a messy amalgamation of negative characterizations would overpower the image of the “Noble Eniskiller.” A dim view of Presbyterianism based upon a selective reading of Scottish history was complemented by similar conclusions drawn from the Irish past.

The scale and effects of Irish immigration were underlying themes that were often hinted at but rarely addressed directly in anti-Paxton Assembly literature. Assembly writers used words such as “swarm” to describe the Irish of the province and the growth of mid-Atlantic Presbyterianism that resulted from continuing immigration from Ulster. Philadelphians had little doubt as to why the Irish were drawn to Pennsylvania. Its famed tolerance was a beacon to disenfranchised immigrants, and its “delightful Plains” far surpassed “the barren Mountains of

⁶⁵ *An Historical Account, of the late Disturbance, between the Inhabitants of the Back Settlements; of Pennsylvania, and the Philadelphians, &c.*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1764), 5.

⁶⁶ *A Battle! A Battle! A Battle of Squirt; Where no Man is kill'd, And no Man is Hurt!* (Philadelphia, 1764), 8.

⁶⁷ In this way proprietary writers followed the example of an earlier generation of Scottish Whig authors who defended Presbyterianism in the wake of the Act of Union by jettisoning Scotland’s radical Covenanting tradition. See Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland’s Past: Scottish Whig Historians and the Creation of an Anglo-British Identity, 1689–c. 1830* (Cambridge, 1993), 66–69.

*Carentaugh, Slemish, or Slevgallion.*⁶⁸ Debates over Irish immigration were not new to the colony, but the Paxton riots did, once again, raise concerns over whether or not Irish Presbyterians made suitable neighbours.⁶⁹ One author framed his argument against greater representation for the western counties in terms of the number of Presbyterians in the colony, “for unhappy for it,” he remarked, “it swarms with them.”⁷⁰ Continued immigration, Presbyterian fundraising in Europe, the establishment of Irish American fraternal societies, and pro-Paxton emphasis on the Irish ancestry of the Lancaster marchers led many Pennsylvanians to question where these immigrants’ loyalty lay.⁷¹ Hunt claimed political impartiality by stating that he never had been awarded government pensions and, unlike the “Foreigners” in the other party, he was “an *American* born.”⁷² In contrast, a false McClenachan slipped when explaining how the Paxton Boys had acted: “For the Honour of our Country, for King GEORGE, and *Old Ireland—Old England* I mean.”⁷³ Another anonymous author reacting to Thomas Barton’s *The Conduct of the Paxton Men* concluded his pamphlet with a plea that “*Bur---on [Barton] and his Ulceration [Ulster] Presbyterians, desiring [that on] the next Day, they dedicate to Liberty and St. Patrick*” should ask the Lancaster murderers to surrender to the authorities.⁷⁴ This was as much of an attack on Barton who, like McClenachan, was an Ulster-born Anglican minister, as it was against Irish Presbyterians. Misplaced loyalty was apparently an Irish disease as much as it was a Presbyterian one.

⁶⁸ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 6. Carntogher, Slieve Gullion, and the Slemish mountains are in the counties of Armagh and Down on the Ulster/Leinster border, an area of conflict between Protestant planters and native Irish residents. The assertion that Ulster Presbyterian immigrants were mountain people from this area may have been inspired by chauvinistic depictions of the Catholic Irish. See Raymond Gillespie and Harold O’Sullivan, eds., *The Borderlands: Essays on the History of the Ulster-Leinster Border* (Belfast, 1989); see esp. P. J. Duffy, “Geographic Perspectives on the Borderlands,” 5–22, and W. H. Crawford, “The Reshaping of the Borderlands c. 1700–1840,” 93–105.

⁶⁹ For earlier examples of anti-Irish xenophobia, see Griffin, *People with No Name*, 103–5.

⁷⁰ *Remarks on The Quaker Unmask’d*, 5–6.

⁷¹ For more on Philadelphia’s Irish American clubs, see Maurice J. Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America, 1760–1800* (Dublin, 2008), 156–61.

⁷² [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 8, 14.

⁷³ *Cheat Unmask’d*, 5.

⁷⁴ *Answer to the Pamphlet Entitled the Conduct of the Paxton Men*, 28. The author’s remarks regarding St. Patrick’s Day were lifted from Barton. He ended his pamphlet with the inscription “*Dated from my Farm-House, March 17th, 1764.—A Day dedicated to LIBERTY and ST. PATRICK.*” Barton expressed his sympathy for western whites as an Irishman, indicating that the Paxton episodes strengthened an Irish Protestant identity. See Thomas Barton, *The Conduct of the Paxton-Men, Impartially Represented* (Philadelphia, 1764), 34.

The politicization of lay Presbyterians, and the knowledge that this group was overwhelmingly hostile to the Assembly platform, led to a rare compliment for the colony's immigrants in the hope of further fragmenting the proprietary confederation. Hunt placed the only voice of opposition to the Presbyterian clergy in the mouth of an immigrant. This man, who was identified as an elder in John Ewing's Philadelphia congregation, interrupted his minister in the middle of a long defense of the colony's proprietors and a tirade outlining his proposals for Presbyterian tithes. The immigrant said, "I confess the reason of my leaving my native Country was to get clear of oppressive Landlords, and paying of Tithes." He further declared, "I love my Profession very well, but I love my Liberty better, and think it much more to the Advantage of the Laity to have the Clergy under their Thumb, than the Clergy to have us under theirs."⁷⁵ The author used the guise of an immigrant to illustrate the hypocrisy of Presbyterian ministers whose memory of Presbyterian suffering under the penal laws in Ireland was now clouded by avarice.

Some anti-Paxton authors directly attacked the New Ticket's use of the memory of the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in their references to Presbyterian participation during the Williamite Wars in Ireland, which guaranteed that the revolution succeeded.⁷⁶ Others turned to shameful episodes in Irish Protestant history to counter the Whiggish narrative celebrated by the New Ticket, mining the turbulent decade of the 1640s for references to Presbyterian brutality. Hunt took a strange angle on a controversial episode in Irish history: the Irish Catholic rising of 1641. The rising began as a protest by displaced Catholic landowners but quickly spread beyond their control among a bitter underclass of dispossessed Catholics, many of whom used it as an excuse to expel Protestants from lands confiscated during the British colonization of Ulster at the beginning of the century. Hunt alleged that Scottish resistance to Charles I's religious policies that tried to force the Anglican liturgy and prayer book onto the Scottish Kirk encouraged the Irish Catholics to rebel in 1641. Presbyterians, therefore, were to blame for starting both conflicts. He pointed out that Ulster Scots were also guilty of brutal acts in 1641:

⁷⁵ [Hunt], *Substance of a Council*, 14–15.

⁷⁶ *The Quaker unmask'd; or, Plain Truth: Humbly address'd to the Consideration of all the Freemen of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1764), 6–7, was countered in *The Quaker Vindicated; or, Observations on A late Pamphlet, entituled, The Quaker Unmask'd* (Philadelphia, 1764), 6–7.

For if the *Catholicks* committed many outrages in defending their country against the inroads and depredations of those foreign interlopers who swarm'd like locusts from the barren hills of *Loughaber* in search of a better country, the *Scotch-Presbyterians* were no way behind hand with them, when without the least remorse, they murder'd 4,000 of the native *Irish*, men, women and children in the *Isle Mc'Gee*, much in the same manner their offspring murder'd the *Indians* at *Lancaster*.⁷⁷

The claim that Scots had “swarm'd like locusts” into seventeenth-century Ulster was meant to resonate with a Philadelphia audience concerned about the plague of Irish “interlopers” entering their province. Hunt moulded the massacre to fit his needs in the service of a cause far detached from contemporary Irish historiographical debates, allowing him to reimagine the incident in ways impossible for his coreligionists in Ireland. The plight of Catholics was sentimentalized in order to highlight Presbyterian savagery. Hunt asserted that the root cause of the rebellion was not Catholic treachery and opportunism, as was popularly believed by Protestants throughout the empire. Rather, the brutality of the Scottish planters provoked the Irish to the point of rebellion. His mention of the massacre at Islandmagee is significant because the episode had become a flash point in the historical debate over the nature of the rising. Protestants traditionally held October 23, 1641, as the beginning of the revolt, with the widespread murder of Protestants following in its wake. Catholic sympathizers, however, claimed that the incident at Islandmagee—which occurred between one and three months later—was the first massacre of the rebellion and thus set off the retaliatory mass murder of Protestants.

Hunt did not question who actually initiated the bloodletting—although he seems to imply that violence accompanied Scottish migration across the Irish Sea—because it was irrelevant to his argument. He was out to demonstrate that both Catholics and Presbyterians were equally as bad. His tally of victims at Islandmagee was four thousand, greater than the three thousand commonly listed by previous Irish apologists.⁷⁸ Hunt

⁷⁷ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 7.

⁷⁸ R. S., *A Collection of Some of the Murthers and Massacres committed on the Irish in Ireland Since the 23d of October 1641* (London, 1662), 2; John Curry, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Rebellion in the Year, 1641* (London, 1758), 145–53. The number killed at Islandmagee, like the number of Protestants killed during the conflict, was grossly overestimated and was probably between sixty and seventy. See, Raymond Gillespie, “Destabilizing Ulster,” in *Ulster 1641, Aspects of the Rising*, ed. Brian Mac Cuarta (Belfast, 1993), 113.

therefore sensationalized Scottish violence while he simultaneously erased English involvement in the massacre. It is also important to note that Hunt did not excuse the Catholics for the “outrages” that they committed, for he claimed “the Natives of both kingdoms seem’d to vie with each other in acts of cruelty.”⁷⁹ The native Irish remained savage, their status hardly raised, but their actions were at least understandable given the brutality of their enemies. The celebrated Presbyterian patriots, however, were brought down to the level of the native Irish. In Hunt’s view, both the Gaelic Irish and the Conestogas remained barbaric, but so then were their assailants.

Alleged Irish Catholic atrocities formed an integral part of the genre of British atrocity narrative. Generations of Protestant authors memorialized the events of 1641 in highly formalized victimization narratives based upon depositions taken from survivors. Like many stories depicting Indian brutality, these vignettes dwelt on the torture of captives, the mutilation of bodies, the murder of women and children, and even incidences of cannibalism. The most famous collection of victims’ narratives was Sir John Temple’s often-reprinted *The Irish Rebellion* (1646). It spawned numerous cheaper tracts, including an American edition, which was titled *Popish Cruelty displayed: being a full and true Account Of the Bloody and Hellish Massacre in Ireland . . . in 1641* and was printed in Boston on the eve of the French and Indian War. The long history and popularity of Irish violence narratives calls into question the originality of the literary genre spawned by frontier violence in mid-eighteenth-century America.⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that the Indian and Irish perpetrators of these acts in both the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature were believed to possess common ancestors—the cannibalistic Scythians. Swift played upon the association between the two groups in his notorious *A Modest Proposal* when his narrator declared that he had received advice from “a very knowing *American*” on how best to cook Irish babies.⁸¹ The Scythian myth might explain how a genre recently domi-

⁷⁹ [Hunt], *Looking-Glass for Presbyterians*, 7.

⁸⁰ The latest American edition of the atrocities of the Irish rebellion, published before the war, was *Popish Cruelty displayed: being a full and true Account Of the Bloody and Hellish Massacre in Ireland . . . in 1641* (Boston, 1753). Much of the material from this collection seems to be taken from John Temple’s popular history, *The Irish Rebellion of 1641* (London, 1646). For the longevity of Protestant myths surrounding 1641, see Jacqueline Hill, “1641 and the Quest for Catholic Emancipation, 1691–1829,” in *Ulster 1641*, ed. Mac Cuarta, 159–72.

⁸¹ Jonathan Swift, *A Modest Proposal For Preventing the Children of Poor People From being a Burthen to their Parents and Country, &c.* (London, 1730), 10.

nated by stories of Celtic barbarism could be so easily employed against Native Americans.⁸²

A pamphlet depicting *A Dialogue, Between Andrew Trueman, And Thomas Zealot* showed that frontier Europeans also possessed the capability to commit acts of remorseless brutality. This lack of compassion, being a mark of savagery, was therefore used to mark frontier Europeans—as well as Native Americans—as “others.” What Peter Silver has called the “anti-Indian sublime,” so often used throughout the Seven Years’ War to rally support for frontier whites, was now used against Irish Presbyterians, ironically to inspire sympathy for the murdered Conestogas:

A. How mony did you kill at *Cannestogoe*.

T. Ane and Twunty.

A. Hoot Man, there were but twunty awthegether, and fourteen of them were in Goal [sic].

T. I tell you, we shot six and a wee ane, that was in the Squaw’a Belly; we sculped three; we tomahawked three; we roasted three and a wee ane; and three and a wee ane we gave to the Hogs; and is not that ane and twunty you Fool.⁸³

Irish Presbyterians were now the savages. By focusing on the Irishness of the Paxton Boys, here displayed in the character’s dialects, Hunt and other Assembly authors aligned Pennsylvanian Presbyterians with older, though obviously still pertinent, conceptions of white savagery.

Furthermore, Andrew and Thomas insinuated that the confessional composition of the crowd at Lancaster was diverse and included Catholics. This diversity was evident in Thomas’s response to the question of whether he murdered the Indians in the name of Christ: “Aye, to be sure. We were aw *Presbyterians*. But that wild Chiel, *Charly Breulluchan* shot an Indian’s Doug” during grace. “I doubt he has the Pope, or the Heegh-Kirk in his Guts.”⁸⁴ Charly’s Gaelic surname, as well as his questionable religious affiliation, hinted at a native Irish element within the Lancaster mob. A similar surname was used for a character in

⁸² Claude Julien Rawson, *God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492–1945* (New York, 2001), 79–91.

⁸³ *A Dialogue, Between Andrew Trueman, And Thomas Zealot; About the killing the Indians at Cannestogoe and Lancaster* (Philadelphia, 1764), 3.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

another printed dialogue, this time between two self-confessed Irish Jacobites named Tim and Charly.⁸⁵ Both characters maintained that a Catholic named Bakerum had led the “*Scotch-Irish*” Paxton Boys. Bakerum was the son-in-law of a drunken bawdyhouse keeper in Omagh, County Tyrone. Upon arrival in Pennsylvania he somehow obtained the office of a justice of the peace and convinced his peers to kill the Conestogas by telling them, falsely, that he was one of their own because his mother was a “*Phipsiterian*.”

Tim was horrified by the Conestoga massacres and exclaimed, “Devil split me, if a recht *Irishman* could ha’ whoud in his Heart to murder dthe poor Devils, when dthey could not do whor dthemselves.” The brutality of the Lancaster massacre was so horrendous that even Irish Jacobites attempted to distance themselves from it by claiming that those responsible were not “recht” Irishmen. Tim explained, “dthey were only dthe Offscourings of dthe *Scotch-Irish* dthat showld dtheir King (our good King *Charlies*) for a Groat.” Yet, the instigator had been a Catholic, thereby tying the incident to familiar stories of past native Irish violence. Charly concluded the farce with the toast, “Och Hone! . . . Here’s old *Ireland* whor ever,” further establishing that many among this ill-defined mass of immigrants, whether they supported the Paxton Boys or not, owed their loyalty somewhere other than the colony of Pennsylvania.⁸⁶ The alleged presence of convicts, Jacobites, Catholics and/or native Irish Presbyterian converts among the Paxton Boys made it easier to place the colony’s Irish population within a familiar dialectic between English civilization and Irish barbarity while at the same time blending traditional anti-Presbyterian rhetoric into the mix. The result was a new image of frontier Irish Presbyterians; they were at once bloodthirsty savages and reformed Protestant republicans.

Some writers questioned if there was an ethnic difference between Irish Presbyterians and Catholics at all. The author of *The Paxtoniade, A Poem* made no such distinction. He satirized the Paxton march and claimed that two Irish elders, O’Haro and O’Rigan, organized it. The author explained that “on Account of some unhappy flaws / In their outward behaviour, the hard-hearted Laws / Had sentenc’d, to see in these western Plantations / A better reception and kind habitations.”⁸⁷ In other

⁸⁵ *A Scene in the First Act of the New Farce. Published as a Specimen* (Philadelphia, 1764), 7–8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 7–8.

⁸⁷ *Paxtoniade*, 5.

words, the two men were transported convicts who, despite their “cruel rejection,” remained loyal to the Kirk. Convicts were transported to the colonies from across Ireland, making their numbers more representative of the Irish population as a whole than voluntary migrants who came from the largely Protestant northern counties.⁸⁸ The “O” prefix further clarified these characters’ ethnic background. And yet they were both identified as Presbyterians, a fact clearly established by their adoration of John Knox.⁸⁹ They may have been Protestants, but they remained Irish. Many Assembly writers claimed Irish American Presbyterians were not “British” to the same degree as other Pennsylvanians. They were either native Irish converts whose Protestantism did not redeem them, or they were the progeny of Scottish migrants whose ancestors’ time in Ulster had cursed them with the taint of Ireland.

Assembly writers ridiculed pro-Paxton efforts to distinguish between Irish ethnicities. One author imagined Rev. McClenachan’s attempt to rank Pennsylvania’s Irish based on their ancestry and religion:

The *Macs* you know are a noble dignified Race in the *Irish Annals*, famed for their intire Renunciation of Popery; while the *O’s* are rank Roman-Catholicks, and Native *Irish* that trot in our Bogs. It is immaterial whether the Letters of a Name is used in spelling it, whether the *O’Haras* are called *O’Haras*, or the *O* left out, and they are called *Haras*; or whether the *O’Rielys*, are called only *Rielys*, yet they are all the same Family, and always attended Mass in *Ireland*, whatever they may do in *Pennsylvania*.⁹⁰

Here the character sounds his resentment towards Anglican conformists of Irish Catholic background because it upset Protestants’ traditional social dominance over Irish Catholics.⁹¹ This was also an obvious attack on McClenachan, who had “abandoned” Presbyterianism in favor of the Church of England and therefore was also guilty of opportunistic con-

⁸⁸ For more information on Irish penal emigration, see Audrey Lockhart, *Some Aspects of Emigration from Ireland to the North American Colonies between 1660 and 1775* (New York, 1976), 80–115; David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin, 1991), 64–65; A. Roger Ekrich, *Bound for America: The Transportation of British Convicts to the Colonies, 1718–1775* (Oxford, 1987), 24–25, 46–47, 83–85; and Bric, *Ireland, Philadelphia and the Re-invention of America*, 9–12, 31–32, 39. The link between the Paxton marchers and convicts was also made in the *Belfast News-Letter*, Mar. 2, 1764.

⁸⁹ *Paxtoniade*, 6. O’Hara is depicted riding an ass descended from Hudibras’s horse.

⁹⁰ *Letter, From a Clergyman in Town*, 3–4.

⁹¹ For Catholics changing their names in America, see Grahme Kirkham’s introduction to R. J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718–1775*, 2nd ed. (Belfast, 1996), xvii–xviii.

formity. McClenachan's close affiliation with Philadelphia Presbyterians, antiproprietary writers accused, proved that this conversion was skin deep. New Ticket attempts to differentiate Irish ethnicities were further mocked in an subsequent antiproprietary tract from the "real" McClenachan: "As to the paragraph about the *Macs*, and so forth, it is pretty passable; for there certainly is as much Difference between the *Macs* and *O's*, as there is between *Teague* and *St. Patrick*."⁹² The differences between the two groups are here trivialized and mocked, as they were in the earlier McClenachan letter and the *Paxtoniade*, in an attempt to link them in the minds of readers.

Conclusion

Those Presbyterians who accepted Isaac Hunt's invitation to gaze into his looking glass found an unrecognizable reflection cast back at them. Certainly they would not have seen themselves in a figure that they could agree was despicable. Looking closer, they would have made out Hunt's fiendish negative—an inverted image of how the author imagined himself and, by extension, all loyal Britons to appear and behave. By using imagery gleaned from British history to discredit their adversaries, antiproprietary authors made clear declarations about how they viewed themselves. While the Assembly Party championed loyalty, rationality, Protestantism, and liberty, the wild Irish Presbyterians of the New Ticket represented treachery, fanatical enthusiasm, superstition, and religious slavery. Conceptions of British ethnicity remained central to the identity of a large portion of the Pennsylvania electorate at midcentury. It should not be surprising then that antiproprietary authors used European models of difference to attack their New Ticket opponents. Indeed, such models, increasingly unwieldy and difficult to apply to American society, suited members of a group so uncomfortable with shifting ethnoreligious demographics that it advocated scrapping traditional systems of government in order to bring the colony closer to the protective bosom of the Mother Country. As seemingly awkward as older models were, they remained the prime expression of collective identity for many Pennsylvanians as late as 1764.

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⁹² *Cheat Unmask'd*, 4.