PENNSYLVANIA POLITICIANS AND THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

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by

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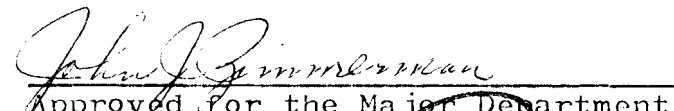

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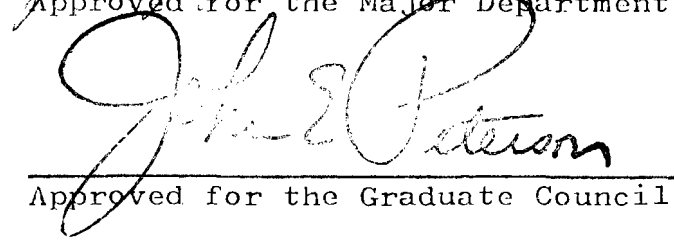

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	PENNSYLVANIA AND ITS MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE	4
3.	BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DELEGATION TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS	44
4.	CONCLUSION	116
BIBLIOGRAPHY		121

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

There were nine men from the state of Pennsylvania who signed the Declaration of Independence. Of these nine signers only three voted for the document. Pennsylvania was unique in this since most of the other colonies voted with only a few dissenters. Because of Pennsylvania's strategic geographical position its concurrence with the Congressional action of early July, 1776, was of the utmost importance to the success of the united effort. Therefore, the question of why the Pennsylvanians voted as they did, and how the signers got to the Congress seemed significant to explore. This paper traces the movement of Pennsylvania from a loyal proprietary colony to a colony ready to take its place among its sister colonies as a free and independent state, and it seeks to ascertain the reason why there was opposition to declaring independence.

To arrive at the answers to these questions it was necessary to use a number of sources that dealt with Pennsylvania in the mid-eighteenth century. The first and eighth series of the Pennsylvania Archives were very helpful for gaining an understanding of the Pennsylvania Assembly. The Pennsylvania Gazette and the Pennsylvania Packet gave adequate

coverage to actions of the Assembly and the Constitutional Convention. However, they did not give any real help in the effort to discover the opinion of the public toward the question of independence. The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography contained a number of valuable primary and secondary sources. The Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, the American Archives Fourth Series, and the Journals of the Continental Congress were very valuable primary sources.

When trying to piece together the lives of the men who represented Pennsylvania in Congress the Dictionary of American Biographies was the logical place to begin. For a few of the men the DAB contained all the information that was available. When autobiographies and biographies were available they proved to be a most valuable source of information. Again the PMHB contained information that was impossible to find in other places. Sanderson's multi-volume work on the Signers proved to be a useful source. A number of secondary sources were used for both the events of Pennsylvania and the men who represented that colony.

The following chapter gives a brief history of Pennsylvania, and explores its movement toward a position favoring independence. The next chapter contains the information on the delegates to the Congress from Pennsylvania. The first eight men were the individuals who served in the First Congress, the second group were those who served up

through July 4, and the last group contains those who were sent as replacements to the Congress on July 20, 1776.

Chapter 2

PENNSYLVANIA AND ITS MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

The colony of Pennsylvania was established as a Proprietary colony under the guidance of William Penn. Because Penn was willing to allow the colony a greater latitude in the running of its affairs, its development was somewhat unique among its sister colonies. As the colony was settled, new counties were formed in the west. By 1750 the western counties had substantially increased in population. The representation of the western counties in the legislature, however, was not increased to keep up with this growth in the west. This lack of equal representation by the middle of the eighteenth century was due to the dominate position of the counties of Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester. Stille' wrote that after 1751 the Assembly was composed of thirty-six members, the vast majority of whom represented the wealth and intelligence of the province. Out of the thirty-six members, twenty-four came from the original counties of Philadelphia, Chester and Bucks and represented the Quakers. The other ten representatives were from the German and Scotch-Irish areas of the back counties. These areas were greater in population, but were not allowed representation

equal to their numbers.[1] Thus even though the Quakers made up one-fifth of the population, they controlled the Assembly. The Quakers felt increasing pressure as they were forced to vote for military supplies. As the French and Indian War began, the pressure for military measures increased. A number of the influential pro-Proprietary party members of the province signed a petition describing the defenseless condition and sent it to the King. The petition required the Quakers to take an oath of office which in effect would expell them from the Assembly. When the governor and his council declared war on the Indians and placed a bounty on their scalps, six Quakers retired from the legislature, and a number of others refused to stand for reelections in 1756. The result was that only twelve Quakers remained in the legislature after the 1756 election and their influence on military matters was never fully restored. This allowed the Assembly to provide for a more adequate military defense.[2]

From 1755 and for the next twenty years, there were two main political parties in Pennsylvania whose positions were clear and in rather strong opposition. The anti-Proprietary party, made up of a Quaker-German alliance, with a strong anti-military faction, favored conversion to a royal province and the taxing of proprietary lands. The Proprietary

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[1]Charles Stille', Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808, (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1891), I, 48.

[2]Wayland C. Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), 2nd ed., pp. 106-107.

party on the other hand, was made up of the Anglicans and rural Presbyterians in the east and the Scotch-Irish in the west. The Proprietary Party favored the continuation of the proprietary government, the use of military force and opposed taxing proprietary land. It was this controversy which brought Franklin to the forefront of Pennsylvania politics in his capacity as the anti-Proprietary party representative to the King.

During the 1760's the struggle over the colonial claims began to take precedence over the other matters. As a result of the Stamp Act controversy, there was a switch in popular opinion, no longer favoring a royal government for the colony, and the petition for a change in government was never seriously considered. Because of Franklin's residence in London, John Dickinson became the leading political figure in Pennsylvania. His "Farmers Letters" made him a celebrity throughout the colonies for he focused attention on the issues which many in the colonies believed were important. Furthermore, the involvement with Britain overshadowed the numerous boundary disputes that had been developing with Pennsylvania's neighbors.

Pennsylvania seemed as committed to the defense of "the rights of Englishmen" as any other colony in the 1760's and early 1770's. Although the Pennsylvanians resented the Sugar Act of 1764, the Stamp Act of 1765 provoked a more intense response. In fact, one of their representatives to the Stamp Act Congress, John Dickinson, drew up the major

resolutions that the Congress adopted. When the ships bearing the stamps arrived at Philadelphia, the people kept it from unloading. In addition they forced John Hughes, the British agent, to resign and the Philadelphia merchants to adopt non-importation agreements. In 1769 in response to the Townshend duties, the merchants of Philadelphia again passed a non-importation agreement. The citizens of Philadelphia in 1770 prevented a shipment of tea from docking after the British retained the tea tax when they repealed the other parts of the Townshend duties. Later in response to the Coercive Acts of 1774, every county in Pennsylvania held meetings which protested British tyranny and expressed support for Boston.[3]

A meeting was held in the State House Yard in Philadelphia on June 18, 1774, in which eight thousand gathered to protest the closing of Boston's port. The two leaders of this meeting were John Dickinson and Thomas Willing, who later would vote against the Declaration of Independence. The resolutions adopted at the meeting were four-fold: (1) that the Boston Port Bill was unconstitutional; (2) that the convening of a continental congress was necessary; (3) that a committee of forty-three was to maintain communications with the county committees throughout the province and with the other colonies; and (4) that they request the governor to call the Assembly into session.

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[3] Ibid., pp. 138-140.

On July 15, 1774, a provincial convention met in Philadelphia made up of representatives of the various county committees. The convention, which had no legal basis for its existence, called upon the Assembly to appoint delegates to a Continental Congress and it gave strong suggestions about the instructions to be given Pennsylvania's delegation. The convention also added the stipulation that if the Assembly did not act, they would take the initiative in the matter and appoint the delegates and issue instructions to them. Once again John Dickinson was largely responsible for the formation of this convention's resolves.

Governor Penn resisted calling the Assembly for as long as he was able, but because of Indian problems on the frontier he was forced to call the Assembly into session. The Assembly met from July 18 through the twenty-third. On July 19, the Assembly adopted the following resolution unanimously:

> That there is an absolute Necessity that a Congress of Deputies from the several Colonies be immediately assembled, to consult together and form a general Plan of Conduct to be observed by all the Colonies, for the Purposes of procuring Relief for our suffering Brethern, obtaining Redress of our Grievances, preventing future Dissentions, firmly establishing our Rights and restoring Harmony between Great Britain and her Colonies on a constitutional Foundation.[4]

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[4]Pennsylvania Archives: Eighth Series, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives, 1683-1776, (8 vols., Harrisburg, 1931-1935), VIII, 7092, hereafter cited as Votes.

On the 23rd of July the Pennsylvania Assembly issued its instructions to the delegates to the Continental Congress. The instructions were as follows:

> Gentlemen, THE Trust reposed in you is of such a Nature, and the Modes of executing it may be so diversified in the Course of your Deliberations, that it is scarcely possible to give you particular Instructions respecting it. We shall therefore only in general direct, that you are to meet in Congress the Committees of several British Colonies at such Time and Place as shall be generally agreed on, to consult together on the present critical and alarming Situation and State of the Colonies, and that you, with them, evert your utmost Endeavors to form and adopt a Plan, which shall aford the best Prospect of obtaining a Redress of American Grievances ascertaining American Rights, and establishing that Union and Harmony which is most essential to the Welfare and Happiness of both Countries. And in doing this, you are strictly charged to avoid every thing indecent or disrespectful to the Mother State. You are also directed to make Report of your Proceedings to the next Assembly.[5]

Joseph Galloway's influence can be seen in these instructions as well as the delegates appointed. No delegate was appointed from outside the Assembly, thus, excluding James Wilson and John Dickinson. Those named to Congress by the Assembly were: Speaker Galloway, Thomas Mifflin, Samuel Rhoads, Charles Humphreys, John Morton, George Ross, and Edward Biddle. John Dickinson was finally made a member of the Congress on October 15 after his election to the Assembly. The First Continental Congress was a relatively conservative body whose actions were in the main aimed at reconciliation with Great Britain. On December 10, the Pennsylvania House approved the proceedings of the First Continental Congress by

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[5]Votes, 7100.

a unanimous vote. It, thus, became the first constitutional body to ratify the acts of Congress.[6]

Between January 23 and 28, 1775 the second provincial convention was held in Philadelphia. The convention approved the proceedings of the Continental Congress. At the suggestion of John Dickinson, the Convention formed an Association to help enforce the non-importation agreements. In addition it empowered the city committee to attempt to take over control of the province after its own adjournment and gave it authority to convene a new convention. The Assembly reconvened on February 20. The Governor suggested on March 8th, that they petition the King for a redress of grievances. This renewed the division in the Assembly between the Conservative forces of Galloway and the more liberal group led by Mifflin, Dickinson, and Thomson. The Conservatives supported the Governor's proposal while the more liberal party saw such action, apart from authorization by the other colonies, as wholly unacceptable. After a few weeks of heated debate and parliamentary maneuvering, the more liberal forces were able to draw up an answer to the governor which defiantly rejected the Governor's plan. In the process Mr. Galloway's career was ended and Pennsylvania took another step towards independence. The Assembly session was

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[6]Kenneth Rossman, Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution, (Chapel Hill, 1952), pp. 27-37; Stille', Life and Times of John Dickinson, I, Chapter 5.

adjourned on March 18 until May 1.[7]

When word reached Philadelphia of the Battle at Lexington and Concord, eight thousand gathered at the State House. At this gathering the people resolved to defend their property, liberty, and lives with arms from those who were attempting to deprive them. On May 5 a petition was presented to the House urging that the Province be put in "a State of Defense, in such Manner as to this House shall appear most proper and effectual.--[8] On the following day Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Willing and James Wilson were added to the delegation to Congress.[9] The ninth of May the House issued their instructions to the Deputies in Congress. The instructions were as follows:

> THE Trust reposed in you, is of such a Nature, and the Modes of executing it, may be so diversified in the Course of Your Deliberations, that it is scarcely possible to give you particular Instructions respecting it.
>
> We shall therefore, in general, direct that you meet in Congress the Delegates of the several British Colonies to be on the Tenth Instant, to consult together on the present critical and alarming Situation and State of the Colonies, and that you evert your utmost Endeavors to agree upon, and recommend, such further Measures, as shall afford the best Prospect of obtaining Redress of American Grievances, and restoring that Union and Harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies so essential to the Welfare and Happiness of both Countries.

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[7]Robert L. Brunhouse, The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790, (Harrisburg, 1942), Chapter 1; Stille , Life and Times of John Dickinson, I, 149-166.

[8]Votes, 7230.

[9]Ibid., 7231.

> You are directed to make Report of Your Proceedings to this House at their next sessions after the Meetings of the Congress.[10]

The Assembly continued to meet through May and June and discussed routine matters as well as the defense of the colony. At the June 30 meeting seventeen resolves were approved which sought to provide for the defense of the colony. The Assembly then adjourned until September.[11]

The Assemblies meetings in September were routine except for the boundary disputes with Pennsylvania neighbors. In October the meetings in the middle of the month centered around the organization of the newly elected Assembly and the boundary disputes. In addition, the issue of raising troops was brought before the Assembly as a result of an order of the Continental Congress. The result was that a number of petitions, from the Committees dealing with the military preparedness of Philadelphia, were presented. The Journal reported on October 31 that the Pennsylvania Assembly presented a resolve to the Congress dealing with this matter. It stated that:

> The House taking into their further consideration the resolve of Congress, for raising a battalion in this province, for general service, find it necessary that moneys should be advanced by the several captains for that purpose.

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[10] Ibid., 7232-3.

[11] Ibid., 7245-7249.

They therefore asked that money be given to raise the battalion.[12] On the eighth of November the Assembly passed seven resolves which dealt with the Association that was in charge of the defense of the colony. They set down certain rules for its operation and payment.[13] The last few weeks in November were almost totally concerned with organizing the armed forces of the colony and the means to raise needed revenue. The Assembly was not in session for the months of December, 1775, and January, 1776.

The Assembly on November 4 named its nine delegates to the Congress. Those named were: John Morton, John Dickinson, Robert Morris, Benjamin Franklin, Charles Humphreys, Edward Biddle, Thomas Willing, Andrew Allen and James Wilson.[14] On November 9 the Committee appointed to draw up instructions for the Delegates to Congress brought out their report. The first and last paragraphs were the same as in the earlier instructions. However, these instructions are more specific in cautioning the delegates about independence. The instructions were as follows:

> We therefore, in general, direct, that you, or any Four of you, meet in Congress the Delegates of the several Colonies now assembled in this City, and any such Delegates as may meet in Congress next year; that you consult together on the present critical and alarming

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[12]Worthington C. Ford, ed., Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, (34 vols. U.S. Govt., Washington, 1904-1937), III, 313, hereafter cited as Journals.

[13]Votes, 7351-2.

[14]Ibid., 7347.

> State of Public Affairs; that you evert your utmost Endeavors to agree upon, and recommend, such Measures as you shall judge to afford the best Prospect of obtaining Redress of American Grievances, and restoring that Union and Harmony between Great Britain and the Colonies so essential to the Welfare and Happiness of both Countries.
>
> Though the oppressive Measures of the British Parliament and Administration have compelled us to resist their Violence by Force of Arms, yet we strictly enjoin you, that you, in Behalf of this Colony, dissent from, and utterly reject, any Propositions, should such be made, that may cause, or lead to, a Separation from our Mother Country, or a Change of the Form of this Government.[15]

The Assembly resumed its deliberation in mid-February, 1776, with routine business. By the end of the month they were again receiving petitions dealing with the various military and civilian aspects of the mobilization. This concern became more prevalent as the months passed; the result was that more and more time was consumed by the Assembly in the matters relating to the defense of the colony. These matters took the form of appointments of persons to positions in the militia, the rules for the military Association, as well as the means for paying the expenses.

From the middle of May the Assembly received petitions dealing with changing their instructions to the delegates to Congress, and petitions dealing with changing the government of Pennsylvania. As early as March 8 the Assembly resolved that additional representation would be given to a number of the counties in Pennsylvania. On June 14, new instructions were sent to the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress by the

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[15] Ibid., 7352-7353.

Assembly. The instructions began by stating that the early instructions which did not allow them to vote for separation from Britain were not done out of any "Diffidence" of the delegate's ability. Rather, it was because of a "desire to serve the good People of Pennsylvania with Fidelity, in Times so full of alarming Dangers and perplexing Difficulties." The situation "is so greatly altered" that the Assembly felt it was necessary to remove the restrictions of the earlier instructions. The reasons for the change in the instructions are as follows:

> The Contempt with which the last Petition of the Honourable Congress has been treated:----The late Act of Parliament, declaring the just Resistance of the Colonists, against Violences actually offered, to be Rebellion, excluding them from the Protection of the Crown, and even compelling some of them to bear Arms against their Country-men:----The Treaties of the King of Great-Britain, with other Princes, for engaging foreign Mercenaires to aid the Forces of that Kingdom, in their hostile Enterprizes, against America; and his Answer to the Peition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London, manifests such a determined and implacable Resolution to effect the utter Destruction of these Colonies, that all Hopes of a Reconciliation, on reasonable Terms, are extinguished. Nevertheless, it is our ardent Desire, that a civil War, with all its attending Miseries, could be ended by a secure and honourable Peace.

As a result of the contempt shown by Britain, the Pennsylvania delegates were authorized to form the necessary compacts with the other colonies. And to conclude such treaties with foreign kingdoms and states and other measures "as, upon a View of all Circumstances, shall be judged necessary for promoting the Liberty, Safety and Interests of America;

reserving to the People of this Colony the sole and exclusive Right of regulating the internal Government and Police of the same."

The Assembly went on to describe how difficult it was to reach this decision:

> The Happiness of these Colonies has, during the whole Course of this fatal Controversy, been our first Wish. Their Reconciliation with Great-Britain our next. Ardently have we prayed for the Accomplishment of both. But, if we must renounce the one or the other, we humbly trust in the Mercies of the Supreme Govenor of the Universe, that we shall not stand condemned before his Throne, if our Choice is determined by that over-ruling Law of Self-preservation, which his divine Wisdom has thought fit to implant in the Hearts of his Creatures.[16]

The change in instructions to the Pennsylvania delegation did not take place solely as a result of forces within the Assembly. The colony of Pennsylvania was experiencing a profound change in its political outlook. This metamorphose resulted in a change in the Assembly and consequently a new outlook concerning the relationship between the colonies and the mother country.

It was evident to those who desired to have the instructions to the Pennsylvania delegates changed, that the only way this could be achieved was to change the makeup of the legislature since they issued the instructions. A major complaint of the frontier was that they were not given representation equal to their numbers and since it was felt the

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[16] Ibid., 7543.

frontier was more favorably inclined towards independence this was the obvious point at which to draw the issue.

The government of Pennsylvania was by its very nature closely tied to the mother country. As a Proprietary colony the more aristocratic group had been in control from the beginning. This early control was self-perpetuating so that when new counties were settled as the frontier moved west, the original counties of Philadelphia, Chester, and Bucks kept representation in the newly-settled areas far below the proper ratio of population to representative. At a meeting held on June 18, 1774, in the State House Yard, the beginning of the popular upsurge to effect a change in the colony of Pennsylvania and its attitude toward Britain, and hence toward the government of Pennsylvania, can be seen. Earlier meetings held in response to other acts passed by the Parliament had gathered at the county level. The June, 1774, meeting marked an escalation in the effort to build greater public support for a change in the Pennsylvania Assembly as well as opposition to the tactics of Great Britain. When the Assembly was forced to yield to the Committee and name delegates to Congress, with the threat that if they did not act the Committee would choose delegates, the illegal Committee gained stature as a rival representative body. When the First Continental Congress ordered that Committees of Inspection be set up to enforce Congressional resolutions it marked the point at which an illegal body was given a degree of legitimacy by an outside government. Thus, as

early as 1774, there were two legislative bodies within the colony of Pennsylvania vying for public support, much as there had been two political parties since 1755.

In January, 1775, a group of Quakers from New Jersy and Pennsylvania met with the aim of pledging loyalty to the King and the Proprietary government. Their Quaker Testimony called for all Quakers "to unite in abhorrence of all such writings and measures as evidenced a desire or design to break off the happy connexion of the colonies with the mother country."[17] At the same time the movement towards independence was moving ahead; thus, by early 1775 there were several political groups discernable. The Tories were made up of the proprietary and crown interests with the passive sympathy of the Quakers. Those whose concern was opposition to Britain made up a Whig element, in which there were moderates and radicals. The moderate Whigs remained in control throughout 1775 as is evidenced by the delegates appointed to Congress. In addition the instructions showed a desire to maintain a moderate stanz.[18]

From November, 1775 to June, 1776, a burgeoning party was developing as a counter force to the moderates. This party insisted upon a speedy declaration of independence and a subversion of the charter government of the province into

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[17] Pennsylvania Gazette, (Philadelphia) February 1, 1775.

[18] Brunhouse, The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, pp. 11-12.

one with greater popular support. Thus, the issue of independence was closely tied to the question of dumping the proprietary government and may be a major reason for the delay on the part of Pennsylvania in the movement toward independence.[19] Joseph Galloway and his followers believed that America's hope rested with a continuation of the union with Great Britain and the formation of an alliance among themselves under Britain's guidance. They had no faith in democracy, rather, their only confidence was in the rule of a few wealthy citizens. From the time of the meeting of the Convention called by the General Committee in January, 1775, the colony of Pennsylvania had two governments. The one, the Assembly, governing under the old charter and recognized by the more moderate group; the other, the General Committee and Convention, was recognized by those desiring a quick change.

Although Pennsylvania was divided in its position vis-a-vis Great Britain and its own political situation, it was involved in the process of arming itself and providing military personnel in compliance with Congressional directives. In response to the battle at Lexington and Concord and the subsequent demands of those who gathered at the State House Yard, the Pennsylvania Assembly granted the needed funds so that by May 10 the city had a military appearance.

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[19]Charles J. Stille, "Pennsylvania and the Declaration of Independence," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, XIII, 387, hereafter cited as PMHB.

At the end of July, 1775, various counties sent letters which discussed the forming of military units to the Pennsylvania Assembly.[20] On July 3, 1775, the Committee of Public Safety, presided over by Franklin, decided to build a fleet of gunboats to protect the Delaware River entrance to the city of Philadelphia. Thus, the colony of Pennsylvania, although it was divided, was determined to provide adequate defense for the colony. The concern for the military preparedness of the colony would also seem to be a recognition that ultimately an armed conflict was probable. The decisions of the representatives of Pennsylvania also were indicative of the power struggle within the colony.

In February, 1776, the movement toward a radical position took a sizable advance. On February 16 the semi-annual election was held for the hundred member Philadelphia Committee. Although the election had not been seen as a test of radical verses moderate strength, the result was a victory for the radicals. Twelve days later the Committee called for a Provincial Convention. The reason according to Charles Thomson was that, "Many members of this body who were suddenly raised to power & who exercised an uncontrolled authority over their fellow citizens were impatient of any kind of opposition." He claimed that "The cautious conduct of the patriots in the Assembly, they attributed to

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[20] Pennsylvania Archives: First Series, (12 vols., Philadelphia, 1852-1855), IV, 639-757, hereafter cited as Pa. Arch.

lukewarmness [...]" As a result instead of "cooperating to keep down parties, they were labouring to raise & foment them."[21] With the call for a convention, the Committee also petitioned the Assembly for expanded representation in that body. In an effort to maintain its power the Assembly agreed to a compromise worked out by John Dickinson and Joseph Reed on March 8. The resolve of the Assembly allowed four additional representatives to the city of Philadelphia, two representatives each to Lancaster, York, Cumberland, Berks, and Northampton counties, and one additional representative to three counties, Bedford, Northumberland and Westmoreland.[22] The eastern counties obviously received no additional representatives. The Committee sent out a circular letter to the county committees explaining that a convention was no longer needed because of the Assembly's action.

The Committee petitioned the Assembly to rescind the hated instructions. This the Assembly refused to do for on April 6 it voted "by a great Majority" not to alter the instructions.[23] It did, however, vote to increase military preparedness. They passed a resolution providing for the disarming of disaffected persons and for the procuring of arms of Non-Associators in the Province.[24]

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[21] C. Thomson to W. H. Drayton, quoted in Stille, Life and Times of John Dickinson, II, 349.

[22] Votes, VIII, 7436.

[23] Ibid., 7513.

[24] Ibid., 7505.

The Committee of Philadelphia prepared a slate of delegates as did the moderates. The issue was clear to the voters in the province as is evidenced by articles in the paper and diaries. Christopher Marshall recorded the following:

> Many, I understand were the private meetings of those called moderate men (or those who are for reconciliation with Great Britain upon the best terms she will give us, by means to be reconciled to or with her), in order to consult and have such men carried for Burgesses at the Election (First of May) as will be sure to promote, to accept and adopt all such measures. These are the schemes that are now ardently pursued by those men.[25]

In the Pennsylvania Packet on April 29, 1776, a letter from an "Elector" to the free and independent electors of the City of Philadelphia was reprinted. It reads in part:

> I tremble to reflect what a party there is in this City, who either in plain words or tantamount insinuation espouse the cause of tyranny. You have read their insidious publications: You have remarked their zeal for a reconciliation and re union with Great Britain on Constitutional principles. This proposal Gentlemen is a mere phantom, a lure, a pitfall to catch you in.[26]

The papers carried a debate between Cato who opposed independence and Cassandra and the Forester who favored it. Thus the issue was clear and the candidates for office also offered a clear choice.

Soon after the decision was reached to hold an election on May 1, the political situation polarized into those

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[25]William Duane, ed., Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster during the American Revolution, 1774-1781, (Albany, 1877), p. 66.

[26]Pennsylvania Packet, (Philadelphia), April 29, 1776, p. 2.

favoring independence and those opposing it. The moderates made their position clear by nominating men whose hesitancy over the matter of independence was well known. Andrew Allen, a man whose position as a member of the aristocracy was well known, was chosen to head the ticket. The next man chosen by the moderates was Thomas Willing, one of the richest men in Pennsylvania and related to the Penn family by marriage. Third, was Samuel Howell, a wealthy merchant with a Quaker background, who was a member of the city council. The fourth man chosen was another wealthy merchant and member of the city council, Alexander Wilcox.

A sub-committee of the Committee of Inspection and Observation spent at least a week longer trying to settle on the radical ticket. Marshall recorded in his diary on April 25 the following:

> Went to Jacob Schriner's; met sundry persons there; went thence to the sign of Rotterdam in Third Street; stayed till the ticket was settled for Inspectors, and three person to put into practice the Resolves of Assembly for disarming Non Associators . . . .Thence, to meet the Committee at William Thorn's school room, where we concluded and fixed the ticket for four Burgesses, viz., George Clymer, Col. Roberdeau, Owen Biddle [and] Frederick Kuhl, but to be kept a secret from the public til after our next meeting on Second Day night, at that place [at] seven o'clock.[27]

Thus, George Clymer, a prosperous merchant, was chosen to head the ticket. Daniel Roberdeau, who was considered to be the most popular man in the city since the people always chose him to chair their public meetings, was considered an

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[27]Marshall, Diary, p. 67.

easy winner. To counterbalance Howell's strong Quaker strength, Owen Biddle, who had put aside his Quaker convictions to join the Independence, was chosen. To attract the German vote, Frederick Kuhl, who was from German descent, was chosen. David Hawke wrote that the parties wished to emphasize issues not men because they did not want grievances against individuals to interfere with the issues. As a result they remained vague on the men chosen, so that if it was necessary last minute changes could be made.

The results of the May 1 election were a shock to the radicals for they elected only one representative from Philadelphia. The Pennsylvania Packet for May 6 reported the results as follows: Samuel Howell 941; Andrew Allen 923; George Clymer 923; Alexander Willcox 921;-----Thomas Willing 911; Frederick Kuhl 904; Owen Biddle 903; and Daniel Roberdeau 890.[28] Marshall made the following comment about the election results: "I think it may be said with propriety that the Quakers, Papist, Church, Allen family, with all the proprietary party, were never seemingly so happily united as at this election . "[29] This was Marshall's response after a post election meeting with Paine, Young, Matlock and Cannon. It is worth pointing out, as does Professor Hawke, that the election was very close and the

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[28]Pennsylvania Packet, May 6, 1776; Marshall, Diary, p. 68.

[29]Marshall, Diary, p. 68.

shift of only ten votes could have totally reversed the decision. He suggested the reason for the victory of the moderates may not have been completely the result of the populace favoring the moderate position. It might also be explained by the people's feelings about the individuals running and the people's attitudes toward the Penn government. Mr. Howell is a good example of a person who had wide popular support beyond the question of whether he favored independents or not.[30]

The results of the election in the backcountry were not much more encouraging to the independents. At least four of the new Assemblymen, James Rankin, James Potter, Thomas Smith and James Allen, were mentioned by Professor Hawke as individuals who did not favor independents at the time of their election. He concluded that even if the Independents had won every seat in the city, they still could not have gained control of the Assembly. Mr. Hawke found that the backcountry really was not that concerned about independence in May of 1776. He found the backcountry had been enthusiastic for an immediate declaration of independence at an earlier date but this eagerness had been burned out. Furthermore, they assumed that it was proper for the elite to govern. The backcountry was also experiencing

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[30]David Hawke, In the Midst of a Revolution, (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 33-35.

the prospects for a good harvest.[31] Thus, in the backcountry a number of forces were working against independence.

In the city of Philadelphia there were six men who formed the core of those who sought to effect a change in the government and policies of Pennsylvania. These men were Benjamin Rush, James Cannon, Christopher Marshall, Joseph Stiles, Timothy Matlock, Tom Paine and Thomas Young. Most of these men had experienced great difficulties in their life and were still striving for fulfillment. These men, as mentioned earlier, played a significant role in the February election for the committee and in naming the ticket for the May 1 election.[32] In addition to these men, John and Sam Adams were working to bring the Pennsylvanians to the point of seeing the need for independence.

The Pennsylvania Assembly demonstrated on May 6 that it was not ready to change the instructions to its delegates in Congress. On that date the House voted down "by a great Majority" a resolution aimed at changing its instructions.[33] This may have been one of the factors that led John Adams to introduce in the Congress a resolution which stated:

> That it be recommended to the respective assemblies and conventions of the United Colonies, where no government sufficient to the exigencies of the affiars have been hitherto established, to adopt such government as shall, in the opinion of the representatives of the

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[31] Ibid., Chapter 3.

[32] Ibid., pp. 101-110.

[33] Votes, VIII, 7513.

> people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular, and Americans in general.[34]

Much to John Adams' surprise, John Dickinson agreed with the resolution and pointed out that Pennsylvania had a government "sufficient to the exigencies of their affiars." In an effort to carry through his intention Adams introduced a preamble to this resolve on May 15. It read:

> Whereas his Britannic Majesty, in conjunction with the lords and commons of Great Britain, has, by a late act of Parliament, excluded the inhabitants of these United Colonies from the protection of his crown; and whereas, no answer, whatever, to the humble petitions of the colonies for redress of grievances and reconciliation with Great Britain, has been or is likely to be given; but, the whole force of that kingdom, aided by foreign mercenaries, is to be exerted for the destruction of the good people of these colonies; and whereas; it appears absolutely irreconcileable to reason and good Conscience, for the people of these colonies now to take the oaths and affirmations necessary for the support of any government under the crown of Great Britain, and it is necessary that the exercise of every kind of authority under the said crown should be totally suppressed, and all the powers of government exerted, under the authority of the people of the colonies, for the preservation of internal peace, virtue, and good order, as well as for the defence of their lives, liberties, and properties, against the hostile invasions and cruel depredations of their enemies;[35]

The intent of the preamble was clearly aimed at Pennsylvania where the general tone of the colony was one that recognized the King's authority. A problem raised by this resolve was that it interfered in a colony's internal affairs, which went contrary to the instructions given by

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[34] Journals, IV, 342.

[35] Ibid., IV, 357-358.

every colony. It also raised the question of whether the preamble was not in effect a declaration of independence. This was because it seemed to ask the suppression of the King's authority which was the last link with Britain. John Adams saw the resolution in such a light for he wrote his wife after its passage that "Great Britain has at last driven America to the last step, a complete separation from her; a total absolute independence, not only of her Parliament, but of her crown, for such is the amount of the resolve of the 15th."[36] The measure passed by a close vote. According to Carter Braxton the vote was six to four.[37]

In Pennsylvania the result of the resolution was a further polarization of the political climate. On the evening of May 15 Philadelphia's Committee met at the Philosophical Hall. A large group had gathered and the resolution of Congress was debated for three hours but no decision was reached as to the best way to use the measure. The next day the Independents decided that the best procedure was to prevent the Assembly from meeting. Marshall recorded that "it was concluded to call a Convention with speed; to protest against the present Assembly's doing any business" until the "sense of the Province was taken in that convention to be called [.] "[38] On May 17, a day of Fasting and Prayer, the

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[36]Edmund C. Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, (8 vols., Washington, 1921-1936), I, 443, hereafter cited as Burnett, Letters.

[37]Burnett, Letters, I, 454.

[38]Marshall, Diary, p. 71.

independents moved around the city gathering names on a petition which urged that a meeting be held on May 20 '"in order to take the sense of the people respecting the resolve of Congress.'"[39] The next day the city committee called a mass meeting for May 20, which was also the day assigned for the assembly to convene. On May 19 "The Alarm" appeared, a broadside that claimed that a new government should be established on the authority of the people. Thus, it said the people must form a Constitition.[40]

On May 20 the meeting was held in the State House Yard, on a rainy Monday with some five thousand in attendance. Adams recorded the following:

> The first step taken was this: the Moderator produced the Resolve of Congress of the 15th inst. and read it in a loud stentorian Voice that might be heard a Quarter of a Mile. 'Whereas his Britannic Majesty, etc.' As soon as this was read, the Multitude, several Thousands, some say, tho so wett, rended the Welkin with three Cheers, Hatts flying as usual[.][41]

The assembled group then adopted several resolves that indicated the revolutionary nature of those in attendance. They expressed their belief that the instructions to their delegates to Congress "have a dangerous tendency to withdraw this Province" from union with the other colonies. They asserted that the Assembly was not elected "for the purpose

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[39]Hawke, In the Midst of a Revolution, p. 134.

[40]Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[41]Quoted in David Hawke, In the Midst of a Revolution, p. 135.

of forming a new Government." Since this was the case the Assembly could not proceed to do so, for this would be "assuming arbitrary power." It was further agreed that a protest would be "immediately entered by the people of this City and Liberties against the powers of the said House to carry the said resolve of Congress into execution." It was agreed "that a Provincial Convention ought to be chosen by the people for the express purpose of carrying the said resolve of Congress into execution." They agreed that members of the county committees should meet to determine the number and manner of election to the convention which was to frame the new government.[42]

In response to the resolves of the Independents the Moderates issued a Remonstrance which sought to present the Moderate views. The first point made in the resolves was that the resolve of May 15 "is only a conditional Recommendation" to the various assemblies. Furthermore, the sole authority for changing the provincial governments resides with the Assembly. The Remonstrance pointed out that the measure of May 15 tended to cause disunion within the colony.[43] The Moderates carried the Remonstrance "two by two, into almost all parts of the town to be signed by all." It was also

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[42]Peter Force, ed., American Archives . . . a Documentry History of . . . the North American Colonies, (6 vols., Washington, 1837-1853), VI, 517-519, hereafter cited as Force, Am. Archives.

[43]Votes, VIII, 7524-7526.

sent into the country, "and much promoted by the Quakers."[44] According to Dr. Rush and the Pennsylvania Gazette on June 12, the Moderates did not meet with much success.

The Independents sought to win the support of the citizenry through broadsides, and personal contact with the people. They also worked to prevent the Moderates message from getting through to the people. This was done by physically stopping the Moderates and by the use of intimidation. The main thrust of the Independents, however, was their own propaganda favoring independents and aimed at discrediting the Assembly. Christopher Marshall's diary gives an indication of the number of meetings of the men involved in trying to start a revolution in Pennsylvania.[45] A tactic used by the Independents that proved to be an effective propaganda measure was that of stirring up the battalions. James Cannon's Committee of Correspondence for the Committee of Privates started on February 1, 1776, to send out bulletins to every battalion in the colony. These bulletins aroused the already unhappy soldiers with arguments about how the Assembly was mistreating them and making them second class citizens. The effect of this maneuver was that various battalions of Associates met and expressed their support for a new government for Pennsylvania. These meetings and their resolves were reported in the various Pennsylvania newspapers

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[44] Marshall, Diary, p. 73.

[45] Ibid., pp. 73-74.

and thus helped give the Independents added propaganda, while furthering their aim of discrediting the Assembly.

The Assemblies new session began what was its final days deliberation on May 20. Although the Independents had not won control of the Assembly, they had enough members to prevent a quorum when their wishes were not being considered to the degree that they thought they should be. The Assembly received a number of petitions from various groups of citizens both favoring and opposing a change in instructions. For three days from June 1 through June 4 the Independents boycotted the Assembly, thus, preventing it from meeting. This occured after the Assembly failed to come to grips with the resolutions from Virginia of May 22 which proposed independence. On June 5 a petition from Cumberland county was received "praying that the Instructions given by the Assembly to the Delegates of this Province in Congress, may be withdrawn [...]" The question of "whether a Committee shall be appointed to bring in new Instructions to the Delegates of this Province in Congress?" was "carried in the Affirmative by a large Majority."[46] The 8th day of June, "The House resumed the Consideration of the Instructions to the Delegates of this Province in Congress, which being gone through, and approved of, were ordered to be transcribed."[47] Christopher Marshall recorded the following: "This day, fresh

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[46] Votes, VIII, 7535.

[47] Ibid., 7539.

instructions were given by our Assembly to their delegates in Congress, Yeas 31, Nays 12." On June 14, the instruction to the Pennsylvania delegates in Congress "being transcribed according to the Order, were signed by the Speaker," and printed in the record.[48] After other matters of a routine nature were disposed of, the Pennsylvania Assembly adjourned until August 26. The gathering on June 14 was the Assembly's last meeting and the legality of the meeting can be questioned, since only thirty-five members were in attendance.

June 18 was the date set by the Committee of the Province for the meeting of the Provincial Conference. The meeting was held at Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia. They adopted a number of resolves that were of significance. One, that the resolves of Congress passed on May 15 be adopted. Two, the present Government of the Province is not competent to run the colonies affairs. Three, that a Provincial Convention be called by this Conference for the purpose of forming a new government for Pennsylvania "on the authority of the Peoply only."[49] They went on to outline the procedures and qualifications for voting in the up-coming election for the Constitutional Convention. The Conference proceeded to take control of the Province by issuing a directive concerning the militia and the Associators. Dr. Rush and Colonel Smith were

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[48] Ibid., 7542-7543.

[49] James E. Gibson, "The Pennsylvania Provincial Conference of 1776," PMHB, LVIII, 331.

appointed as a Committee to draft a resolution concerning Independence. The committee's report stated that "in behalf of ourselves and with the APPROBATION, CONSENT AND AUTHORITY of our constituents unanimously declare our willingness to concur in a VOTE of the CONGRESS declaring the UNITED COLONIES FREE and INDEPENDENT STATES [.] " This was to apply to Pennsylvania provided the colonies internal policies are left unobstructed.[50] This resolution was received and recorded in the Journals of Congress. The resolution was passed on June 24. It is curious that on June 20 the Conference passed a resolution that set as a qualification for voting an oath bearing "allegiance to George the Third [.] "[51]

The resolution favoring independence from Pennsylvania preceded the resolve of Congress by less than two weeks. On June 28, the Congressional Committee appointed to prepare a draft of the declaration brought in its report; it was read and ordered to lie on the table.[52] On July 1, 1776, the motion for independence came before the house. Thomas Jefferson recorded the following series of events for that day:

> On Monday the 1st of July the house resolved itself into a committee of the whole and resumed the consideration of the original motion made by the delegates of Virginia, which being again debated through the day, was carried in the affirmative by the votes of N. Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, N. Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, N. Carolina, and Georgia. S.

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[50] Ibid., 336.

[51] Ibid., 331.

[52] Journals, V, 491.

> Carolina and Pennsylvania voted against it. Deleware having but two members present they were divided [.][53]

The delegates from New York asked for permission to withdraw since they were waiting for new instructions. The resolution was postponed for the day.[54] Thomas McKean recorded the vote of Pennsylvania on July 1: "The Delegates for Pennsylvania, who voted in the negative, were John Dickinson, Robert Morris, Charles Humphries and Thomas Willing Esquires; those in the affirmative were John Morton, Benjamin Franklin and James Wilson, Esquires."[55]

On July 2 the resolution for independence again came before the Congress. The following resolution was adopted:

> That these United Colonies are, and, of right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and that all political connexion between them, and the state of Great Britain, is, and ought to be, totally disolved.[56]

The vote by Pennsylvania on the resolution was three to two. Franklin, Wilson and Morton voted "Aye" while Humphreys and Willing registered disapproval. John Dickinson and Robert Morris did not take their seats in the Congress.[57] On July 4

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[53]Jefferson, "Notes of Debates," Journals, VI, 1092.

[54]Journals, VI, 1092.

[55]Burnett, Letters, I, 533.

[56]Journals, V, 507.

[57]T. McKean to W. McKorkle, Marshall, Diary, pp. 291-292.

the concluding arguments were heard on the final changes to be made in the Declaration that Thomas Jefferson had prepared. Towards evening the colonies voted unanimously to accept this Declaration that told the world why they found it necessary to separate themselves from Great Britain.

The election to the Constitutional Convention, which named new delegates to Congress, began on July 8. The Convention commensed on July 15 and proceeded to revamp the government in the image they deemed appropriate. Goodman suggested that since they did not present the state constitution to the people, many of the wealthy Quakers went into the Tory camp.[58] On July 20, 1776, that body elected new members to serve in the Continental Congress. Christopher Marshall recorded the appointment thusly, "B. Franklin, votes, 78; Robert Morris, 74; James Wilson, 74; John Morton, 71; George Ross, 77; Col. James Smith, 56; Benja. Rush, 61; George Taylor, 34."[59] In addition, George Clymer was appointed on July 20.[60] Thus it was that these Pennsylvanians took their place in history as signers of the Declaration of Independence, a document signed on August 2 by those present on that date.

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[58]Nathan G. Goodman, Benjamin Rush - Physician and Citizen, 1746-1813, (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 55.

[59]Marshall, Diary, p. 85; Journals, V, 596.

[60]Burnett, Letters, II, lxii.

The movement towards independence in Pennsylvania was slow and irregular. However, as early as June, 1774, different communities were taking a stand against the absolute right of the king and emphasizing what they believed were their rights. For example, resolution were passed in Hanover Township and in Middletown, both in Lancaster County, which took a strong stand against the arbitrary use of power by the king or Parliament. At least thirteen communities passed resolutions to this affect in the summer of 1774.[61] In December, 1774, the county of Northampton held a meeting to provide for the common defense of the colonies.[62] It is no doubt significant that this early sentiment against Great Britain occurred in predominately non-Quaker communities in the more western counties. However, the general tenure of Pennsylvania politics caused Charles Lee to describe Pennsylvania to Robert Morris in the following manner: "That damn'd slow heavy quakering Nag, your province is mounted upon, ought to be flogg'd and spurr'd, though she kicks and plunges." He went on to claim that Thomas Mifflin was the reason for the slight movement made in bringing Pennsylvania further toward an anti-British position.[63]

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[61] A Bid for Liberty, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, (William Penn Association, 1937), p. 14.

[62] Charles Lincoln, Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania, 1760-1776, (Philadelphia, 1901), p. 31.

[63] Rossman, Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution, p. 38.

In 1775 the independents' movement picked up momentum although the advance was not uniform. The Quakers, for example, held an anti-revolutionary Congress in January, 1775. The statement that came out of this meeting, called the Quaker Testament, stated their position. It reads as follows:

> We are therefore united by a sincere concern for the peace and welfare of our country, publicly to declare against every usurpation of power and authority, in opposition of the laws and government and against all combinations, insurrections, conspiracies and illegal Assemblies; and as we have restrained from them by the conscientious discharge of our duties to Almighty God by whom Kings reign and Princes decree justice, we hope thro' his assistance and favor, to be enabled to maintain our testimony against any requisitions which may be made of us, inconsistent with our religious principles, and the fidelity we owe to the king and his government as by law established, earnestly diserving the restoration of that harmony and concord which have heretofore united the people of these provinces and been attended by the divine blessing on their labor.[64]

After the battles at Lexington and Concord a group of eight thousand gathered at the State House Yard to register their determination to defend themselves.

This sentiment for a colonial defense, if not for independence, grew during the summer. On July 3, 1775 the Pennsylvania Committee of Public Safety decided to build a fleet of gunboats to protect the Deleware River entrance to the city. Dr. Benjamin Church wrote to Major Kane on July 23,

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[64]Lincoln, Revolutionary Movement in Pennsylvania, p. 199, n 1.

> 'A view to independence appears to be more and more general. Should Great Britain declare war against the colonies they would be lost forever . . . . For God's sake prevent it by a speedy accomodation.' 'The people of Connecticut are raving in the cause of liberty . . . . The Jerseys are not a whit behind Connecticut in zeal. The Philadelphians exceed them both.'[65]

The Pennsylvania Archives recorded the receipt of a number of letters from various counties which discussed the forming of military units for those counties.[66] The colony complied with the Congress in providing troops and supplies when the Congress requested these things from Pennsylvania. During 1775, Pennsylvania seemed to move with the other middle colonies in a slow deliberate way. The sentiment favoring stronger action to support the American cause seemed to be growing among the general population. However, because of the makeup of the Assembly this feeling was not reflected in the instructions given the delegates to the Continental Congress. To say that support favoring a complete break with Great Britain had widespread support, however, would be to vastly overstate the case.

Merril Jenson wrote that "in the spring of 1776 the political agencies representing the middle colonies were still opposed to independence. It did not matter whether they were the revolutionary bodies of New York, New Jersey, and Maryland," or if they were the old colonial legislatures of

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[65]Quoted in Lincoln, Revolutionary Movements in Pennsylvania, p. 229, n 2.

[66]Pa. Arch. IV, 639-757.

Pennsylvania and Delaware, there was no indication of a desire to change the instructions which prevented their delegates from voting for independence. He pointed out that Pennsylvania "was looked upon as the biggest obstacle, and the supporters of independence did not dare go ahead without one of the richest colonies and the largest city in America."[67] A possible indicator of support for the colonial cause may be gleamed from a letter by John Hancock on January 25, 1776. In it he wrote, "I would just observe, that in order to supply the battalion ordered to March from Pennsylvania, the Committee of Inspection of the City and Liberties of Philadelphia went round from house to house, and procured blankets from the inhabitants."[68]

In a speech drawn up by James Wilson on February 13, he expressed an opinion that no doubt reflected the feeling of many of his constiuents. This might be particularly true since he was said to have had doubts about the final break with Britain in July. In the February speech, Wilson expressed the belief that to remain within the British empire was very desirable, but the first concern was that America be free. His speech in part is as follows:

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[67]Meril Jensen, The Founding of a Nation - A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776, (New York, 1968), p. 682.

[68]Force, Am. Archives, IV, 849.

> We are desirous to continue Subjects: But we are determined to continue Freemen. We shall deem ourselves bound to renounce; and, we hope, you will follow our Example in renouncing the former Character wherever it shall become incompatible with the latter.
>
> While we shall be continued by you in the very important Trust, which you have committed to us, we shall keep our Eyes constantly and steadily fixed upon the Grand Object of the Union of the Colonies----THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT AND SECURITY OF THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS. Every Measure that we employ shall be directed to the Attainment of this Great End: No Measure, necessary, in our Opinion, for attaining it, shall be declined. If any such Measure should, against our principal Intention, draw the Colonies into Engagements that may suspend or dissolve their Union with their fellow-Subjects in Great Britain, we shall lament the Effect; but shall hold ourselves justified in adopting the Measure. That the Colonies may continue connected, as they have been, with Britain, is our second Wish: Our first is----THAT AMERICANS MAY BE FREE.[69]

In the spring the basic concern was with the May first election. As indicated earlier in this chapter the results of this election can be interpreted either way because the outcome was so close.

The controversy both dealing with the colonies internal politics and the controversy with Great Britain took up a considerable amount of space in the Pennsylvania papers. Both the Gazette and the Packet printed the views of people, using a pseudonym, which expressed strong opinions either favoring or opposing a change in Pennsylvania's government and independency from Britain. As events moved the Congress closer to declaring independence the papers printed more direct quotes from Congress and from the colonial meetings. In addition they both printed the resolves of the Associators.

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[69] Journals, IV, 146.

The papers appear to be more favorably inclined to the view that the colony should remain with its sister colonies and thus move with them toward independence. The newspapers provide a good sketch of the events within Pennsylvania during the months immediately before the Declaration. They are less helpful in providing information on the popular attitude of the citizen. This is largely due to the fact that virtually all editorial comment is unsigned. Furthermore, whether the resolves of the Associators favoring the actions of Congress reflected a wider public support beyond that group, is difficult to ascertain from the newspapers. The response of various groups that presented petitions to the Pennsylvania Assembly, which for the most part favored changing the instructions to the delegates in Congress, would seem to indicate a popular response. However, this indicator can also be questioned for those who signed might have been from an educational or social position that did not reflect the wishes of the general population. Whether they signed the petition because of pressure beyond their own beliefs will probably remain in some doubt. However, by checking the roles of those who joined the Continental army or the militia one could certainly obtain an idea of how dedicated to the cause these individuals were. There is little doubt, in light of the coverage given the Congress and the colonial bodies, that the newspapers favored the movement towards independence.

If one were to study the Tories that made a claim after the war, one might acquire an idea of how Pennsylvanians felt toward the war. Wallace Brown has made such a study. He found that .07 percent of Pennsylvania's population made a claim after the war; this was less than in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Fifty-four percent of those whose residence is known lived in Philadelphia. When one takes the counties of Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia the figure totals sixty-eight percent of the claimants. He also found that a similar distribution was found among those who were named traitors.[70] Thus, a Pennsylvania claimant was in a small minority which rarely included anyone from the ruling class. He probably lived in one of the three counties mentioned above and was more likely to be an immigrant than to be native-born. It was probable that he was engaged in some commercial activity or was a professional man or office holder. However, if he lived outside of Philadelphia he was probably a farmer with modest wealth.[71] It needs to be pointed out that this study concerned those who were deeply committed to the mother country, and that it involved a minute percentage of the total population. In addition it does not measure the feeling in July, 1776, but rather at a point much later. However, it does give some idea of who the really committed Tories were.

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[70]Wallace Brown, The Kings Friends - The Composition and Motives of the American Claimants, (Providence, 1965), p. 138.

[71]Ibid., p. 149.

Chapter 3

BIOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA DELEGATION TO THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS

BIDDLE

Edward Biddle, born in Philadelphia in 1738, was the fourth son of William and Mary Scull Biddle. Edward's grandfather, William, was one of the original proprietors of New Jersy, having left England in 1681. His mother's father was Nicholas Scull, the surveyor general of Pennsylvania. His brothers were Judge James Biddle, President Judge of the first judicial district, Commodore Nicholas Biddle, and Charles Biddle, Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

On February 3, 1758, Edward was commissioned an ensign in the provincial militia, and was present at the taking of Fort Niagara. He resigned from the army with the rank of captain in 1760, and received five thousand acres of land for his services. Upon completion of his study of the law, he was admitted to the bar and commenced practice in Reading, Pennsylvania.

He was elected as a representative from the county of Berks in the Pennsylvania Assembly from 1767 to 1778. In October of 1774 he was elected Speaker of the Assembly

to succeed Joseph Galloway, after having served on a number of important committees. On July 2, 1774, he served as chairman of the freeholders of the county of Berks which met in Reading. At this time strong resolutions in support of American liberties were issued. It is recorded that "'the thanks of the assembly were unanimously voted to the chairman for the patriotic and spirited manner in which he pointed out the dangerous situation of all the American Colonies, occasioned by the unconstitutional measures lately pursued by the British Parliament[s]'" The resolutions expressed loyalty to the King.[1]

Edward Biddle was elected to serve as a delegate to the First Continental Congress. Along with Joseph Galloway, Biddle was chosen to sit on the committee that was "'to state the rights of the colonies in general; the instances in which those rights are violated and the means most proper to be pursued for obtaining a restitution of them.'"[2] When the Second Continental Congress met, Mr. Biddle was again elected to serve as a delegate from Pennsylvania. However, on the way from Reading to Philadelphia, he fell overboard from his boat into the Schuylkill River. He was forced to sleep in his wet clothes. This resulted in a violent attack of illness which cost him the loss of one eye and left him an

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[1]Quoted in Craig Biddle, "Edward Biddle," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, I, 101, hereafter cited as PMHB.

[2]Ibid., 102.

invalid for the rest of his life. He died at Chatsworth near Baltimore, Maryland on September 5, 1779, where he had gone for medical treatment; he was interred in St. Paul's Churchyeard at Baltimore.[3]

General Wilkinson said in his Memoirs (p. 330) that Edward Biddle was "'a man whose public and private virtue commanded respect and excited admiration from all persons; he was Speaker of the last Assembly of Pennsylvania under the Proprietary Government, and in the dawn of the Revolution devoted himself to the cause of his country.'" and he continued, "Biddle 'successfully opposed the overbearing influence of Joseph Galloway. Ardent, eloquent, and full of zeal, by his exertions during several days and nights of obstinate, warm, and animated discussion in extreme sultry weather, he overheated himself.'" General Wilkinson concluded that if Mr. Biddle's health had been maintained he "'would, no doubt, have occupied the second or third place in the revolutionary armies.'"[4] Mr. James Read in a written eulogy said of him, "'As a public character very few were equal to him in talents or noble exertion of them, so in private life the son, the husband, the father, brother, friend and neighbor, and master had in him a pattern not to be excelled.'"

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[3]Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961, (U.S. Govt., Washington, 1961), p. 102, hereafter cited as BDAC.

[4]Quoted in PMHB, I, 103.

He concluded, "'Love to his country, benevolence and every manly virtue rendered him an object of esteem and admiration to all that knew him.'"[5]

Biddle was not in the Congress at the time the vote was taken on the Declaration of Independence. It seems evident that his illness prevented him from attending the Congress in July, 1776.

GALLOWAY

Joseph Galloway, a member of the first Continental Congress, was the most prominent Quaker party politician to become a Tory. Galloway served as speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly for ten years, representing the moderate interests of the colony, before the controversy with Great Britain forced him into an unpopular position. He was born at West River, Maryland about 1729, the son of Peter B. and Elizabeth Rigbie Galloway. In 1740, he moved with his father to Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia, where his father owned an estate. Joseph received a classical education and then studied law. He was admitted to the bar before the age of twenty in Philadelphia. In 1753, he married Grace Growdon whose father was a wealthy provincial leader. Thus, Mr. Galloway was a prominent citizen and attorney at an early age in Philadelphia. His basic concern

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[5]Ibid.

was with the law dealing with real estate. In 1769, he was awarded the degree of LL.D by Princeton College in recognition for his attainments as a lawyer and for his public services.

The public career of Joseph Galloway began in 1756 when he was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly from Philadelphia County on October 1. His election occurred as the Quakers withdrew at least to a degree from Pennsylvania politics, as a result of their disapproval over money appropriated for military expedentures. Mr. Galloway played an important part in the Pennsylvania Assembly acting on frequent occasions as a liaison between the Assembly and the governor. When Benjamin Franklin left for England in 1757, Mr. Galloway assumed the management of the Anti-Proprietary Party. Galloway became involved in the trouble with the Indians and also with the question on changing the Proprietary government which resulted in a strong controversy with John Dickinson. In this controversy Galloway joined with Benjamin Franklin. The trouble over this issue resulted in the defeat of both Franklin and Galloway in the 1764 election.[6]

Galloway was not out of the public eye for long. In 1765 he was returned to the Assembly, even though he had not taken a popular position on the Stamp Act. On August 29, 1765, he wrote in the Pennsylvania Journal, that he was compelled, "'at a time when almost every American pen is

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[6]BDAC, p. 925; DAB, IV, 116.

employed in placing the transactions of the Parliament of our mother country in the most odious light . . . to point out the impudence and folly of such conduct.'"[7] Galloway's position supporting Britain in the Stamp Act apparently was overlooked at this early date in light of his continued opposition to the Penn government. This opposition to the colonial government must have been a popular position since Galloway was elected Speaker of the Assembly in 1766 and consecutively thereafter until 1774. Because of the controversy with Dickinson and the resultant doubt of Galloway's reelection in Philadelphia, he decided to run for the Assembly from Bucks County and was subsequently reelected to the House. During these years, Galloway appears to have been discouraged with public life and gave some thought to retiring. He was, however, persuaded from doing so in part by the encouragement received from Franklin.

Galloway approved the meeting of the colonies in a general Congress. However, he wanted the members to be elected by the legally constituted Assemblies, not by unauthorized bodies. Galloway had a great fear of rule by the mob and a great concern for maintaining the rule of law. The British constitution, he believed, was defective. Thus, the aim of all concerned should be to establish a closer political

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[7]Quoted in John J. Zimmerman, "Charles Thomson 'The Sam Adams of Philadelphia,'" Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXXV, 469.

union between Britain and America.[8] It was with this in mind that he took up the task of drafting the instructions to the Pennsylvania delegation to the Congress. In the instructions the delegates were urged to exert their "utmost endeavors to form and adopt a plan which shall afford the best prospect of obtaining a redress of American grievance." The instructions continued urging that America's rights be ascertained and "establishing that union and harmony which is most essential to the welfare and happiness of both countries."[9] The Congress met in September; Galloway was appointed to the committee for stating the rights and grievances of the Colonies. John Adams recorded that on September 8, 1774, Galloway gave a speech on the subject of the basis of their rights. Galloway said, "I never could find the Rights of Americans, in the Destinctions between Taxation and Legislation, nor between Laws for Revenue and for the Legislation of Trade." He continued, "I have looked for our rights in the Laws of Nature--but could not find them in a State of Nature, but always in a State of Political Society." He did find them in the constitution of the English Government. Power results from those who own property and no laws are binding except those "made by the consent of the Proprietors in England." As a result he suggested, "I have ever thought

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[8]DAB, IV, 116.

[9]Pennsylvania Archieves: Eighth Series, Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives, 1683-1776, (8 vols., Harrisburg, 1931-1935) VIII, 7100, hereafter cited as Votes.

we might reduce our Rights to one. An Exemption from all Laws made by British Parliament, made since the Emmigration of our Ancestors." In his last paragraph, he acknowledged that his "Arguments tend to an Independency."[10]

On September 28 he said that he felt that the general non-importation would be too gradual for the relief of Boston. He felt a general non-exportation would be too debilitating to the colonies. Galloway pointed out that the colonies wanted the protection of Great Britain and so had to come to some agreement with her. For this reason, he said:

> I propose this Proposition. The Plan--2 Classes of Laws. 1. Laws of Internal Policy. 2. Laws in which more than one Colony were concerned, raising Money for War.--No one act can be done without the assent of Great Britain.--No one without the assent of America. A British American Legislature.[11]

Mr. Galloway's plan was never formally discussed again.

On December 15 Joseph Galloway was reappointed to the Congress apparently over his own objections. He wrote on January 14, 1775:

> That I might not appear to undertake the execution of measures which my judgment and conscience disapproved I could not serve them as a delegate at the ensuring Congress. And yet I could, not prevail in persuading them to a new appointment in my stead.[12]

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[10]L. H. Butterfield, editor, Diary and Autobiography of John Adams, (4 vols. Harvard University, 1961), II, 129-130.

[11]Ibid., 144.

[12]Quoted in Ernest H. Baldwin, "Joseph Galloway, The Loyalist Politician," PMHB, XXVI, 426.

According to Burnett, Galloway did not attend Congress after the recess in 1774, and was excused May 12, 1774. Mr. E. Dyer writing to Joseph Trumbell in May, 1775, said:

> Mr. Galloway was dismissed from being a Member of the Congress by the Assembly of this Province justly despisted and Condemned by all and Doctor Franklin who is lately arrived from London put in his place who freely took his seat in Congress.[13]

He did remain active in the Pennsylvania Assembly in early 1775, but because of ill health and public opposition to his position, withdrew from public life. Remaining at his home from the summer of 1775 until December, 1776, he was subjected to increasing violence by mobs. In December of 1776, when General Howe was moving through New Jersy, Galloway gathered up some of his valuables and with other prominent loyalists, joined General Howe's camp, and acted in an advisory capacity. When the British captured Philadelphia, he was appointed to a position of administrating municipal affairs. Mr. Galloway became disgusted with the way the British army was operating and attempted to reform it. His efforts at reform were largely fruitless.

After the war Mr. Galloway sought compensation for loyalists; his own petition for permission to return to Philadelphia was rejected. His last years were thus spent seeking to aid loyalists and writing tracts on religion. He retained his belief that the republican ideas which had grown up in America were dangerous and the best form of government

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[13]Burnett, Letters, I, 131.

was a monarchy. This fear of republicanism was in large part due to his own aristocratic tendencies and his fear of the mob. It seems evident that Joseph Galloway, had he been a member of Congress in July, 1776, would have voted no. He apparently remained hopeful that some form of union between Britain and her colonies would evolve even after hostilities broke out. He could not conceive of the American states making it on their own and his fear of a republican government was just too strong. Mr. Galloway died on August 29, 1803, at Watford, Herts, England.[14]

HUMPHREYS

Charles Humphreys was born at his father's residence, The Mansion House, about seven miles west of Philadelphia in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The year of his birth is uncertain, but was somewhere between 1712 and 1714. His father, Daniel, came from Wales in 1682, and married Hannah Wynn, daughter of Dr. Thomas Wynn, whose other daughter, married John Dickinson, an ancestor of the author of "The Farmer's Letters."

He completed preparatory studies and then engaged in milling. At the urging of his fellow citizens, he became a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1763 and served until

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[14] PMHB, XXVI, 161-191, 289-321, 417-442, DAB, IV, 116-117; BDAC, p. 925, Burnett, Letters, I, lix, 22.

the summer of 1776. He was chosen as one of the original seven delegates to the First Continental Congress and was reappointed to the Second Congress. He appears to have supported all the resolutions against British action up to the Declaration.[15]

It was not possible to find any other information on Charles Humphreys. Even the county history does not contain any biographical information on him. It would appear that he was ignored by historians and compilers of data on the prominent men of his day; no doubt, this was due to his vote against the Declaration. There is no indication why he voted against it and any statement of the reason is purely conjecture. He, it is likely, felt as the other members of Pennsylvania voting no, that the colonies were not ready to strike out on their own either for political or military reasons.

MIFFLIN

The first son of John and Elizabeth Bagnell Mifflin, descended from the John Mifflin who came from England before 1680, was Thomas Mifflin, a delegate to the first Continental Congress and served as a general in the Continental Army. Thomas's father was a wealthy merchant who served as alderman, councilman, justice of the peace, provincial councilor

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[15] BDAC, p. 1096; The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, (New York, 1893), III, 359; A. A. Humphreys, "Charles Humphreys," PMHB, I, 83-85.

and trustee of the College of Philadelphia. The family were Quakers, so Thomas attended Quaker schools and the University of Pennsylvania from which he graduated at the age of sixteen in 1760. He spent the next four years at the counting-house of William Coleman preparing for a mercantile career. In 1764, he spent a year visiting Europe and wrote from London that he felt himself as great a patriot for America as when he had left.[16]

Upon returning to America in 1765, he entered the merchant business with his brother George, a business that was continued successfully until the outbreak of the Revolution. He became a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1765 and remained a member until 1799. He also attended meetings of the early patriotic and social organization, the Sons of St. Tammany organized in May, 1772.

The political career of Thomas Mifflin began at an early age, for in March, 1771, he was appointed warden of the city of Philadelphia, and in 1772, he represented Philadelphia in the provincial assembly. He was reelected in 1773 and appointed to the Committee of Correspondence. In 1774, despite the opposition of the Quakers to his ardent Whiggism, he was overwhelmingly returned to the colonial assembly. On July 22, 1774, he was sent by the Pennsylvania Assembly as a member of that state's delegation to the Continental Congress. He serves as a member of both Congresses until his

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[16] DAB, VI, 606.

resignation in June, 1775, to become an aid-de-camp to General Washington.

Thomas Mifflin was an early opponent of British policies toward the colonies. As a young merchant, he had opposed the Stamp Act. As a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly, he acted with the moderate Whigs in an effort to keep the opposition alive without going to the extreme that Samuel Adams desired. Mifflin was one of those who believed that it was important for the colonies to act together. For this reason, he wrote Sam Adams that he desired to have a general Congress which would determine the best way "to prevent Jealousies & Infractions."[17] In June, 1774, Mifflin was one of a number of speakers who spoke in the State House yard in opposition to the Boston Port Bill. He was also among those who called upon Governor Penn to convene the Assembly in order to appoint delegates to the general congress, which the Governor was forced to do because of Indian trouble. At the same time the provincial convention met in Philadelphia. The convention urged the legislature to appoint delegates to Congress with the warning that if the legislature refused, the convention would do the appointing. Under those conditions, the legislature appointed Thomas Mifflin and six others.[18]

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[17]Quoted in Kenneth Rossman, Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution, (Chapel Hill, 1952), p. 24.

[18]Ibid., chapter 2.

In Congress Mifflin served on various committees, most notable the committee that drafted the recommendation for the Association. According to John Adams, he also made a number of suggestions on the specifics of the way non-importation should operate. While playing an important role in the Congress, he was reelected to the legislature. During its winter session, he labored for the cause. When the delegates to the Second Continental Congress were chosen, Mifflin was again one of the delegates from Pennsylvania. However, because of the battle at Lexington, Mifflin became involved in military affairs. As a result, he was appointed a major. On July 28, the Quakers read Mr. Mifflin out of their meeting as a result of his military activities. John Adams, however, thought that Mifflin should have been a general because he was the "animating soul" of the revolutionary movement.[19] Various members wrote of Mifflin's value as a member of Congress; Silas Deane noted how "greatly missed" Mifflin was.[20] Roger Sherman wrote to Joseph Trumbull in July, 1775, that Major Mifflin "was a very useful member of this Congress." He noted that "I would recommend to your notice [Mifflin] as an upright, firm, spirited and active Friend in the Cause of Liberty."[21] Mifflin was elected for a

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[19]DAB, VI, 606-607.

[20]Deane to Trumbull, September 7, 1775, Burnett, Letters, I, 198.

[21]Sherman to Trumbull, July 6, 1775, Burnett, Letters, I, 154.

fourth term in the Pennsylvania Assembly, but asked to be excused because of his military obligations.[22]

Thomas Mifflin served in the Continental army for a number of years, attaining the rank of major-general. He finally resigned after a conflict with others over the Conway Cable. He was involved in public life the remaining twenty years of his life, serving as Governor of Pennsylvania for nine years. He died in January, 1800, a penniless man apparently the result of his complete unconcern for his own finances. He was laid to rest at the Lutheran graveyard in Lancaster. His funeral expenses were paid for by the state of Pennsylvania.[23]

Benjamin Rush recorded the following remarks about his onetime colleague, Thomas Mifflin:

> Those who knew this man in the close of the Revolution and in the evening of his life, will hardly believe what is strickly true, that he possessed genius, knowledge, eloquence, patriotism, courage, self-government and an independent spirit, in the first years of the war. He was extremely useful in the gloomy winter of 1776 by rallying the crooping courage of the militia of his native State, which he did by riding through all the populous countries, and exhorting them to turn out to check the progress of the British army. His influence was much promoted by an elegant person, an animated countenance, and popular manners. Had he fallen in battle, or died in the year 1778, he would have ranked with Warren and the first patriots of the Revolution.[24]

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[22]Votes, VIII, 7360.

[23]DAB, VI, 607-608.

[24]George W. Corner, ed., The Autobiography of Benjamin Rush - His "Travels Through Life" together with his Commonplace Book for 1789-1813, (Princeton, 1948), p. 155, hereafter cited as Rush, Autobiography.

Dr. Rush, writing about Mifflin's election as Governor in 1790, strongly condemned Mifflin for his immoral life. Rush wrote that Governor Mifflin had lived "in a state of adultery with many women" and "had children by some of them." He asserted that Mifflin "was much addicted to swearing and obscene conversation," and added that "his political character was as bad as his moral."[25]

Thomas Mifflin did not play a direct part in the Pennsylvania delegation's decision on the Declaration of Independence since he was not a member of the Continental Congress in July, 1776. His role in the First Congress and his activities in the Continental Army indicate his strong feelings in support of the American cause. He, no doubt, would have hesitated as other moderate Whigs did over the actual break with Britain, but probably would have voted with the majority.

MORTON

John Morton was born in late 1724 or early 1725, the son of John and Mary Archer Morton. He was a descendant of a Swedish ancestor who came to America in 1654 and settled in what later became Pennsylvania. John Sr. died before his only child was born leaving the widow and son a considerable

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[25]Ibid., 190.

estate that had been handed down from his father. John received only about three months of formal education in the public schools. However, his step-father, John Sketchley, educated young John in surveying and other branches of learning. In 1754, he married Ann Justice (or Justis); three sons and five daughters survived their father.

His political career began in the mid 1750's. In 1756, he was elected a member of the Provincial Assembly from Chester County, a post he held until 1766, and again from 1769 to 1775. He became a justice of the peace in 1757 and was appointed a judge in 1770; he served as president judge of the court of general and common pleas of the county, and in 1774 was appointed an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Pennsylvania. He served as high sheriff from 1767 for three years. Continental service began for John Morton in 1765 when he served as one of four delegates from Pennsylvania to the Stamp Act Congress. In July, 1774, he was elected as a delegate to the First Continental Congress and served in that body and the Second Congress until late 1776. During this period, he continued to serve in the Pennsylvania Assembly taking on the added responsibilities of Speaker on October 16, 1775.[26]

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[26]M. A. Leach, "John Morton," American Scandinavian Review, July-August 1915, pp. 226-227; John Sanderson, Signers of the Declaration of Independence, (9 vols. Philadelphia, 1823-1827), 2nd edition, III, 138-139, hereafter cited as Sanderson, Signers. BDAC, p. 1365.

His service in the Continental Congress did not seem to be particularly noteworthy until he cast the deciding vote in the Pennsylvania delegation in favor of independence. He subsequently served as chairman of the committee of the whole on the adoption of the Articles of Confederation which were ratified after his own death.[27] His vote in favor of independence, according to Sanderson, caused Morton a great deal of anxiety and resulted in the animosity of a number of old friends. In April, 1777 a violent inflammatory fever caused his death. On his death bed, he is said to have uttered the following remark about his vote in favor of independence. "Tell them that they will live to see the hour, when they shall acknowledge it to have been the most glorious service that I ever rendered to my country."[28]

It seems perfectly consistant with Mr. Morton's previous service that he would have favored the Declaration. His early career was built around opposition to the proprietary government. His activities as a member of the Stamp Act Congress and his subsequent actions as a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly and the Continental Congress gave expression to his belief that separation was inevitable. On June 8, 1775, he wrote the following to Thomas Powell:

> We expect an entire stoppage to trade the 1st of next month, tho that depends on what our Congress may order; we are heartily united in one general cause, not one Tory dare show his face in opposition we are really

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[27]DAB, VII, 257.

[28]Sanderson, Signers, III, 142-144.

> preparing for the worst that can happen, viz. a Civil War. We have nearly 2000 Troops now under Arms in this City, and very well disciplined.[29]

There is very little material available on John Morton. No major biographies have been written with only small sketches in various biographies of the signers available. Most of these sketches are more eulogies than accurate reflections of the man. In addition, very few of his letters remain.

RHOADS

Samuel Rhoads (Roads or Roades), the fifth son of John and Hannah Willcox Rhoads, was born in 1711. His grandfather, also called John, came from Derbyshire, England in the latter part of the seventeenth century after suffering persecution for his Quaker beliefs.

Rhoads received a limited education and became a carpenter and builder, in addition he branched out into mercantile adventures and speculated in real estate. He was a member of the Carpenter's Company of Philadelphia at least from 1736 and served as its president and treasurer from 1780 until his death. On October 6, 1741, he was elected as a member of the Common Council of Philadelphia. He was elected a manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital in July of 1751 and served in this position for thirty years. In 1755,

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[29]Burnett, Letters, I, 114.

he was employed by the city of Philadelphia to help lay out some of the streets of the city. In 1761, he was elected to two offices: alderman and assemblyman. Rhoads served as an assemblyman in the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1764 and again from 1771 to 1774. In 1762, he was chosen as a commissioner to attend a conference with the Western Indians at Lancaster.[30]

In July, 1774, he was elected by the Pennsylvania Legislature as a member of the state's delegation to the First Continental Congress. "William Rawle, in describing the delegates, says of Samuel Rhoads that 'he was a respectable merchant of Philadelphia, belonging to the Society of Friends--without the talent of speaking in public.'" He continued, "'he possessed much acuteness of mind, his judgment was sound, and his practical information extensive.'"[31] On October 4, 1774, he was elected mayor of Philadelphia, which prevented him from being an active member of the Congress. The record shows that this was also the reason why he was not appointed to the Second Congress. "Samuel Rhoads, Esquire, one of the Deputies for this Province at the late Congress, being now Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, is omitted in the above appointment, it appearing to the House that he could not attend the Service."[32]

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[30] BDAC, p. 1513; Henry D. Biddle, "Colonial Majors of Philadelphia," PMHB, XIX, 64-67.

[31] Quoted in PMHB, XIX, 68.

[32] Votes, VIII, 7167.

Mr. Rhoads and Benjamin Franklin became acquainted during their years of service in the Assembly. As a result, they worked together on a number of projects for the benefit of Philadelphia. He served as an officer of the American Philosophical Society for several years. In addition, he was for a number of years a director of the Library Company of Philadelphia.

Death came to Samuel Rhoads on April 7, 1784. He and Elizabeth Chandler Rhoads had three children, one son and two daughters.[33]

ROSS

One of the Pennsylvania delegates who served in the Continental Congress during the first Congress and up to November, 1775, and again after July 20, 1776, was George Ross. George Ross was born on May 10, 1730, at New Castle, Delaware, the eldest son of the Rev. George Ross and his second wife, Catherine Van Gezel. His father was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh and had prepared for the Presbyterian ministry, but he found this church too censorious and hypocritical, and so took orders in the Church of England. He came to America as a missionary and for many years served as rector of Immanuel Church in New Castle.

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[33] PMHB, XIX, 64-71; Votes, VIII, 7167; Burnett, Letters, I, ix.

George received a good preparatory education and was said to be a good student in foreign language. At the age of eighteen, he started studying law under his step-brother, John, of Philadelphia. He was admitted to the bar in 1750 and began to practice law in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. One of his first clients was Anne Lawler, whom he married on August 17, 1751. They had two sons and a daughter.

He set up a lucrative law practice and was for twelve years the prosecutor for the crown in Cumberland County. The first public notice of Ross occurred when he was elected a representative to the Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1768 and again in 1770 and 1774. While in the Assembly, he took a deep interest in the Indian problems; he also became known for his disputes with the Governor. Mr. Ross favored for some time a meeting of the colonies in a General Congress, and so was appointed to the committee that was to draft a reply to the Virginia proposal. He was also appointed to the committee to draw up the instructions to the delegates from Pennsylvania, and was appointed a delegate to the Congress. He again served in Congress from July 20, 1776, until January, 1777, when illness caused him to withdraw. The county of Lancaster passed a resolution thanking him for his public service, and expressed agreement with his public conduct. When he retired, he was given 150 pounds out of the county stock, which he declined to accept. On April 14, 1779, he was

appointed as a judge of the Admiralty Court. He died of an attack of gout on July 14, 1779, while serving on the court.[34]

Although there is very little mention of Mr. Ross in his capacity as a member of Congress, he had the distinction of signing the Declaration of Independence. He also served his state as a member of the Assembly for a number of years.

DICKINSON

One of the most paradoxical of all of the men discussed in this paper is John Dickinson. Here was a man who in the early years of the struggle with Great Britain led the way in opposing Parliamentary powers and defending the rights of Englishmen. Yet, Dickinson could not bring himself to vote for the Declaration of Independence.

John Dickinson was born on November 8, 1732, the second son of Samuel and his second wife, Mary Cadwalader Dickinson. Samuel Dickinson was the grandson of the first proprietor of the estate Crosin-dore' on which John was born. The senior Dickinson was a lawyer, who in 1740, moved to Delaware where he purchased a large estate in Kent County, near Dover. He was shortly thereafter appointed judge of the county court. Mr. Dickinson arranged for his son to study

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[34] Biographical Annals of Lancaster County, (J. H. Beers & Co., 1903), 1324; Sanderson, Signers, III, 303-308; DAB, VIII, 177.

under William Killen, who provided young Dickinson a good classical education. At the age of eighteen, John began the study of the law under a priminent Philadelphia lawyer, John Moland.[35] From 1753 to 1757, Dickinson studies at the Temple in London.

In 1757, Mr. Dickinson returned to Philadelphia and began the practice of law. The first volume of Dallas Reports contains three cases in which Dickinson appeared as consul in 1760. In October of 1760, he was elected as a member of the Assemblies of the Lower Counties as the Delaware Assembly was then called. He was elected Speaker of the Delaware Assembly on becoming a member of it. In 1762 and 1764, he was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly. While in the Pennsylvania Assembly, Dickinson, Franklin, and Galloway disagreed strongly over the issues of whether Pennsylvania should remain a Proprietary government or whether it should become a royal government. Dickinson took the position that although the Proprietary government had many faults, yet it was better to maintain the present form rather than risk the excesses of the British ministry. Because the popular feeling was so strongly opposed to Dickinson's position, he lost his seat in the Assembly until 1770.

When the Sugar Act was passed in 1764, Dickinson saw it as a vindication of his comments made in connection with the form of government best suited for Pennsylvania. In 1765,

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[35]Charles Stilles, The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808, (2 vols. Philadelphia, 1891), I, Chapter 1.

he printed a pamphlet "The Late Regulations Respecting the British Colonies on the Continent of America Considered," in which he explored the economic ramifications of the Act. His pamphlet was aimed at the British merchants. He argued that British merchants would suffer, because the trade with Britain would be reduced and the British merchant and manufacturer would be hurt. He did not mention the constitutional question, since he was aware that the American position would not be accepted by the British. Because of his stand, Dickinson was sent to the Stamp Act Congress as a delegate from Pennsylvania. He was put in charge of writing the resolves of Congress. In these resolves a distinction was made between taxes for revenue and taxes for regulation. The Congress acknowledged the right of Britain to regular British trade, but it did not recognize a British right to raise a revenue from American goods.

In December of 1767, the Pennsylvania Chronicle began to publish a series of letters on the political situation, which brought John Dickinson to the forefront in the struggle with Great Britain. Mr. Dickinson was the author of this succession of letters known as the Farmer's Letters. The series was made up of fourteen articles covering the full range of Britain's relations with her colonies. In them, he sought to point out the future danger to American freedom if the Americans did not stand up to Britain. However, he called for both sides to seek conciliation, because it was for their mutual benefit to reach an accord. He particularly

emphasized how the British people would be hurt if trade was interrupted. The appeal he made was continually to the British Constitution and the remedies that it provided. He further appealed for the stricter enforcement of non-importation laws, and in general favored the use of petitions to the King as a means of resolving grievances.

In 1771, John Dickinson was again sent to the Pennsylvania Assembly, and on March 5, drafted a petition to the King. In it he asked in a most "curtious way" that the Tea tax be repealed. When an effort was made to get Philadelphia to aid Boston as a result of the coercive acts, Mr. Dickinson was one of those who opposed resistance to Britain. However, he acted as chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in Philadelphia, and wrote three papers justifying American action using the precedent of English history.[36]

He served for nine days in the First Continental Congress at the end of its session. He was immediately added to the Committee drafting a petition to the King, and in fact, wrote the Petition. Between the meeting of the First and Second Congress, the Committee of Correspondence, chaired by Mr. Dickinson, met again and sought to better enforce the non-importation agreements. He was reappointed a member of the Continental Congress and served in that capacity until July 4, 1776. During this period, he was elected a colonel of the first battalion raised in the city in June, 1775. In

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[36]Ibid., Chapter 4.

July, 1775, he drafted the Second Petition to the King and the Declaration on the causes of taking up arms. He also wrote the instructions to the delegates from Pennsylvania, since he was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly as well as the Continental Congress. As a member of the Congress, his main function continued to be that of its penman.

John Dickinson was a member of Congress when the question of declaring independence came up. Mr. Dickinson could not bring himself to vote for the resolution of independence, which seems totally inconsistant with his past actions, at least on the surface. When he was a member of the First Continental Congress, he wrote at least two letters indicating the inevitability of armed conflict with Great Britain, yet he wished that this could be avoided. To Arthur Lee, he wrote on October 27, 1774, in part:

> I wish for peace ardently; but must say, delightful as it is, it will come more grateful by being unexpected. The first act of violence on the part of Administration in America, or the attempt to reinforce General Gage this winter or next year, will put the whole Continent in arms, from Nova Scotia to Georgia.[37]

In his letter to Mr. Quincy the following day, he expressed similar feelings:

> The most peaceable Provinces are now animated; and a civil war is unavoidable, unless there be a quick change of British measures. The usual events, no question, will take place if that happens--victories and defeats. But what will be the final consequence? If she [England] fails, immediate distress; if not ruin; if she conquers, destruction at last . . . Several <u>European</u> Powers, it is probable, will fall on as soon as she is entangled with

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[37] Burnett, <u>Letters</u>, I, 83.

> us. If they should not, what can she effect at three thousand miles distance, against at least four hundred thousand freemen fighting pro aris et focis? . . . . Oh! for a warning voice, to rouse them to conviction of this important truth, that the reconciliation depends upon the passing moment, and that the opportunity will, in a short time, be irrecoverably past, as the days beyond the flood.[38]

In a letter dated April 29, 1775, he wrote Arthur Lee of his concern, that a bloody war might soon evolve as a result of Lexington and Concord. He wrote:

> But what topics of reconciliation are now left for men who think as I do, to address our countrymen?---- Have we the slightest reason to hope that those Ministers and Representatives will not be supported throughout the tragedy, as they have been through the first act? No. While we revere and love our Mother Country, her sword is opening our veins.

He then expressed the belief that Britain's enemies would attack her in this civil war and then turn on the colonies. This will, no doubt, result in the colonies wading "through seas of blood to a dearbought and at best a frequently convulsed and precarious independence." But in the next paragraph, he goes on to say that all will be given in the cause, for what are material goods compared "with our rights and liberties."[39]

Mr. Dickinson continued to try and postpone the inevitable final break. It seemed that many of the other members of the Congress wanted to take action that would keep

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[38]Peter Force, ed., American Archieves . . . a Documentary History of . . . the North American Colonies, 4th series, (6 vols. Washington, 1837-1853), II, 947-948, hereafter cited as Force, Am. Arch.

[39]Ibid., 445.

Dickinson in the Congress and supporting its actions.[40] For this reason, he was allowed to rewrite the document Jefferson had written, on the reasons for taking up arms against the King. In his letter to Arthur Lee of July 7, 1775, John Dickinson explains his feelings about the Petition:

> Before this comes to hand, you will have received, I presume, the Petition to the King. You will perhaps at first be surpriz'd, that we make no Claims, and mention no Right. But I hope, [on] considering all Circumstances, you will be [of] opinion, that this Humility in an address [to] the Throne is at present proper.
>
> Our Rights [have] been already stated--our Claims made--W[ar] is actually begun, and we are carrying it on Vigor[ously]. This conduct and our other Publications will shew, [that our] spirits are not lowered. If the Opportunity is now offered to them [by an] unexceptionable Petition praying for [an] accomodation. If they reject this Appl[ication] with Contempt, the more humble it is, [the more] such Treatment will confirm the Minds of [our] Countrymen, to endure all the Misfortunes [that] may attend the Contest . . . .[41]

In this period, he received some criticism for his position from his associates in Congress, particularly from John Adams. Mr. Adams wrote his wife in July, 1775, that Dickinson's abilities and virtues have recently "been found wanting."[42] He described Dickinson to James Warren on July 24, 1775, as "A certain great Fortune and piddling Genius, whose Fame has been trumpeted so loudly, has given a silly cast to our whole Doings." And in his Diary in September, Adams described, if it is accurate, a clear instance of Dickinson snubbing Adams.[43]

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[40] Burnett, Letters, I, 157-158.

[41] Ibid., 157.

[42] Ibid., 175.

[43] Ibid., 176.

E. Dyer described Dickinson to William Judd the following way:

> I may say he [Dickinson] is not very highly Esteemed in Congress. He has taken a part very different from what I believe was expected from the Country in general or from his Constiuents.[44]

These remarks and those of Adams could, no doubt, be explained as the result of a personality clash, as well as an objective indicator of the feeling of his associates.

When the time came for Dickinson to make the decision on the Declaration, he continued to resist. He voted against the resolution on July 1 and absented himself from the proceedings on July 4. John Adams recorded the following in regard to Dickinson's speech against the Declaration:

> Mr. Dickinson, however, was determined to bear his testimony against it [the Declaration] with more formality. He had prepared himself apparently with great labor and ardent zeal, and in a speech of great length, and with all his eloquence, he combined together all that had before been written in pamphlets and newspapers, and all that had from time to time been said in Congress by himself and others. He conducted the debate not only with great ingenuity and eloquence, but with equal politeness and candor, and was answered in the same spirit.[45]

In his speech, Dickinson acknowledged that, "My Conduct, this Day, I expect will give the finishing Blow to my once too great, and, my Integrity considered, now too diminish'd Popularity." But he said he would "rather they should hate Me, than that I should hurt them." He asked what advantage

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Adams, Autobiography, in Burnett, Letters, I, 522n.

could be gained from adopting this resolution and answered that there are only two. One, it might animate the people and second, it would convince foreign powers of our strength and unity which would result in aid to the colonies. He answered these arguments, thusly:

> As to [the] 1st [point] - [it is] unnec[essary]. [The preservation of] Life [,] Lib[erty] & P [ro] p[er] ty [is a] suff[icient] Mot[ive to animate the People. The] Gen[eral] Sp[irit] of Am[erica is animated.]

He answered the second point by saying that France and Spain might just let us try our strength because they both might "P[er]ceive the (imm[ediate]) Dang[er]of their Col[onie]s ly[in]g at our Doors--." He therefore suggested that we act in conformity with France so as to please her. To do otherwise was to treat her with contempt especially in light of the application made to France. France's reaction might well be that, since you did not wait for our consultation and since we are not ready to aid you, therefore fight your own battle until we are ready to aid you. It might also be that Great Britain would offer Spain or France some other part of her empire to keep these nations out of the conflict. Or, France might intimidate Great Britain, requiring certain lands in payment for staying out of the war.

Dickinson felt that many of the problems the new government faced, should be worked out before declaring Independence. Thus, we should first "Est[ablish] our gov[ernmen]ts & take the Reg[ula]r. Form of a State---- [.] "

Further, he continued, "[It is] Our Int[eres]t. to keep G[reat] B[ritian] in [the] Op[inion] th[at] We mean Recon-[ciliati]on as long as possible [.] ----" He also feared the possibility of France ruining Great Britain and then being a threat to the colonies. Dickinson suggested that the people might turn against them for the Declaration, when they find the things mentioned above are not completed. Thus, the idea that our strength of spirit, resulting from a Declaration, might only last through the first battle. He goes on to state his strong fear that the colonies are not united enough among themselves to stand the conflict, therefore, there is real danger of a partition of the colonies.[46]

Although John Dickinson did lose public support for a time, he did seem to hold the respect of his colleagues. Dr. Rush held a very positive view of John Dickinson. He recorded the following in his Autobiography:

> Few men wrote, spoke, and acted more for their country from the years 1764 to the establishment of the federal government than Mr. Dickinson. He was alike eloquent at the bar, in a popular assembly and in conversation. Count Winguiski, a Polish nobleman who traveled thro' The United States soon after the peace, said he was the most learned man he had met in America. He possessed the air of a camp and the ease of the court in his manners. He was opposed to the Declaration of Independence at the time it took place, but concurred in supporting it. During the war and for some years after it, he admired and preferred the British Constitution. Toward the close of his life he became a decided and zealous Republican.[47]

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[46]Notes and Documents, PMHB, LXV, 468-479.

[47]Rush, Autobiography, p. 154.

Thus John Dickinson was not opposed to the concept of independence, only its timing. He wanted to see the colonies build a stronger union among themselves, and then forge an alliance with France and Spain that would virtually insure success. His position on July 1 seems consistant with his earlier stands. It is just that in July, the issue was independence, not merely opposition to Great Britain. It may well be that John Dickinson was right, the war would have been easier if a stronger union and a better established government, as well as a definite alliance had been set up. But, it is just as likely that the controversy over the best form of government would have resulted in greater division within the Colonies.

ALLEN

The second son of Chief Justice William Allen and Margaret Hamilton Allen, Andrew, was a member of the Continental Congress but had resigned before the Declaration of Independence came up for a vote. He was born in Philadelphia in June, 1740. In 1759, he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. He studied law under Benjamin Chew and later in London. His admittance to the bar in Philadelphia came in 1765. From 1765 to 1775 he was a member of the Provincial Assembly and of the Provincial Council, appointed attorney general in 1766, a member of the common council of Philadelphia

in 1768, and the committee of safety 1775 and 1776. In the election for the Assembly of May, 1776, he tied for second place among the four members chosen by the city.[48]

Andrew Allen's election to the Continental Congress occurred on November 4, 1775. He attended the Congress from November 6, 1775, to about May 20, 1776. The last record of him in the Journals is on March 25, 1776.[49] It is evident that he like others opposed British taxation but could not bring himself to favor a split with England.[50] James Allen recorded in his diary the following: "A few weeks, before this unhappy declaration my Brother Andrew, with Mr. Willing and Mr. Humphries left the Congress." He continued, "all the other Delegates, tho' ever opposed to Independence, remained & have since become great converts to it." He adds that his brother and the two other gentlemen were left out of the next appointment to the Congress.[51]

The Allen family remained loyal to Great Britain. After Washington's defeat at New York, Andrew Allen sought the protection of Lord Howe at Trenton. He took an oath of loyalty to George III at that time. His feelings of loyalty toward Britain were shared by the other members of

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[48]DAB, I, 184-185, BDAC, p. 469.

[49]Burnett, Letters, I, iviii.

[50]Wallace Brown, The King's Friends - The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalists Claimants, (Providence, 1965), p. 132, hereafter Brown, The King's Friends.

[51]"Diary of James Allen, Esq. of Philadelphia, Counsellor-At-Law, 1770-1778," PMHB, IX, 191.

his family, as seen in James Allen's diary. A pundit in 1777 wrote of William Allen, Jr., who had been a lieutenant colonel in the American army, a position from which he resigned "not because he was totally unfit for it, but because the Continental Congress presumed to declare the American States Free and Independent without first asking the consent of and obtaining the approbation of himself and his wise family."[52] Andrew returned with General Howe to Philadelphia on December 26, 1777. When the tide turned and the Americans began to be more victorious, Andrew Allen's property was confiscated. After the close of hostilities Mr. Allen was pardoned and he revisited Philadelphia. Under the provisions of the Jay Treaty, he sought to regain the money paid the state by his early debtors. He failed to receive any compensation from the United States government and returned to London to live with one of his children on a British pension of 400 pounds per year. He died in London on March 7, 1825.[53]

FRANKLIN

The oldest and certainly most distinguished delegate in Congress in July 1776 was Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on January 17,

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[52]Quoted in Brown, The King's Friends, p. 152.

[53]DAB, I, 184-185.

1706, the son of a chandler and soap boiler, who had emigrated from England in 1682. Benjamin was the tenth son of Josiah and Abiah Franklin and as such he was thought by his father to be destined to serve the church as his father's tithe. At an early age, Benjamin learned to read and was sent to the Boston Grammar School at the age of eight. Because the expense was prohibitive, he was removed to George Brownell's school for writing and arithmetic. At ten, he was put in his father's business but, disliking this, he was apprenticed for twelve years to his half-brother, James, a printer. Because of disagreements with James, Benjamin left Boston for Philadelphia in late 1723 with a good knowledge of printing and a strong love for reading. In 1724, he went to England and further developed his printing ability and returned to Philadelphia in 1728, a partner of Hugh Meredith. From 1730 to 1748 Franklin applied himself to business and developed an international reputation for his wisdom as a result of Poor Richard's Almanack. In addition, he developed a number of scientific inventions and discoveries which spread his fame to Europe. He received the degree of Master of Arts from Harvard and Yale in 1753 and from William and Mary in 1756. In 1759, he received the degree of LL.D. from St. Andrews and D.C.L. from Oxford in 1762.

Because of his numerous writings and his scientific achievement, his name was well known; this recognition led him to a political career. His political career was to be a part of his life until he was some eighty years old. He was

the only Founding Father to sign the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty with France, the Treaty of Peace, and the Constitution. Dr. Franklin retired from his printing business in 1748, leaving it in the hands of a partner, so he would still retain an income without the burden of full-time responsibility. In 1751, Franklin was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly and was sent in 1754 to Albany to represent Pennsylvania in the Albany Congress. Here Franklin introduced his famous plan of union, which although not adopted, proved to be a source of discussion for years. In 1757, Franklin was appointed by the Pennsylvania Assembly to represent them in London. This he did until 1762, when he returned to Pennsylvania and took part in Pennsylvania politics. He was defeated for his seat in the Assembly in 1764 as a result of his strong support of a change of government for Pennsylvania--from a proprietarship to a royal government. The Assembly apparently saw no reason to consider Franklin's defeat as an excuse for not continuing to seek the implementation of the petition to change the government. As a result, they sent Franklin back to England to guide the petition through the Privy Council.[54]

Shortly after Dr. Franklin's return to England, the difficulty over the Stamp Act arose. Franklin and the other agents sought to keep the Act from passing, but failed. The

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[54]Sanderson, Signers, 1st edition, II, 7-12; BDAC, p. 912.

uproar caused in America by its passage, shocked Franklin. He wrote John Hughes on August 9, 1765, "The Rashness of the Assembly in Virginia is amazing." And went on to urge "a firm Loyalty to the Crown and faithful adherence to the Government of this Nation." in spite of the "Madness of the Populace or their blind Leaders [.]"[55] He appears to have been shocked that the colonists were so upset by the Act and felt that their strong protests were a deterent to his efforts at repeal.

In 1766, Franklin appeared before the House of Commons and was examined by them on his feelings about America's position in regard to taxes. In this famous exchange, Franklin clearly warned Commons of the growing feeling of resentment in the colonies over British action toward them. He sought to keep the empire united while defining what he perceived the American position to be. The Stamp Act was repealed and the Declaratory Act passed in its place, and for a time British-American relations stabilized. This allowed Franklin time to travel as well as write pamphlets, letters, and articles for newspapers. It also provided him the opportunity to contemplate the position of the colonies in their relationship to the mother country.

On March 13, 1768, he wrote his son, "The more I have thought and read on the subject [,] the more I find

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[55]L. W. Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin, (17 vols., New Haven, 1963), XII, 324-325.

myself confirmed in opinion that no middle doctrine can be well maintained." He continued, "Something might be made of either of the extremes: that Parliament has the right to make all laws for us or that it has the power to make no laws for us." He concluded the latter choice was most correct. He expressed uncertainty over what the Farmer meant by drawing a limit on the Parliament's power to tax. He suggested it was difficult "to draw lines between duties for regulation and those for revenue."[56]

During the following few years, Franklin's activities were routine. In addition to his duties as an agent for Pennsylvania, he was named by Georgia, New Jersy, and Massachusetts as their agent. He also continued extensive traveling; and his interest in science and inventions remained strong. He continued a heavy correspondence and frequently wrote articles pleading the American view in the British press. By October, 1773, he had come to the conclusion "that the parliament has no right to make any laws whatever, binding on the colonies, . . . and that the king . . . is their only legislator."[57]

Franklin's relative inactivity ended in January, 1774, when the news arrived in London about the Boston Tea Party. Coupled with the incident of the Hutchinson letter, the tea

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[56] Ibid., XV, 75-76.

[57] Franklin to his son, Thomas Fleming, ed., The Founding Fathers - Benjamin Franklin - A Biography in His Own Words, (New York, 1972), p. 247, hereafter cited as Franklin Founding Fathers.

party caused great consternation in Britain. The result for Franklin was a grueling experience in the cockpit in which he was subjected to an hour long tirade by the solicitor general. The following day, he was dismissed from the postal service. The next months saw him snubbed and then catered to in an effort to gain his support for the English cause. However, Franklin's support for the American cause was increasing, not decreasing. In a letter to Jonathan Williams Sr. on September 28, 1774, he wrote, "I rejoice to see the Zeal with which your cause is taken up by the other Colonies." "But," he continued, "were they all to desert New England, she ought in my opinion to hold the same Determination of defending her Rights [.]"[58] With the death of Mrs. Franklin on December and a continuing feeling of fruitlessness over his activities, Franklin decided to leave for America. While he was on the ocean, the battle at Lexington and Concord was fought.

Franklin's return to America did not allow him much time for reflection. On May 6, 1775, he was appointed to the Continental Congress by the Pennsylvania Assembly. One of his first actions as a member of Congress was the introduction of a resolution thanking the Earl of Chatham for the "wise and excellent Plan he offer'd in the House" to "accomodate the present unhappy Differences [.]" He also suggests that the Congress thank Edmund Burke and David Hartley for their

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[58] Ibid., p. 257.

support of America.[59] In a letter to his wife on July 23, John Adams wrote that Dr. Franklin in Congress "has been very constant in attendance [...]" He has not sought to take the lead "but has seemed to choose that the Congress should pursue their own principles and sentiments, and adopt their own plans." His disposition has been entirely American. "He does not hesitate at our boldest measures, but rather seems to think us too irresolute and backward. He thinks us at present in an odd state, neither in peace nor war, neither dependent nor independent," Adams continued:

> but he thinks that we shall soon assume a character more decisive. He thinks that we have the power of preserving ourselves; and that even if we should be driven to the disagreeable necessity of assuming a total independency, and set up a separate state, we can maintain it.[60]

On July 31, the Journal reported Franklin saying, "that there was no Matter in Dispute between us but the single Circumstance of the Mode of Levying Taxes, which Mode as they are so good as to give up to us [...]" He went on to say "they claim a Right (and actually do practice it) of altering our Charter and establish'd Laws, which would leave us not the Shadow of Liberty. . . . [or] Security."[61]

Dr. Franklin's interest in the American cause continued and grew in 1776. In February, 1776, he proposed a

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[59]Burnett, Letters, I, 105.

[60]Ibid., 175.

[61]Worthington C. Ford, ed., Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, (34 vols. U. S. Govt., Washington, 1904-1937), II, 233.

resolution in Congress which stated that after July 20, the custom houses would be closed and their officers be discharged. Further, he proposed that trade would be free with any country "that will admit our Commerce and protect it." The second part of his resolution stated that we would do our utmost to "maintain and support this Freedom of Commerce" until "the late Acts of Parliament" shall be repealed.[62] By the middle of April, in a letter to Josiah Quincy, while on his way to Canada, he discussed the questions of the timing for a declaration of independence. Franklin seemed to indicate that it was only a matter of time and gave no indication that he had any doubt about the rightness of such a declaration. He wrote:

> You ask, 'when is the Continental Congress by <u>general consent</u> to be formed into a supreme legislature; alliances, defensive and offensive, formed; our ports opened; and a formidable naval force established at the public charge?' I can only answer at present, that nothing seems wanting but that 'general consent.' The novelty of the thing deters some, the doubts of success, others, the vain hope reconciliation, many. But our enemies take continually every proper measure to remove these obstacles, and their endeavors are attended with success, since every day furnishes us with new causes of increasing enmity, and new reasons for wishing an eternal separation; so that there is a rapid increase of the formerly small party, who were for an independent government.[63]

During the Spring of 1776, Franklin was sent by Congress to negotiate with Canada on the prospect of an alliance with Canada and the American Colonies. During this time, he suffered a severe attack of the gout, as a result, he was not

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[62]Burnett, <u>Letters</u>, I, 364.

[63]<u>Ibid</u>., 422.

able to attend to the business in Philadelphia. On June 21, he wrote General Washington of his absence and said that as a result ". . .I know little of what has pass'd there except that a Declaration of Independence is preparing . . ."[64] On his return to Congress, Franklin was appointed a member of the committee to draft the Declaration. The changes he made on Jefferson's draft were minor. When the vote deciding the matter of independence came before the convention, Franklin voted for the resolution to no one's surprise.

Dr. Franklin continued to serve his country and state. He served as president of the Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention of 1776, a diplomatic commissioner to France and later Minister to France, one of the negotiators of the Treaty of Paris 1783, the Governor of Pennsylvania for three years and a member of Pennsylvania's delegation to the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Death took Dr. Benjamin Franklin on April 17, 1790; he was buried at Christ Church yard in Philadephia. Congress ordered a month of mourning in honor of the famous scientist and statesman.[65]

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[64] Ibid., 500.

[65] BDAC, p. 912; Sanderson, Signers, II, 151; Franklin, Founding Fathers, pp. 406-407.

MORRIS

Robert Morris was born in January, 1734, in Liverpool, England, the son of a merchant engaged in the tobacco trade with America. The senior Morris emigrated to America leaving Robert in the care of his grandmother, to whom he was very attached. In 1747, Mr. Morris sent for his son to join him in Talbot County, Maryland. Robert was placed under the tutelage of a man named Annan in Philadelphia. At the age of 15, he was left an orphan when his father was hit by a bullet used in a salute honoring him at a dinner party. Apparently, shortly thereafter, he began working for the Willings' who were shipping merchants, holding a secure position both socially and economically, in Philadelphia. In 1754, the firm was reconstituted and Robert was made a partner with Thomas Willing. The next few years saw Mr. Morris engaged in a considerate amount of traveling. On one of his voyages, he was captured by the French. In February, 1769, he married Mary, the daughter of Colonel Thomas White.

The first time that Mr. Morris showed an active interest in politics was in 1765 when he signed the non-importation agreement, as a result of the Stamp Act. Sanderson wrote that the stopping of trade was important to Willing and Morris, so it was "an important sacrifice."[66] He was also on a committee to force John Hughes, the stamp collector for Philadelphia, to resign his position. In 1766,

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[66]Sanderson, Signers, 2nd ed., II, 313.

he was appointed warden of the port of Philadelphia by the Pennsylvania Assembly. When a Committee of Safety was formed for the Province in June, 1775, Mr. Morris was made vice president and continued in the office until July, 1776.[67]

On November 3, 1775, he was sent to the Continental Congress as a delegate from Pennsylvania. Soon after his appointment, he was made chairman of the secret committee which was to contract for importation of arms and ammunition. A committee was set up in December of 1775 to devise ways and means for furnishing the colonies with naval armaments; Robert Morris was appointed a member of this committee and the subsequent permanent naval committee. In April, 1776, he was commissioned to negotiate bills of exchange and to procure money for Congress. During this time, he continued to serve as a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety and the Pennsylvania Assembly. He served as the go-between on a number of occasions between Congress and the authorities of Pennsylvania. The committees he served on in Congress and the bodies in Pennsylvania put increasing demands on his time.

There seemed to be little doubt that Robert Morris was moving with others to a position favoring a Declaration of Independence in the Spring of 1776. On April 6, he

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[67]William G. Sumner, The Financier and the Finances of the American Revolution, (2 vols., New York, 1891), II, 309-314; Mrs. Armine Hart, "Robert Morris," PMHB, I, 333-342.

wrote General Gates:

> It is time we should be on a certaintity and know positively whether the libertys of America can be established and secured by reconciliation, or whether we must totally renounce connection with Great Britain and fight our way to a total independence. Whilst we continue thus firmly united among ourselves, there is no doubt but either of these points may be carried [.]

He went on to state his fear of even the "appearance of division amongst ourselves."[68]

It was Robert Morris' fear of the division in the colonies that led him to vote against the Declaration. On July 20, 1776, he wrote to Colonel Joseph Reed, his reasons for his vote:

> I have uniformly voted against and opposed the Declaration of Independence, because, in my poor opinion, it was an improper time, and will neither promote the interest nor redound to the honour of America; for it has caused division when we wanted union, and will be ascribed to very different principles than those which ought to give rise to such an important measure. I did not expect my conduct in this great question would have procured my dismission from the great Council, but find myself disappointed, for the Convention has thought proper to return me in the new delegation; and although my interest and inclination prompt me to decline the service, yet I cannot depart from one point which first induced me to enter the publick line: I mean an opinion, that it is the duty of every individual to act his part in whatever station his country may call him to in time of difficulty, danger, and distress.---[69]

In a letter to Horatio Gates on October 27, 1776, Mr. Morris expressed similar feelings about the prematurity of the Declaration. He asserted that instead of the needed unity, various states are involved "in Intestine division." He

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[68]Force, Am. Archieves, 4th series, V, 801.

[69]Ibid., I, 468.

reiterated his belief that it was the citizens' duty "to follow when he cannot lead" and that the minority should submit to the majority opinion "during this great Contest[.]"[70]

It would seem that Robert Morris felt the need to follow the majority on the matter of voting on July 4. For this reason, he did not take his seat and cast a no vote on that date; rather, he allowed Pennsylvania to vote with the majority. Curiously, Mr. Morris was reappointed by the Pennsylvania Assembly to remain a delegate to Congress even though he had not voted for the Declaration. Upon his reappointment, Mr. Morris signed the Declaration in early August, along with the other members from Pennsylvania. During the war he demonstrated his belief in the cause, by his tireless efforts as the "financier of the Revolution."

After the war, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Bank of North America, was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, served a term in the United States Senate, and was offered the post of Secretary of the Treasury by President Washington, which he declined. He became involved in an unsuccessful land deal which resulted in great indebtedness and his imprisonment for three years. During his time in prison, President Washington ate a meal with him. Five years after his release from prison, he died in Philadelphia. He was interred in the family vault of William White in Christ Churchyard.[71]

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[70]Burnett, Letters, II, 135.

[71]DAB, VII, 220-223.

He appeared to be highly esteemed by his fellows.

John Adams wrote:

> I think he [Morris] has a masterly Understanding, an open Temper and an honest Heart; and if he does not always vote for what you and I should think proper, it is because he thinks that a large Body of People remains, who are not yet of his Mind.

He concluded by calling Morris "an excellent Member of our Body."[72] Dr. Benjamin Rush had similar praise for Mr. Morris. He wrote that Robert Morris is:

> a bold, sensible, and agreeable speaker. His perceptions were quick and his judgment sound upon all subjects. He was opposed to the time (not to the act) of the Declaration of Independence, but he yielded to no man in his exertions to support it, and a year after it took place he publickly acknowledged on the floor of Congress that he had been mistaken in his former opinions as to its time, and said that it would have been better for our country had it been declared sooner. He was candid and liberal in a debate so as always to be respected by his opponents, and sometimes to offend the members of the party with whom he generally voted. By his extensive commercial knowledge and connections he rendered great service to his country in the beginning, and by the able manner in which he discharged the duties of Financier he revived and established her credit in the close of the Revolution. In private life he was friendly, sincere, generous and charitable, but his peculiar manners deprived him of much of that popularity which usually follows great exploits of public and private virtue. He was proud and passionate, and hence he always had virulent enemies, as well as affectionate friends.[73]

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[72] Burnett, Letters, I, 433.

[73] Rush, Autobiography, p. 148.

WILLING

Thomas Willing, born December 19, 1731, was the eldest of eleven children of Charles and Anne Shippen Willing. His father was a wealthy merchant. At an early age Thomas was sent to be educated at Bath, England, under the care of his grandmother Willing. In September, 1748, he went to London and studied at Watt's Academy, before entering the Inner Temple to study law on October 5, 1748. He returned to Philadelphia on May 19, 1749, and entered into his father's counting house, and was taken in as a partner in 1751. In 1754, his father died of yellow fever and Thomas assumed control of the business with an inheritance of £6,000. He formed a partnership with Robert Morris which was to be important for financing the Revolution.[74]

In 1754, he began a career of public service that was to extend until 1811. He was elected as an assistant to the Pennsylvania Delegation at the Albany Congress in 1754. In 1755 or 1757, he became a member of the common council; in 1758, he was appointed Pennsylvania Commissioner for trade with the West Indies; 1761, he was appointed judge of the Orphans Court of Philadelphia; in 1763, at the age of thirty-three, Willing was elected mayor of Philadelphia. He was one of the first to sign the Non-Importation Resolutions against the Stamp Act in 1765. With John Dickinson, he

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[74]DAB, X, 302.

presided over the meeting of citizens of Philadelphia in support of the people of Boston, which met on June 18, 1774. Willing was chosen to preside over a Provincial Congress which met from July 15th to the 22nd in 1774. This Provincial Congress urged that a general Congress of the Colonies be held, and urged the Pennsylvania Assembly to name delegates.[75]

Thomas Willing served as a member of the Committee of Correspondence in 1774 and as a member of the Committee of Safety in 1775. He was elected as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress and served until the new delegates were appointed by the Pennsylvania Assembly in July, 1776. On the first of July, 1776, the resolution for independence was taken up in the Committee of the Whole. Thomas Willing was one of those who voted not to report the resolution. The next day, when the resolution was voted on, he again voted in the negative.

On September 20, 1774, Thomas Willing wrote General Frederick Haldimand his feelings about the controversy with Britain. He suggested that "repeated injuries on the one side, and retorted Insults on the other, will probably keep alive the Coal which must consume the vitals of both countrys." He continued that "as an American I both See and feel the chains which are prepared for me." And although he took honor and glory in the reputation of Britain and loved his

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[75] Ibid., 303; BDAC, 1826.

own land "whose liberties and interest are most cruelly and unjustly attack'd [,]" [Yet] "Some humiliation on their part and Some concessions on Ours seems to me the only proper and probable way, of settling the unhappy dispute [.]"[76] Thus, at this early date, Willing was expressing the desire for some form of reconciliation between the Colonies and Great Britain. This, of course, would have been a common reaction in September of 1774.

When the vote for independence came before the Congress in July, 1776, Thomas Willing still was hesitant about separation from Britain and voted against the measure. He explained his vote thusly:

> I voted against this Declaration in Congress not only because I thought America at that time unequal to such a conflict as must ensue (having neither Arms, Ammunition or Military Experience), but chiefly because the Delegates of Pennsylvania were not then authorized by their instructions from the Assembly, or the voice of the People at large to join in such a vote.[77]

Other reasons why he voted no, might well be his English training, and affiliation with the Anglican Church and the Penns. In addition, his merchantile interests may have influenced his position.

Thomas Willing never took an oath to the King. Apparently, his vote against the Declaration was not held against him, since he served as a Washington appointee, for

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[76] PMHB, VI, 366.

[77] Thomas W. Balch, "Thomas Willing of Philadelphia (1731-1821)," PMHB, XLVI, 8.

Washington appointed Willing to receive subscriptions to the First Bank of the United States. Subsequently, he served as its first president. His mercantile investment grew into a large fortune. Thomas and his wife Anne, the daughter of Samuel McCall, had thirteen children. Thomas Willing died in Philadelphia on January 19, 1821, and he was interred at Christ Churchyard.[78]

WILSON

James Wilson was born September 14, 1742, on his father's farm near the little village of Caskardy, in the shire of Fife in Scotland. He was the first son after three daughters born to William and Alison Lansdale Wilson. William Wilson was an elder in the Associate Presbyterian Church and determined that his son should devote full time to the Lord's work. As a result, James was sent to school even at great sacrifice to his family. James went to the little parish school near Caskardy. He studied Sallust and Virgil, Euclid's Geometry, Penmanship, Rhetoric, Latin, and Greek. It is assumed that his long hours studying by flickering candle light, were the cause of his poor sight later in life. At the age of fourteen he graduated from grammar school and applied for a scholarship to St. Andrews.

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[78] DAB, X, 303.

A few days after taking the examination, Wilson was notified that he had received the bursarship. Thus, James entered St. Andrews in November, 1757, and went through the four year course. He no doubt was much influenced by the Enlightenment thought. He nevertheless decided to enter divinity school at St. Mary's College, and studied for a year under Dr. Andrew Shaw. At this point, William Wilson died and James returned to help support the family. He took up the position as tutor in a gentleman's family. In 1765, he took a course in bookkeeping and merchant accounting from Thomas Young. He apparently found accounting as boring as tutoring. Thus, he decided that his future in Scotland was not as bright as it could be in America. After securing his mother's blessing and the financial aid of friends, he set off for America,[79] arriving in New York in the Fall of 1765.

Upon arriving in America, James sought employment at the College of Philadelphia; he was armed with a letter to Dr. Richard Peters, who was a trustee of the College. At the commencement held in May, 1766, he received an honorary masters degree. Not pleased with the academic environment, he seemed to feel that the law offered the best chance for advancement. He, therefore, worked out an arrangement where he could study under John Dickinson. This he did until 1767,

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[79]Charles P. Smith, James Wilson - Founding Father 1742-1798, (Chapel Hill, 1956), Chapter 1.

whereupon, he decided to set up practice in Reading.[80] His practice resulted in only a few clients in the first year, thus leaving him ample free time, part of which he used by combining with William White in writing a column under the name "Visitant." The column was written very much in the Enlightenment school. They moved from frivolous topics to matters much more weighty. After four months they published their last article, in large part, because Wilson's law practice began to grow. He fell in love with Rachel Bird and they were married on November 5, 1771.

In 1770, Wilson had moved to Carlisle and set up practice there at the urging of John Armstrong. The town was a part of the growing frontier and as such provided a good opportunity for a young lawyer. His law practice continued to grow but he also fell into debt because of land purchases. Envolvement in the dispute between Britain and America was also taking up his time. On July 12, 1774, he was elected as a member of the Committee of Correspondence for Carlisle. In addition he was appointed as a deputy to meet at Philadelphia to decide on measures for the Congress' consideration. He was then put on the committee to draw up instructions for the delegates from Pennsylvania. He was nominated, but not elected, a delegate to the Congress. Later that year, he refurbished an article he wrote in 1768 and entitled it, "Considerations on the Nature and Extent

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[80] Ibid., Chapter 2.

of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament." In this pamphlet, he denied the "legislative authority of the British Parliament over the colonies . . . in every instant." Rather, the colonists owed loyalty only to the crown and should enjoy all the rights of Englishmen.[81]

In January, 1775, he was again sent as a representative to a convention at Philadelphia. The main purpose of the convention was to ratify the actions of the First Congress. It also provided an opportunity for Wilson to give an oration on his views of the British Constitution. In April of 1775 he was commissioned as a colonel in the fourth battalion of Associators of Cumberland County, a position he never actively took up.

He was appointed a member of the Second Continental Congress on May 6, 1775, and on May 15, he assumed his new duties. The duties he assumed were mainly those of a member of various committees of the Congress. Starting as a member of the committee to consider Massachusett's question, of whether the Provincial Congress should take up the powers of civil government and whether Congress would take over the army growing up around Boston, he showed himself in these early months to be a moderate. The committee's answer to these questions was to take over the army since there was no real alternative, and it confirmed the Provincial Assembly's power until the Crown agreed to govern the colony by its

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[81] Ibid., p. 54.

charter. The radicals had hoped for much more. In June he was appointed to a committee to arrange for the printing of paper money. He was also appointed to the permanent committee on Indian Affairs which took up a great deal of his time. In November, 1775, he was reelected to Congress by the Pennsylvania Assembly. The Congress appointed him as a member of a committee to determine what was to be done with the captured vessel.

Richard Smith in his Diary for January 9, 1776, records:

> Wilson moved and was strongly supported that the Congress may expressly declare to their Constituents and the World their present Intentions respecting an Independency, observing that the Kings Speech directly charged us with that Design.[82]

Samuel Adams writing to his cousin John on January 15, 1776, reported the motion thusly:

> 'That, whereas we had been charged with aiming at independency, a committee should be appointed to explain to the people at large, the principles and grounds of our opposition.' etc.[83]

James Wilson was a member of that committee and the committee's report is in his handwriting. The first major assertion was all Power that the people have not disposed of still resides with them. This is true whether speaking of Great Britain or her colonies. The right that Parliament claimed over the colonies, if it is allowed to stand, will result in slavery. He wrote, "We wish for Peace---we wish

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[82]Burnett, Letters, I, 304.

[83]Ibid., 311.

for Safety: But we will not, to obtain either or both of them, part with our Liberty."[84] He asserted, however, that their aim was to reestablish the constitutional rights of the Colonies and return to the former state, so long as this was consistant with their freedom.[85]

James Wilson appears to have been at the center of the controversy between those desiring immediate independence and those wishing to delay that move. At the heart of the matter was the question of the instructions given to the Pennsylvania delegates by their Assembly. Pressure was put on the Assembly to change these instructions; pressure they resisted until the middle of June. Mr. Wilson said in part:

> We are the servants of the people, sent here to act under a delegated authority. If we exceed it, voluntarily, we deserve neither excuse nor justification. Some have been put under restraints by their constituents; they cannot vote without transgressing this line. Suppose they should hereafter be called to an account for it. This Province has not, by any public act, authorized us to vote upon this question---.
>
> In this Province, if that preamble passes, there will be an immediate dissolution of every kind of authority; the people will be instantly in a state of nature. Why then precipate this measure? Before we are prepared to build the new house, why should we pull down the old one [.][86]

Because the instructions remained unchanged on June 7, James Wilson voted against the resolution for independence and joined with a few others in asking for a three week delay on the measure. They felt the middle colonies needed additional

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[84] Journals, IV, 139.

[85] Ibid., 130-146.

[86] Ibid., 1075.

time to become convinced of the need for independence. Because of his position which seemed to indicate an opposition to independence, he was strongly castigated. As a result, twenty-two of his colleagues in Congress felt it necessary to issue an explanation and defense of his position.[87]

By the middle of June, the Pennsylvania delegates received new instructions from their Assembly. These new instructions allowed the delegates to stay in step with the other provinces, by voting for resolutions that would promote the "liberty, safety, and interests of America." As a result, Wilson felt he could vote for the resolution for independence on July 1 and July 4. Wilson seems to have felt the same as many others that it was the wisest course of action to postpone independence for as long as possible. However, by the beginning of July he must have felt that enough public support was behind the movement for separation.

James Wilson continued to serve the public in various capacities. He continued to serve on various important committees in Congress during much of the war. He was elected to Congress in 1782, and worked on various revenue measures. In 1787, he was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention and played a major role in the formations of the Constitution, and with Gouveneur Morris wrote the final draft. From 1789 until his death in 1798, he was an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Throughout his life he was

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[87] DAB, X, 327.

plagued with debt as a result of land speculation. Even in the months immediately before his death, he fled to Burlington, New Jersey, to avoid arrest for his indebtedness.[88]

Dr. Rush characterized Justice Wilson thusly:

> An eminent lawyer and a great and enlightened statesman. He had been educated for a clergyman in Scotland, and was a profound and accurate scholar. He spoke often in Congress, and his eloquence was of the most commanding kind. He reasoned, declaimed, and persuaded according to circumstances with equal effect. His mind, while he spoke, was one blaze of light. Not a word ever fell from his lips out of time, or out of place, nor could a word be taken from or added to his speeches without injuring them. He rendered great and essential services to his country in every stage of the Revolution.[89]

CLYMER

George Clymer was born on March 16, 1739, in Philadelphia, the son of Christopher and Deborah Fitzworth Clymer. At an early age he lost both parents and came under the guardianship of his Uncle, William Coleman, an eminent merchant in Philadelphia and friend of Ben Franklin. His uncle had a large library which helped to give George an early taste for reading. He began a business career first as a clerk, then partner, and finally inherited the business from his uncle. He associated himself with Robert Ritchies and was later taken into a partnership with Reese Meredith and his son. They established the firm of Merediths and

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[88] Ibid., 328-330.

[89] Rush, Autobiography, p. 150.

Clymer which continued until 1782. He married Reese Meredith's daughter, Elizabeth, in 1765 and began a friendship with George Washington, who was a frequent visitor at the Meredith household.[90]

His public career began when he became a volunteer in General Cadwalader's brigade at the outbreak of hostilities with Britain. In 1773, he became chairman of a committee of the Philadelphia Tea Party that forced the resignation of the merchant appointed by the British to sell the tea. He became a member of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety. On July 29, 1775, he became one of the first continental treasurers and, as an act of faith in the system, exchanged all of his specie for continental currency. He served as treasurer until his appointment to the Congress in July, 1776. Clymer had been one of the first to advocate complete independence from Britain and was said to have realized "his dearest wish" when he was given the opportunity to sign the Declaration. He served in Congress until September, 1777, when he was not reelected. During the time he served in Congress, he worked extremely hard; in fact if he visited his family twenty-five miles away in Chester County, it was only for a night, returning to his desk the next morning. He served on a number of committees, including those that investigated the difficulties in Washington's command. In 1777,

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[90]Sanderson, Signers, 146-150; BDAC, p. 710; DAB, II, 234; National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, III, 272.

he was sent as a commissioner to investigate Indian troubles on the frontier said to be inspired by the British. He returned to Congress in 1780 and continued almost without interruption until 1796 to serve his country in various capacities.[91]

Mr. Sanderson, in his book on the Signers, had only the highest praise for Mr. Clymer. He said of Clymer:

> The kindness and urbanity of his manners endeared him to all his associates, while the simplicity which was a marked feature of his character, did not permit him to assume an offensive or unreasonable control over their opinions.[92]

He did not speak "ill of the absent, or endeavoring to debase their character." He was scrupulous and punctual in his attendence to even the smallest detail. Sanderson continued:

> Mr. Clymer possessed strong intellects from nature, which he improved by culture and study. 'Firm, but not obstinate; independent, but not arrogant; communicative, but not obtrusive; he was at once the amiable and instructive companion.'[93]

He died at Morrisville, Pennsylvania, on January 23, 1813, at the home of his son.

RUSH

In 1683, John and Susanna Rush arrived in Pennsylvania from England with eight children and several grandchildren.

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[91] Ibid., pp. 146-186; Ibid., p. 710, Ibid., p. 234-5; Ibid., p. 272.

[92] Sanderson, Signers, III, 180.

[93] Ibid., p. 179.

It was from this commander in Cromwell's army that Benjamin Rush, the Signer, had descended. John, the grandson of the immigrant John, married Susanna Hall Harvey by whom he had seven children, including Benjamin born in 1745. Benjamin's father died in July, 1751, at the age of 39, leaving his wife with seven living children, since one son had died in infancy; Mrs. Rush also had a daughter from her first marriage. To meet the financial burden of raising these children, Mrs. Rush "opened a grocery shop in a public street in which she sold, among other things, liquors by wholesale and retail."[94]

Benjamin Rush began his educational experience at "a country school in Nottingham, now in Cecil County in the State of Maryland,"[95] a few years after his father's death. The school was run by Rev. Samuel Finley, who was married to Mrs. Rush's sister. Rev. Finley seems to have had a profound affect on the young Rush. This appears to have been particularly true with regard to his religious convictions. He ascribed not having "at any time of my life ever entertained a doubt of the divine origin of the Bible," to the arguments Rev. Finley made at the Instructions on Sunday evening.[96] He wrote that the only thing that dampens the review of this time was "that I profited so much less than I might

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[94]Rush, Autobiography, p. 27.

[95]Ibid., p. 28.

[96]Ibid., p. 31.

have done from all the opportunities I enjoyed of literacy and moral instruction."[97]

In the Spring of 1759, when Benjamin was 15, he was admitted into the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), as a junior. He received from Samuel Davies, "a love of knowledge," and he said, "that if I derived but little from his instructions, I was taught by him how to acquire it in the subsequent periods of my life." Also the practice of taking notes was acquired from Davies. In September, 1760, he was given a Bachelor of Arts degree.[98] He had decided to enter the law profession but upon visiting with Dr. Finley, he was advised that "the law was full of temptation" and the practice of medicine was suggested.[99] He studied under Dr. John Redman from February, 1761 until July, 1766. Rush recorded that he was "absent from his business but eleven days and never spent more than three evenings out of his house."[100] After his internship with Dr. Redman, he went to study at Edinburg, London, and Paris. He studied in Edinburg until September, 1768 and went on to London where he became acquainted with many of the leading scholars of Britain. In February of 1769, he went to Paris where he met the leading thinkers and scholars of France. Thus, he acquired an excellent classical education in Europe and was exposed to a

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[97] Ibid., p. 33.

[98] Ibid., p. 36.

[99] Ibid., p. 37.

[100] Ibid., p. 38.

vast selections of ideas that he would not have been privy to in America.

Dr. Rush set up practice in Philadelphia after his return from his European study. He was appointed a Professor of Chemistry shortly after his return from Europe. His early years in medical practice were spent working with the poor and he was known for his gentleness to his patients. He continued his medical studies and wrote A Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on Chemistry in 1770. In 1772, he published anonymously a tract dealing with personal hygiene and in 1773, an address dealing with the inequity of trade. In 1774, he and James Pemberton founded the first antislavery society.[101]

Thus, through publishing and lecturing both at the college and in public, he acquired public recognition. According to Goodman, Dr. Rush was very concerned about the Stamp Act and criticized Ben Franklin for his failure to denounce the act. He goes on to say that Rush's antagonism to the British Crown never disappeared after this event.[102] Benjamin Rush traced his own enlarged involvement in America's bid for freedom in the following way:

> I took an early but obscure part in the controversy between Great Britain and the American colonies in the year 1773. Having published several pieces in the news

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[101] DAB, VIII, 228; Nathan G. Goodman, Benjamin Rush - Physician and Citizen, 1746-1813, (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 42.

[102] Goodman, Benjamin Rush, p. 42.

> papers in favor of the claims of my country, which attracted notice, I was admitted into the confidence of John Dickinson (the author of the Farmer's Letters), Chas. Thompson, Thomas afterwards General Mifflin, and George Clymer, who then by their publications governed the public mind in Pennsylvania. Their influence was much aided by a pamphlet written by James Wilson who then lived at lar- lisle, and by the conversation of Edward Biddle, an eminent lawyer who then lived at Reading. From these sources proceeded for a while nearly all the political information which set Pennsylvania in motion, and united her with her sister Colonies.[103]

Rush considered writing a pamphlet critical of British rule in America, but never completed it, for he feared that it might harm his practice. He seems, however, to have urged Thomas Paine to write such a pamphlet and was an advisor through the process of writing. It was his suggestion that the pamphlet be entitled Common Sense and he also arranged for its publication.

Dr. Rush entered formal political activities on February 16, 1776, when he was elected to the Philadelphia Committee of Inspection and Observation. This committee had been created to implement the regulations of the Association that the first Congress had designed in 1774. By 1776, it was exercising a great deal of power over Pennsylvania. Extensive maneuvering resulted in the election of those favoring independence of whom Ben Rush was one. He continued to be actively involved with the group working for independence, to the point that he saw no patients on May 19. The men with whom Rush was associated continued to maneuver an overthrow

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[103]Rush, Autobiography, pp. 109-110.

of the Loyalist government of Penn.[104] It therefore seemed appropriate that when new delegates were named to Congress in the middle of July, Benjamin Rush was among them.

Benjamin Rush lived a full life after signing the Declaration, for he was at that time only thirty-one years of age. He became involved in prison reform, efforts to obtain prohibition, and the study of psychiatric patients. In addition, he wrote various books and continued to serve as a lecturer at the University. At the same time, he continued his medical practice and carried on a varied interest in politics. His biographers have revealed him as a man of integrity but remaining stubbornly adament if he thought he was right. This trait caused him more trouble than he would have had to face.[105] He had a scientific mind, ever seeking out facts and adding to his store of knowledge, but he did not seem to be much inclined to introspection.

Dr. Rush was conscious of the dynamic force of the Declaration. "The declaration of independence," he commented in the Spring of 1777, "was said to have decided & weakened the colonies. The contrary of this was the case." He continued, "Nothing but the signing, and recognizing of the declaration of independence preserved the congress from a dissolution in December 1776 when Howe marched to the Delaware." In addition, "The declaration of independence

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[104]David Hawke, Benjamin Rush - Revolutionary Gadfly, (Indianapolis, 1971), Chapter 8.

[105]Goodman, Benjamin Rush, p. 42.

produced a secession of tories . . . timid . . . moderate and double minded men from the counsels of America in consequence of which the congress as well as each of the States have possessed two times the vigor and strength they had formerly."[106]

SMITH

The exact time of James Smith's birth is not known, for it was one of his strange characteristics to keep his age a secret, even from his closest friends. He apparently was born around 1713 in Ireland, the second son of Mr. and Mrs. John Smith. When James was entering his teens, the family came to America where his father purchased a tract of land west of the Susquehanna, in York County, Pennsylvania. James attended school in Philadelphia and studied under the Rev. Francis Alison. He received a classical education and then read law in the office of his elder brother. Sanderson wrote that his brother died in early manhood which caused James to move far into the woods, where he established himself as a lawyer and surveyor in the vicinity of the present sight of Shippensburg. After a few years on the frontier he returned to York to practice law where for some time he was the only lawyer, but there was little legal business. This

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[106] Ibid., p. 55.

may have encouraged him to take up iron manufacturing which he pursued from 1771 to 1778, costing him £5,000.[107]

James Smith was a leader in the backcountry for the cause of liberty at an early stage. In July, 1774, he read an "Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America" and urged the non-importation of British goods and a general congress of the colonies, as a means of securing redress for colonial grievances. He was appointed to the committee to draw up instructions for the Pennsylvania delegates to the First Congress. Upon Smith's return to York from a meeting of the committee for the Province of Pennsylvania in December, 1774, he engaged himself in raising and drilling a volunteer company which elected him captain. This company, later a battalion, was the first corp of volunteer soldiers organized in Pennsylvania with the intent of opposing the forces of Great Britain.[108] This occupied his time during the period of the First Continental Congress. In January, 1775, he was a member of the convention for the province of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia. He concurred in the actions of the First Congress. In June, 1776, he was a member of the provincial conference composed entirely of Whigs. When Dr. Rush proposed that the conference declare their sentiment for independence, the motion was seconded by Smith. He also played a role in setting into

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[107] Sanderson, Signers, 2nd ed., III, 197-9.

[108] DAB, IX, 284; Sanderson, Signers, III, 205.

motion the wheels for improving Pennsylvania's defense. He was a member of the Constitutional Convention in July, 1776. However, after a week of service in that body, he was selected a delegate to Congress from Philadelphia on July 20, 1776. As a member of Congress at this time, he was present in early August to affix his name to the Declaration of Independence.[109]

James Smith continued to serve in various capacities of public service to his state and nation. His public career culminated in 1785 when he was elected to Congress, but because of age, declined to serve. He practiced law from 1781 to 1801 and accumulated a sizeable estate. In 1805, a fire destroyed his office and most of his papers. He died in July, 1806, and was buried in the English Presbyterian Churchyard at York; he was survived by his wife, Eleanor Armour and two of their five children.[110]

Known to be somewhat eccentric, he was also the life of any party. He had a rich and retentive memory which provided him with a vast store of humorous antedotes. Though he loved wine and drank much of it, he was never known to be intoxicated. He always maintained the dignity of his own character, and never permitted, nor uttered, a jest aimed at religion or ministers. He regularly attended church once a Sunday, but could with difficulty, be persuaded to go in the

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[109]Sanderson, Signers, III, 206, 213, 220.

[110]DAB, IX, 284.

afternoon. He said, "that a second sermon in the same day always put the first one entirely out of his head."[111]

Dr. Rush recorded the following opinion of Mr. Smith:

> A pleasant facetious lawyer, his speeches in Congress were in general declamatory, but from their humor, frequently entertaining. He was an early Whig, but wanted steadiness, it was said, in his political conduct.[112]

TAYLOR

One of those elected to serve in the Congress after July 4, 1776, was George Taylor. He was born in Ireland in 1716 and is "said to have been the son of a respectable clergyman of that country, who gave him a better education than was usually bestowed" on those in his station. His father seems to have been determined to educate him for medicine, but before he completed his study he embarked on a ship to America as a redemptioner in 1736.[113] Upon arriving in America, he bound himself to a man named Savage who owned an iron works in the Warwick Furnace & Coventry Forge in Chester County. Here he worked as a filler throwing coal into the furnace. It was evident that Taylor was not accustomed to hard physical work, so Savage installed him as a clerk. Upon Savage's death, Taylor took over as manager

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[112]Rush, Autobiography, p. 149.

[113]Sanderson, Signers, 2nd ed., III, 241.

and in 1742 married Savage's widow.[114] Around 1754 he moved to Durham in Bucks County where he and a partner leased a furnace. After 1763 he lived mainly at Easton in Northhampton County.

His career of public service began in 1757 when he became a justice of the peace, an office he was to hold off and on for some fifteen years. In October, 1764, he served as Northampton's representative in the provincial assembly, a post he held until 1769. He was a member of the minority proprietary party and bitterly opposed a royal government and its chief advocate, Franklin. In addition he was a member of the committee that drew up instructions for delegates to the Stamp Act Congress. From 1770 to 1775, he served in the judiciary and also was active in the growing opposition to British policy. He was named with five others to a committee of Correspondence. In October of 1775 he was again sent to the Pennsylvania Assembly and there helped draft the instructions for the delegates in Congress from Pennsylvania. He was appointed as a delegate to the Continental Congress in July of 1776 to replace one of the members who had not voted for the Declaration. Burnett reported that there is no indication that Taylor attended the Constitutional Convention except that he signed the Declaration of Independence and served on a committee with George Walters at a conference with Indians at Easton in January, 1777. In March, 1777, he

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[114] Ibid., 242.

was elected to the new Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, but because of illness he served only six weeks and then retired from active public affairs. He died on February 23, 1781, and was interred in St. John's Luthern Church Cemetery before reinterment in the Easton Cemetary. He was preceded in death by his wife and two legitimate children. He had five children by his housekeeper, Naomi Smith.[115]

Benjamin Rush said of George Taylor, that he was "a respectable country gentleman, but not much distinguished in any way in Congress."[116] Sanderson said of Taylor that "he was a man of strong native parts, and of honourable conduct; industrious and enterprising in his habits, and useful in times requiring firmness and strong good sense."[117] The DAB said that Taylor was "a moderate radical, whose attitude was largely provincial, and whose interest in politics was never absorbing."[118]

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[115] DAB, IX, 324-325; Sanderson, Signers, III, 256.

[116] Rush, Autobiography, p. 149.

[117] Sanderson, Signers, III, 256.

[118] DAB, IX, 325.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

The colony of Pennsylvania, whose slow and at times painful movement towards independence has been the subject of the preceding pages, was unique in a number of ways among her sister colonies. This uniqueness may give some clue as to why Pennsylvania reacted as she did in the spring and summer of 1776. The fact that Pennsylvania was a Proprietary colony, and had a Proprietor who was willing to give them a great deal of freedom to govern their own affairs, was a most significant factor. Sanderson suggested that Pennsylvania

> had always been a colony peculiarly favored by the crown, and had received from it many direct expressions of its good will; her proprietary government had been conducted without a shadow of political oppression, though its history is now and then disfigured with controversies about the personal rights of the descendants of the founder, and the mutual privileges granted and reserved by charter; her constitution was liberal, indeed democratic to a degree which existed in only a few other colonies [.][1]

John Adams wrote a letter to Benjamin Hichborn on May 29, 1776, which expressed this view:

> The middle colonies have never tasted the bitter cup; they have never smarted, and are therefore a little

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[1]Sanderson, Signers of the Declaration of Independence, (9 vols., Philadelphia, 1823-1827), 2nd edition, III, 249.

> cooler; but you will see that the colonies are united indissolubly.
>
> The proprietary governments are not only encumbered with a large body of Quakers, but are embarrassed by a proprietary interest; both together clog their operations a little.[2]

Jefferson in his notes asserted "that the backwardness of these two colonies [Md. & Pa.] might be ascribed partly to the influence of proprietary power and connections, and partly to their having not yet been attacked by the enemy."[3]

The makeup both religiously and racially of Pennsylvania's three hundred thousand people on the eve of the Revolution added to the uniqueness of the colony. About one-sixth of the population belonged to noncombatant sects such as Quakers, Mennonites, Dunkers, and Moravians. Three fairly definite groups were evident in pre-Revolutionary Pennsylvania. The first group was composed of the non-fighting sects mentioned above and a few Episcopalians. They felt that New England and Virginia politicians were bringing on a war of rebellion and that it was up to the more conservative people of the middle colonies to check them. At the time of the First Congress they were in favor of yielding to the home government and appeal to its generosity for considerate treatment. Galloway was the leader of this faction. A second group was composed of Episcopalians, a few Quakers and

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[2]Edmund C. Burnett, Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress, (8 vols., Washington, 1921-1936), I, 467.

[3]Worthington C. Ford, ed., Journals of the Continental Congress, 1714-1789, (34 vols., U.S. Govt., Washington, 1904-1931), VI, "Notes of Debates," 1090.

numerous wealthy Presbyterians and Germans. Although they did not agree with the radicals they were determined to go along with the movement in the hope of holding it within moderate bounds. In this group were Mifflin, Dickinson, Thomsen, Reed, Robert Morris, and Wilson. The third group was the more radical element which included the bulk of the Presbyterians, a few Germans, and the mechanics of the city of Philadelphia. They remained moderate until the spring of 1776. The leader of this group was Thomas Paine.[4] The racial makeup of the colony was also important. The Germans had initially taken their direction from the Quakers, but since ninety percent were Lutheren and Reformed they had no scruples against bearing arms. The early indifference of the Germans was not completely overcome as unanimity was not achieved even after the Declaration. The Scotch-Irish had little sympathy for Britain from an early stage in the trouble with the mother country. Dunaway wrote that there "were no pacifists and but few loyalists among them. From first to last their voice was raised for war, "and it was their influence that was the decisive factor in turning Pennsylvania toward favoring the Revolution. They furnished a larger proportion of soldiers than did any other racial group in the commonwealth.[5] Thus, Pennsylvania was a divided

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[4]Kenneth R. Rossman, Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution, (Chapel Hill, 1952), p. 16.

[5]Wayland F. Dunaway, History of Pennsylvania, (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), 2nd ed., pp. 106-107.

province both religiously and racially; this factor played a major role in keeping the colony from assuming a significant role as a leader in the struggle against Great Britain. As a result of this division within Pennsylvania, it might be said that the vote of Pennsylvania's delegates in Congress reflected, at least to a degree, the sentiment of the province.

The reasons why the individual delegates voted as they did is indicated in the articles on the different men. With the exception of Galloway and Allen the individuals discussed above were not opposed to the concept of independence, but rather to the timing of the action. Many felt that it was vital to have a strong national government established, and foreign alliances assured before the colonies broke with the mother country. They feared disunion and anarchy at home, and an unfavorable alliance abroad which might lead to domination by such an ally. This condition might be worse than the "tyranny" of Great Britain. A number of individuals feared rule by the mob more than rule by Parliamentry decree. In addition many had personal reasons for retaining their loyalty to Britain. Family and financial ties were strong, religious convictions had been deeply implanted, and the fear of the unknown were factors that weighed heavily upon each individual, whether he was a delegate to Congress or a potential member of some military body. The decision that each one had to reach was not insignificant, for as Thomas

Jefferson wrote, independence is not declared for "light and transient causes." Each one, whether he decided for or against independence, pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor to the position he took. There was no middle ground after the majority reached its decision to accept "the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Natures God" entitled them. Because of its crucial geographic position, Pennsylvania was vitally needed by those favoring independence. Therefore, the struggle within Pennsylvania and the manner in which its delegates voted on those July days in 1776, were of the utmost significance for the nation that was to become the United States of America.

Because of the internal revolution that occurred in Pennsylvania those delegates who had not supported the Declaration, with the exception of Robert Morris, were replaced by the Constitution Convention that was governing Pennsylvania. Therefore, the six delegates who were sent to the Congress on July 20, as the new representatives from Pennsylvania along with Franklin, Morton, and Wilson, signed the Declaration of Independence on August 2. Thus it was that six men who had not voted for the Declaration were commissioned by their government to emblazon their names to the document that signifies for many the spirit of the American dream.

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