

*New Jersey's
Revolutionary Experience*

19

*New Jersey's
Whigs*

DENNIS P. RYAN

New Jersey Historical Commission

NEW JERSEY'S REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE

Larry R. Gerlach, *Editor*

This series of publications is dedicated to the memory of Alfred E. Driscoll, governor of New Jersey from 1947 to 1954, in grateful tribute to his lifelong support of the study and teaching of the history of New Jersey and the United States. He was a member of the New Jersey Historical Commission from 1970 until his death on March 9, 1975.

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**THE NEW JERSEY AMERICAN
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Foreword

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is a Bicentennial pamphlet series published by the New Jersey Historical Commission with a grant from the New Jersey Bicentennial Commission. The twenty-six numbers and two teachers' guides are intended to acquaint secondary school students and the general public with the state's history during the era of the American Revolution. Some titles treat aspects of the Revolution in New Jersey, while others show how important themes of the colonial period developed during the revolutionary years; some bring together the results of existing scholarship, while others present the findings of original research; some are written by professional historians, and others by laymen whose investigations of Jersey history exceed avocation. Because the series is directed to a general audience, the pamphlets have no footnotes but contain bibliographical essays which offer suggestions for further reading.

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is the product of a cooperative venture by numerous individuals and agencies. On my behalf and that of the pamphlets' readers, I accord recognition and appreciation to the individual authors for their contributions to New Jersey history, to the New Jersey American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration Commission and the New Jersey Historical Commission for their support of the project, to Hank Simon, president, Trentypo, Inc., for his invaluable suggestions and cooperation in producing the series, and to the staff of the Historical Commission: Richard Waldron, Public Programs Coordinator, who as project director supervised the series from commencement to completion; Peggy Lewis, Chief of Publications and Information, and Lee R. Parks, Assistant Editor, who edited and designed each number; and William C. Wright, Associate Director, who contributed valuable suggestions at every stage of production.

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William Paterson (1745-1806). Portrait by James Sharples. Courtesy New Jersey Bank, West Paterson, New Jersey.

The American Revolution produced havoc and deep divisions in New Jersey society. As events moved toward independence, the people faced a difficult choice. As Englishmen, would they remain loyal to their king despite the unpopular actions of their home government? As American colonists, would they support republicanism and liberty and join other colonies in denouncing British policies? To many the conflict between loyalty and independence was cause for much soul searching. The forces pressing for American independence eventually moved toward the overthrow of royal government under William Franklin and the establishment of a state and constitution. It is this group of activists that now concerns us. Who were they? What factors help us to understand why this particular group chose to participate in a revolution rather than remain either neutral or loyal to England?

A working definition of a “Whig” is needed. Throughout this essay the term “Whig” is interchangeable with “patriot.” Prior to 1776, both terms connote general support of colonial liberties—religious, political or economic—in the face of British ministerial or parliamentary encroachments. From 1776 on, the terms designate those who opposed Great Britain either actively or passively during the revolutionary war. The Whigs of revolutionary New Jersey were those individuals who risked life and fortune either by active leadership or by support of the Continental Congress and the new state constitution. There were many degrees and types of patriotism. There were well-known and visible leaders, such as William Livingston, the state’s first governor, who was despised by British generals and Loyalists. He was the target of assassination plots and a plundering raid upon Liberty Hall, his home, in Elizabethtown

(modern Elizabeth). He was respected for his leadership qualities and his inflammatory pen. He labored without rest, attending meetings of the Privy Council, signing legislative acts, hearing testimony of Loyalists, and issuing passes and pardons. He is one example of those who became the state's leaders during the American Revolution.

At the other end of the spectrum are the many individuals who never served in the General Assembly (the upper house of the state legislature), the Continental Congress, or even the militia. Perhaps they were the typical patriots. They appeared at town and committee meetings to voice their support for the revolutionary government. They signed oaths of allegiance and paid their taxes. They stood guard against British and Loyalist raiding parties and sent intelligence about the maneuvers of the redcoats. When the army of George Washington was in winter encampment at Middlebrook (now Bound Brook), Pompton or Morristown, these people would provide the starving and shivering men with wheat, horses and clothing. Although they are little known, appearing only as names on petitions to the state government or on quartermaster rolls, they were the real movers of the Revolution. Leaders like William Livingston and the ordinary citizen were united in the winning of independence.

The American Revolution was truly a revolutionary event which destroyed the power and authority of Great Britain in the colonies. In New Jersey as elsewhere the revolutionaries at first resisted within the legal framework of the British colonial system, then resorted to violent protest over the Stamp Act and the tea tax, and finally established a governmental body of their own—the Provincial Congress. In June 1776 the Provincial Congress ordered the arrest of William Franklin, the king's appointed governor, and by that act overthrew the established government. At that point the revolution was accomplished politically. All subsequent events, both the war with Great Britain and the various economic and social reforms, occurred after the essential act of revolution had taken place.

While many Whigs were probably only vaguely aware of the potential consequences of their actions, they must have realized that failure would have brought them economic ruin, jail or death. With the assistance of their former neighbors who had become

Loyalists, the leaders would have been apprehended and punished. Why would such a group of men risk the welfare of their families and themselves in revolution and war? Historians do not yet fully know the answer to this question, and that is particularly so for New Jersey. But we may venture a partial explanation.

The change in British colonial policy after 1763 forced many colonists into resistance and eventually, revolution. The passage of the Stamp Act, which created unprecedented reaction in the colonies, excited in New Jersey an indecisive initial response. The legislature refused to send official representatives to the Stamp Act Congress which met in New York City in October 1765, but scattered acts of protest and violence occurred in Woodbridge and Elizabethtown. During the next ten years Parliament passed new tax measures, which Jerseymen, like other colonists, considered an attempt to impose "taxation without representation." They were more alarmed by the closing of Boston Port in 1774 and the British assumption of control of the government of Massachusetts. When British and American forces skirmished at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, a majority of New Jersey's inhabitants were ready to arm for resistance against their mother country. Most of the province's governmental leaders, including Governor William Franklin, were also shocked by the ill-considered policies of King George's ministers. In sum, the patriots of New Jersey were reacting to British policy and defending their constitutional liberties. British policy created the circumstances for the end of royal government in New Jersey.

The religious history of the colonial period helps to clarify why certain individuals became patriots. Religion was basic to all residents of New Jersey, and the church was the center of every town's intellectual and social life. It provided ideas and values to help the citizens live and work. Although all of the major sects were Protestant, the settlers of New Jersey in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries brought with them a long heritage of rivalry. Congregationalists from New England had come to the New World in protest against what they viewed as Roman Catholic aspects of the Anglican Church (Church of England). Baptists were unwelcome in England and in Massachusetts. Quakers were persecuted in Great Britain and New England. Scottish Presbyterians fled Anglican persecution in their country. Huguenots from Holland

had originally been persecuted in France. While they had their sectarian differences, all these groups felt deep-rooted mistrust of the established Anglican Church. In the early years of the eighteenth century, the Congregational churches of New Jersey became Presbyterian because of a similarity of religious views and the need for combined effort. A latent fear of religious persecution was a part of the cultural atmosphere of East Jersey.

The Anglican Church became a force in New Jersey's religious pattern only in the eighteenth century. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts sent missionaries from England. Despite its late start, the church made headway in the colony. In West Jersey the tolerant Quakers allowed the Anglicans to proselytize. Both churches encouraged the secular and religious education of slaves, going so far as to include them in the congregation. Both included men of great wealth and standing as well as poor members. In East Jersey the Anglican missionaries converted many of the wealthy landholders and merchants of Perth Amboy and Shrewsbury. By the 1750s, despite the suspicion of other sects, Anglicans were at least tolerated. In Shrewsbury the Presbyterian, Anglican and Quaker houses of worship stood within a few feet of each other; in 1769 the Presbyterian minister even permitted the Anglican minister to use his church.

This was a society with a long heritage of resistance to land tax and to the established Church of England, which in part explains radical reaction to the changes in British policy. Each new measure passed by Parliament touched a raw nerve. The Stamp and Currency acts aggravated the financial problems of the colony. Worse, the Stamp Act alienated the articulate provincial leadership. A stamp placed upon printed matter—letters, legal papers, newspapers—became unpopular with the merchants and lawyers who were influential in their communities. Its repeal in 1766 demonstrated that united resistance combined with ineffective enforcement of the law could reverse Parliament's decisions.

The passage of the Townshend duties and the Tea Act met with similar unified response. However, it was the passage of the so-called Intolerable Acts in 1774 that created a groundswell of revolutionary sentiment. By closing the port of Boston and taking control of the government of Massachusetts, the British ministry had made a fatal step in alienating a large portion of the people

of New Jersey as well as the other colonies. This was an attack not only upon the people of Massachusetts but upon the New England system of free government. For the many Jerseymen with family and church ties in the Bay Colony, a massive expression of sympathy and support developed. The committee of correspondence in Monmouth County communicated with the committee of Boston. Even the pacifist Quakers offered support to their brethren in Massachusetts. These measures were so unpopular that Governor William Franklin expressed his disapproval to the ministry.

The Quebec Act of 1774 was not one of the Intolerable Acts but New Jersey inhabitants viewed it as part of a British effort to end civil and religious freedom. Although the measure granting religious toleration to Roman Catholics applied only to Canada, the issues of taxation and parliamentary power were intertwined with religion. The act was considered, according to one patriot, an attempt by “a corrupt and venal ministry” to establish “the Popish Religion” in Canada. Anglicans did nothing to assuage these fears; they continued to profess loyalty to their king and church and to press for an American bishop. Despite the fact that there is no evidence of a coordinated British effort to end the civil and religious liberties of Americans in 1774, many New Jersey Baptists, Presbyterians and Dutch Reformed believed it existed. Their view of reality, however distorted, was a factor in the course of events.

From 1774 to 1776 New Jersey’s patriots began to form a united opposition to royal government. Town and county committees issued resolves against British policy. The meeting of representatives of the counties at New Brunswick in July 1774 signified the rise of a patriot leadership. The meeting of the First Continental Congress in September 1774 associated the Whigs of New Jersey with the intercolonial resistance movement. In May 1775 the First Provincial Congress of New Jersey was held in Trenton. Convening shortly after bloodshed at Lexington and Concord, it was a sign that New Jersey’s revolutionaries were ready to take government into their own hands. The Provincial Congress issued orders to raise troops and taxes and became the de facto government of the colony. With the arrest of Governor William Franklin on June 19, 1776, royal government in the colony ended. The overthrow of British power was completed with

the adoption of a state constitution on July 2, 1776. This revolutionary train of events occurred only thirteen years after New Jersey soldiers had fought for their king in the French and Indian War (1756-1763).

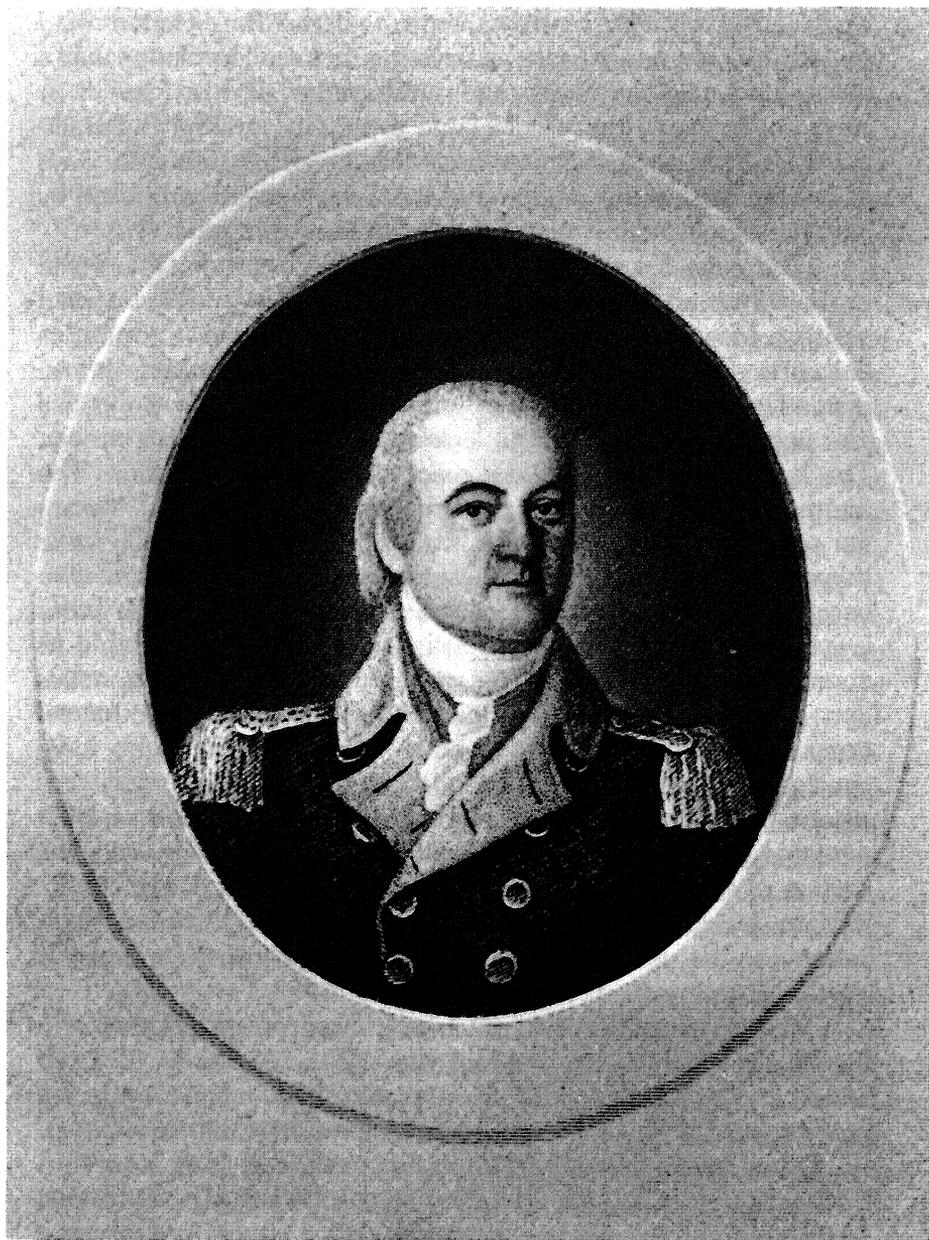
No one really knows how many New Jersey citizens were supporters of the new government. There are records of forty-five thousand men (with duplication) who served in the Continental army, state troops and militia. There are incomplete vouchers and receipts for supplies given or sold to the state troops and to General Washington's army. There are records of those who became state assemblymen, county freeholders, judges and sheriffs. However, there may have been many vocal supporters of independence who left no record of their attachment. On the other hand, there were those who were pressured into supporting the new government, which continually had to deal with the problem of allegiance. Those loyal to King George III remained a threat throughout the war. The establishment of two newspapers, the *New-Jersey Gazette* at Burlington in 1777 and the *New-Jersey Journal* at Chatham in 1779, shows that the leadership saw the need for propaganda to persuade the people of the state to continue their war efforts. In approximate figures and with great reservation we might estimate that about 50 percent of the people of Monmouth, Essex, Middlesex, Morris and Somerset counties were patriots. With British forces often stationed in Bergen County, it is difficult to judge how many Bergen patriots remained silent during British occupation. In West Jersey the presence of a large number of pacifist Quakers, as well as members of the Anglican Church, suggests that well under 50 percent there supported the war.

Who were the Whigs? Presbyterians, Baptists and members of the liberal *Coetus* party of the Dutch Reformed Church were most fearful of continued allegiance to Great Britain. The letters and records of the era are filled with examples of the definition of "liberty" as a defense of "Rights and Privileges Both Civil and Religious, Against Our Cruel Enimies." In an anonymous letter to the wife of a Loyalist of New Brunswick, "A mechanic" commented: "Mr. Legrange used to say the church to which he belongs [Anglican] was in danger of being destroyed. Let him read the New Constitution of this Province . . . the Presbyterians are not such Devils as you formerly imagined." The exiled former governor of

New Jersey, William Franklin, wrote that the Presbyterians had misled the common people by stressing that the Revolution was a defense of religious liberty and privilege in order to gain their support. To many the war became a puritan crusade. Entertainments such as horse racing and gambling were discouraged. Days of fasting, prayer, humiliation and thanksgiving were proposed by both the clergy and the new governor, William Livingston.

There are few other significant differences between the profile of the Whigs and that of the people who fled to British occupied territory. Most royal officials and East and West Jersey proprietors fled; however, John Stevens, with his son, John Stevens, Jr., remained and continued as a member of the Legislative Council (the upper house of the state legislature) in the new government. The large landowners did not react as an economic group. The Skinner and Kearny families became Loyalists; yet William Alexander served as a major general in the Continental army. There were lawyers such as William Livingston and William Paterson who became important members of the new government while other lawyers such as David Ogden and Cortlandt Skinner became its enemies. Some new immigrants without roots in their communities departed for the British lines, but others joined the Continental army. Among the leaders on both sides were men who were intelligent, literate and informed about events. They made decisions based on their understanding of the dispute and on their personal involvement in it. Ideas and convictions moved the leaders of society, in many cases even at the risk of personal ruin. William Livingston, Whig, and William Franklin, Loyalist, both believed in the righteousness of their respective causes and risked life, family and property for them.

This composite profile contained many exceptions. One of the least likely of New Jersey's Whigs was William Alexander, or Lord Stirling as he preferred to be called, an Anglican and an East Jersey Proprietor who hardly fit the pattern of the revolutionary leader. His father had bequeathed him a large estate in New York and New Jersey. In 1756 he was appointed surveyor general of East Jersey, and in the same year he began a long tenure as a member of the governor's Provincial Council. He was a frequent visitor to London and, with the self-appointed title of nobility he claimed from a Scottish earldom, assumed a position among New Jersey's



*William Alexander, or, as he preferred, Lord Stirling (1726-1783).
Courtesy New Jersey Historical Society.*

elite. He was a busy land speculator and owned shares in such enterprises as the Hibernia Iron Mine in Bergen County. Financial troubles after 1760 forced him to sell portions of his real estate. Despite his cordial relationship with the last royal governor, William Franklin, Stirling severed his connections with Great Britain and resigned from the council in 1775, a decision that was neither quick nor easy. His friendship with George Washington and his bonds of politics and marriage with the Livingston family may have influenced him. As events moved from protest to violence in 1775, Stirling accepted a colonel's commission in the Somerset County militia. He remarked: "To be thus called forth at a time when their dearest rights are invaded, to take so prominent a part in their defense, cannot but excite the most grateful feelings of one who has ever been a friend of the liberties of mankind."

On November 7, 1775, Stirling received an appointment in the Continental army. He helped in the preparation of the defense of New York City. In the battle of Long Island he was taken prisoner, and on October 7, 1776, he was released. He remained with Washington's army and fought at the battle of White Plains (October 28), and he led the rear guard in the army's retreat across New Jersey in November and December. In the surprise attack on Trenton on December 26, he played a major role. Illness prevented his return to active duty until February 1777. He spent his winters with Washington and the freezing soldiers at Valley Forge (1777-1778) and Morristown (1779-1780). Known for his intense loyalty to Washington, he discouraged efforts to undermine the commander's authority. He was a leader in the battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. Declining health prevented his continued activity as a field commander after 1779. A raid on Staten Island in January 1780 took a heavy toll on Stirling's men and on his own precarious health. He was given command of the Northern Department in 1782 and was stationed at Albany. On January 15, 1783, he died of pneumonia and was buried in Albany. A proprietor, an Anglican, and a member of the Provincial Council, William Alexander is a reminder that, despite the profile of the average Whig, the revolutionary spirit at times activated those tied by politics and religion to Great Britain.

Most Whigs had participated in political life before 1776. Many had been county freeholders, assemblymen or town clerks. This is

crucial in understanding the success of the new government; in emerging from its colonial status, New Jersey had a reservoir of able leaders trained and experienced in government. Moreover, these men were products of a representative system in the legislature and in town and county government. Unlike the members of the council and admiralty courts, who were appointed by the British ministry, they were accustomed to responding to the people who elected them. Finally most of the patriot leaders were established members of their communities with deep-rooted ties to church and family.

The political revolution of 1776 changed the shape and nature of New Jersey's government. A number of royal officials left as did county judges and town clerks. Their flight created a vacuum of leadership that was filled by newcomers and those previously holding lesser offices. Over 75 percent of the county and provincial officials in the late colonial period (1770-1775) had left office by 1777. Quakers and Anglicans, who had been prominent in politics in the period 1770-1776, were conspicuously absent from the new state government. Presbyterians, Baptists and members of the Dutch Reformed Church filled their places. In the town of Newark, Anglicans had held all provincial and county positions before the war; Presbyterians controlled 85 percent of the offices from 1776 to 1783. The Anglican officeholders' fall from power accompanied the demise of English rule in New Jersey.

Little change took place in the occupational background of the leadership. As under colonial rule, most leaders were prosperous farmers, and there was a substantial minority of professionals, especially lawyers. Francis Barber of Elizabethtown, a teacher, became a colonel in the New Jersey Brigade (the New Jersey regiments of the Continental army). William Livingston was a member of the legal profession in New York and New Jersey before the Revolution. David Brearly of Allentown was among the relatively few Anglicans who put political conviction above religious affiliation to join the Revolution. He served as an officer in the New Jersey Brigade until 1779, when he was elected chief justice of the state Supreme Court. On September 7, 1780, in the case of *Holmes vs. Walton*, he ruled that the state constitution was superior to legislative statutes, a landmark in the evolution of judicial review and constitutional law. Dr. John Cochran, an early supporter of

American independence, was a physician who was appointed surgeon general of the Continental army for the Middle Atlantic region. A constant critic of the poor conditions and treatment of wounded soldiers, he was appointed in 1781 director general of the hospitals of the United States.

The system of beliefs that activated the Whigs was important in the formation of their constitution and in their legislative activity. The patriot leaders were not democrats in the modern sense of the word. They did not believe that political power and office-holding should be entrusted to those with little standing in their community. Standing implied property and wealth. The new state constitution stipulated that members of the Legislative Council be worth £1,000 of real or personal property, and £500 was required of an assemblyman. Taking into account conditions of inflation and the prevalence of even higher property restrictions under the former colonial government, this represented a liberalization of colonial laws. However, even a voter (freeholder) had to be worth £50. High-ranking officers in the army were generally men of wealth with good family connections. The young and poor rarely had a share of political power or military leadership.

William Livingston, John Witherspoon, Elias Boudinot and other leaders of the Revolution in New Jersey, through the force of their ideas and actions, exercised great influence over the lives of others. Yet the essence of leadership lay in gaining the support of the people. Livingston could issue directives, but he relied upon the many lesser officials to execute them and upon the citizenry to obey them. The authority of the new state depended on the ability and support of local constables, tax assessors and justices of the peace. Although there were times and places where the state government was ignored, usually due to the proximity of British troops, it survived and gained the allegiance of the people. While the people did not vote directly for their governor, who was chosen annually by the legislature, their support kept Livingston in office until his death in 1790.

We must turn to the followers, the other patriots, to understand how ultimate victory was achieved and independence confirmed. Many served in the military. The law required all men between the ages of sixteen and fifty to serve in the local militia. There were exemptions for age and illness. Those who failed to

turn out for monthly training or for active duty were fined as delinquents. Those who refused to pay their fines were liable to have the equivalent in property seized. Militia service was vitally important in winning the war. There were numerous raids on the coast of New Jersey by British troops and Loyalists; they were often thwarted by the rapid arrival of the local militia. At some major battles—for example, Springfield (June 23, 1780)—the tenacity of the militia helped turn the tide. This duty created great hardship for small and marginal farmers. A month's tour at harvest time, while crops rotted in the fields, could bring disastrous results the next year. Fortunately for the new state government, the burdens were never severe enough to cause the collapse of this local levy system. One reason may be that the men generally chose their commanding officers and served with their kinsmen and neighbors. In addition, they were not only aiding the cause but also protecting their own families and homes.

Many New Jersey Whigs volunteered for indefinite service in the Continental army and state troops. Elias Dayton is representative of the many men whose lives were disrupted by prolonged military service. Dayton was a merchant and member of the Presbyterian Church of Elizabethtown. In 1774 he was a consistent supporter of the boycott of British goods demanded by the Continental Congress. In 1775 he helped to raise men for the new army. He was instrumental in the capture of the British supply ship, *Blue Mountain Valley*, in January 1776. His son Jonathan soon joined him in his military endeavors. Both fought in the campaigns of 1776 for control of New York State. Elias Dayton participated in many other far-flung and bloody battles. He helped to quell the Indians of Pennsylvania and to impede the advance of British units at Springfield. Despite years away from home and shop, Dayton continued to serve after 1780. He marched with his brigade of 1,328 men to be involved in the Virginia campaign of 1781, which ended at Yorktown. His zealous devotion to his state and country earned him a promotion to brigadier general in 1783. After the war, he remained active in his general store, as a trustee of his church, and as a member of the state assembly and the congress. He was one of the many Jersey men who were willing to risk personal safety and wealth for the new nation.

Other Whigs supported the Revolution by selling supplies,

paying taxes, serving on juries and running local government. The Revolution was won in the countryside among the people. If the majority of the people of New Jersey had taken the oath of loyalty offered by General William Howe, British commander in chief, on November 30, 1776, the army and the new state government would have collapsed. Without support or supplies there would have been no war effort or civil authority. This is not to deny that some Jerseymen sat on the fence waiting to see which side would emerge victorious, nor does it dismiss those who, by their separation from immediate involvement, sat out the war. Enough of the people of New Jersey, through hardship and sacrifice, aided the new government and its military forces sufficiently to allow them to survive.

The agricultural abundance of the Passaic and Raritan valleys attracted both the American and British armies. The British and their Hessian and Loyalist supporters depended mainly on supplies from overseas. They raided for forage (supplies of agricultural products). British war maps of northern Monmouth County noted where grain could be taken and cattle seized. On the march or in encampment the British army also deprived the Continental army of crops and work teams by making ample use of the resources of East Jersey as a supplementary supply center. At the conclusion of a British raid, the retreating troops burned houses and crops in their path.

For the American forces, procurement of grain and foodstuffs, as well as wagons, bedding and draught animals, from New Jersey was vital to the survival of the army. A large proportion of George Washington's correspondence dealt with the supply situation. During the years 1775-1781 New Jersey was a major source of supply. Quartermasters often relied upon East Jersey when they were unable to procure ample supplies in New York, Pennsylvania or New England. During the winter encampments at Morristown (1777 and 1779-1780) and Middlebrook (1778-1779), the region kept the army alive.

Although many farmers were ardent patriots, often they were reluctant to sell their produce. Washington urged the justices of the peace in each county to use their influence in the purchase of supplies. Great demand and lack of faith in the state certificates and Continental currency made the prices of foodstuffs high.

Private persons often bought crops needed by the army by offering hard coin. The inflationary spiral created difficulty because the farmer abhorred the new government's paper money as it depreciated to the point of being almost worthless, and the army contractors usually could not meet his demand for hard coin. Efforts to fix prices also met resistance. A Monmouth County farmer defended his patriotism, despite selling his produce to a private buyer, by noting that he had the right to a fair price for it. The issuance of certificates that promised to reimburse the farmer in hard coin at a later date only partially alleviated the situation.

Although the correspondence of exasperated generals and harried quartermasters often described the farmers of East Jersey as being disloyal, the unremitting warfare and internal disruption had created great problems for the inhabitants. Farmers may have supported the new government, but they could survive only by sowing and harvesting their crops to raise enough to feed their families or else face starvation. Agricultural surplus may have meant prosperity in peacetime, but in wartime it was essential. In addition, crops and livestock were tempting targets for all sides. The time needed to cultivate fields often prevented those who could have helped the army from carting supplies or providing oxen and horses. Laborers were in great demand to build shelters, transport supplies and work in the ironworks and saltworks of Morris and Monmouth counties. Workers at the Hibernia and Ringwood ironworks and the Pennsylvania Saltworks in Toms River were exempted from militia duty. Many laborers and artisans were poor and would have starved if they had depended upon the worthless paper money they received to buy food for their families. Many shoemakers, tailors and weavers were reluctant to leave their shops for long periods. Jerseymen found patriotism difficult in an era of inflation and economic insecurity.

One New Jersey Whig who had to deal with the problems of supply was James Caldwell. He exemplifies the many Presbyterian clergymen who gave heart, mind and body to the revolutionary cause. Caldwell was one of many graduates of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) found among the patriots. After being ordained a minister in 1761, he was installed as the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Elizabethtown. There he began his association with the parishioners who were to become the leaders

of the new state: Abraham Clark, William Livingston, Elias Boudinot and Elias Dayton. With the formation of the New Jersey Brigade, Caldwell became chaplain. He traveled with the Brigade to New York in 1776 and later returned to New Jersey as a member of the quartermaster department. His reputation and influence aided his efforts to purchase supplies for the army stationed in the Middle Atlantic states. His personal influence was crucial in convincing local farmers to accept the questionable certificates for their crops and livestock. His wife Hannah was killed in the British attack on Connecticut Farms (modern Union) in June 1780. Caldwell's humanitarian concern led to his own death on November 24, 1781. While helping a woman to pass from British territory to Elizabethtown he was inadvertently shot by an American soldier. He left nine orphaned children.

Various inequities and questionable activities occurred in the ranks of the patriot cause. Quartermasters were often accused of lining their pockets at public expense. Personal rivalries and jealousy impeded the effectiveness of New Jersey's officer corps. Soldiers deserted one brigade to accept a bounty in another. Officers withheld pay from their men. In the Morristown encampments, officers and their ladies attended parties while soldiers froze at Jockey Hollow. Soldiers desperately exchanged paper money with speculators who eventually were paid in hard coin. Goods from British ships captured on the coasts were divided up among the local militia as a prize. After the war, officers were granted pensions for service while many former enlisted men fell deeper into debt. Loyalist property that was confiscated and sold often ended in the hands of wealthy patriots. Political favors and intrigues were part of the new state government. The Whigs of Monmouth County hanged suspected Loyalists without trial.

To be sure, no laws prevented a man in public service from increasing his personal wealth. William Paterson was a vital force in the success of the new government, while at the same time he improved his law practice. John Stevens, Jr., was an able treasurer while he enriched his landholdings. These and many other men served a personal interest while making a valuable contribution to the survival of the state. Paterson was a legal student of Richard Stockton at Princeton. Although a young man, he was appointed secretary to the Provincial Congress in 1775. In 1776 he became

the state's first attorney general. He was able to practice law while holding that office, and he used his expanded influence to increase the number of his cases. He thereby greatly enlarged his salary, particularly since he often represented other members of the government in private suits. He declined a place in the Continental Congress in 1780, on grounds that his law practice would suffer.

John Stevens, Jr., was appointed state treasurer on July 15, 1776, and served in that difficult post until 1783. He received little help in confronting the many financial problems of the state. Debts and inflation eroded the earning capacity of all residents of the state, including Stevens. His close connections with other civil officials compensated for the declining value of his salary. When Cornelius Haring, agent in Bergen County for the sale of the property of fleeing Tories, offered the large estate and mansion of William Bayard for sale in 1784, Stevens was able to increase his landholdings greatly. The land he purchased on March 16, 1784, and subsequent smaller purchases included most of what became Hoboken and Weehawken.

Patriotism and personal profit were often inseparable. However, most New Jersey Whigs, from governor to marginal farmer, were men of conviction who made great sacrifices and were loyal to their cause.

Perhaps the profile of the New Jersey patriot will be made clearer by focusing on two individuals. One was an obscure follower, the other an important leader.

Nathaniel Baldwin, born in 1750, was a resident of Newark. His family, who had come from Connecticut with the first settlers in 1666, had participated in the New Jersey riots over land titles and quitrents in the mid-eighteenth century. Baldwin was a member of the First Presbyterian Church. Since shoemaking was not a lucrative trade, he was probably not wealthy. Many of his kinsmen were large farmers and merchants who had need of his services. Since we possess none of his letters we know none of his thoughts. He was not elected a leader in his town. We know of his existence only from his gravestone, his name on tax lists, and his account book. Baldwin, along with most of his church and family, supported American independence. He became a private in the Essex County militia. The fact that he did not enlist in the Continental army suggests his reluctance to be far from his shop for extended periods.

When the British army threatened, he was on active duty. Militiamen were activated for frequent tours of duty in Essex County, and Nathaniel's shop was left unattended when he served. His account book reveals that his income and transactions declined during the war. Nathaniel Baldwin was typical of those obscure Whigs who ratified American independence at great cost.

Nathaniel Scudder of Freehold, born in 1733, was also a Presbyterian descended from New Englanders. Aside from these similarities, little of Scudder's life resembled Nathaniel Baldwin's. He was a substantially wealthy physician and a respected leader of his community. Before the war he had a lucrative practice. As the Revolution approached, he became a member of Freehold's committee of correspondence, which issued resolves in sympathy with the people of Boston in 1774. With the formation of the state government, Scudder became Speaker of the General Assembly. In November 1776 he was appointed a colonel in the Monmouth County militia. Tory raids resulted in the destruction of some of his personal property. In 1777 he was chosen as a delegate to the Continental Congress, a post he held until 1779. In a poignant letter to John Stevens he stated the philosophy of a Whig in public service:

I early entered into this Contest, firmly resolved never to retire from such Service, as my Country should call me to, untill the Liberties of my Country (dearer to me than Fortune or Life) should be firmly established, or untill real Necissity should compel me to it. . . . This has added so much to the Reduction of the small Remains of my Private Fortune, to the Distresses and uneasiness of my Family. . . .

He explained that since his wealth fell short of that of most other delegates he wished to decline another term. But his retirement was shortlived. He wrote to his son in October 1780 that he was led to serve in the General Assembly once again due to "the imminent Dangers threatening the County and indeed the whole State." A year later, a party of Loyalists made one of their frequent raids on the people of Monmouth. They penetrated to Colts Neck where they were pursued back to their boats by the inhabitants of Freehold. In an attack on the Loyalist rear guard, Scudder was shot and killed. He was buried in the graveyard of Old Tennent Church.

Nathaniel Scudder, Nathaniel Baldwin, James Caldwell and Elias Dayton were but a few of the many New Jersey Whigs. We have tried to describe why they joined a revolutionary movement. Fear of British oppression through taxation and the threat posed by the Anglican Church forced many Presbyterians, Baptists and others into opposition, protest and violence. What did the leaders and followers have in common? Fear of British action was certainly important, but paramount was that they wanted or accepted change. Some were conservatives and wished only for independence and the maintenance of their rights and liberties. Others may have fought for expanded personal opportunity. They were the activists who risked all that they had in defending their cherished liberties and in creating a brighter future. Wealthy or poor, flaming radical or reluctant revolutionary, they all contributed to American independence and the survival of the new state.

For Further Reading

The ample literature on New Jersey's role in the Revolution concentrates disproportionately on military and political events. The following works are narrative descriptions of political events and personalities: Donald L. Kemmerer, *Path to Freedom: The Struggle for Self-Government in Colonial New Jersey, 1703-1776* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940); Leonard Lundin, *Cockpit of the Revolution: The War for Independence in New Jersey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940; reprinted by Octagon Books, New York, 1972). Richard P. McCormick has included a brief discussion of the Revolution in *Experiment in Independence: New Jersey in the Critical Period, 1781-1789* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950) and *New Jersey from Colony to State 1609-1789* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, Co., 1964). The latter is the best one-volume history of the colony and new state. Also useful are John E. Pomfret, *Colonial New Jersey: A History* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973); Francis B. Lee, *New Jersey as a Colony and as a State*, vol. 2 (New York: Publishing Society of New Jersey, 1902); and Alfred H. Bill, *New Jersey and the Revolutionary War* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, Co., 1964). These works will provide the reader with ample

information about principal leaders and battles. For an outline of important events see Dennis P. Ryan, *New Jersey in the American Revolution, 1763-1783: A Chronology* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1974).

The annual New Jersey History Symposium of the New Jersey Historical Commission has resulted in the publication of recent research. See in particular the papers of Larry R. Gerlach and Adrian C. Leiby in William C. Wright, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution: Political and Social Conflict* (rev. ed.; Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1974), pp. 10-39, and those of David A. Bernstein and Dennis P. Ryan in William C. Wright, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution II* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1973), pp. 12-44. For specific treatments of William Paterson and Abraham Clark, see the papers of John E. O'Connor and Ruth Bogin in William C. Wright, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution III* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1976). Mark E. Lender, in the same volume, offers reasons why Jerseyans joined or failed to join the militia and Continental army.

A model study of patriots in Bergen County is Adrian C. Leiby, *The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley: The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground, 1775-1783* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962). This local history is valuable for a discussion of the conflict within a society that was inflamed and reinforced by war.

Specific matters dealt with in this pamphlet have been the subjects of several books and articles. The evolution of colonial culture is the subject of Peter O. Wacker, "New Jersey's Cultural Landscape Before 1800," *Proceedings of the Second Annual Symposium of the New Jersey Historical Commission* (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1971), pp. 35-62. The proprietary disputes are handled by John E. Pomfret in *New Jersey Proprietors and Their Lands* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964), and Gary Horowitz in "New Jersey Land Riots: 1745-1755," in William C. Wright, ed., *Economic and Social History of Colonial New Jersey* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1974), pp. 24-33. For a discussion of the conflict over an Anglican bishop in America, see Nelson R. Burr, *The Anglican Church in New Jersey* (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1954), and Carl Bridenbaugh,

Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962). Little has been written on the reaction of other denominations in New Jersey to the American Revolution.

Other pamphlets in this series that deal with prominent Whigs are Carl E. Prince, *William Livingston: New Jersey's First Governor*; Donald W. Whisenhunt, *Elias Boudinot*; and John T. Cunningham, *New Jersey's Five Who Signed*, which deals with New Jersey's signers of the Declaration of Independence. For a discussion of religious motivations affecting Whigs and Loyalists see Edward J. Cody, *The Religious Issue in Revolutionary New Jersey*. All four were published by the New Jersey Historical Commission in 1975.

Finally, for the words of participants themselves, the reader may turn to Larry R. Gerlach, ed., *New Jersey in the American Revolution, 1763-1783: A Documentary History* (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1975).

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