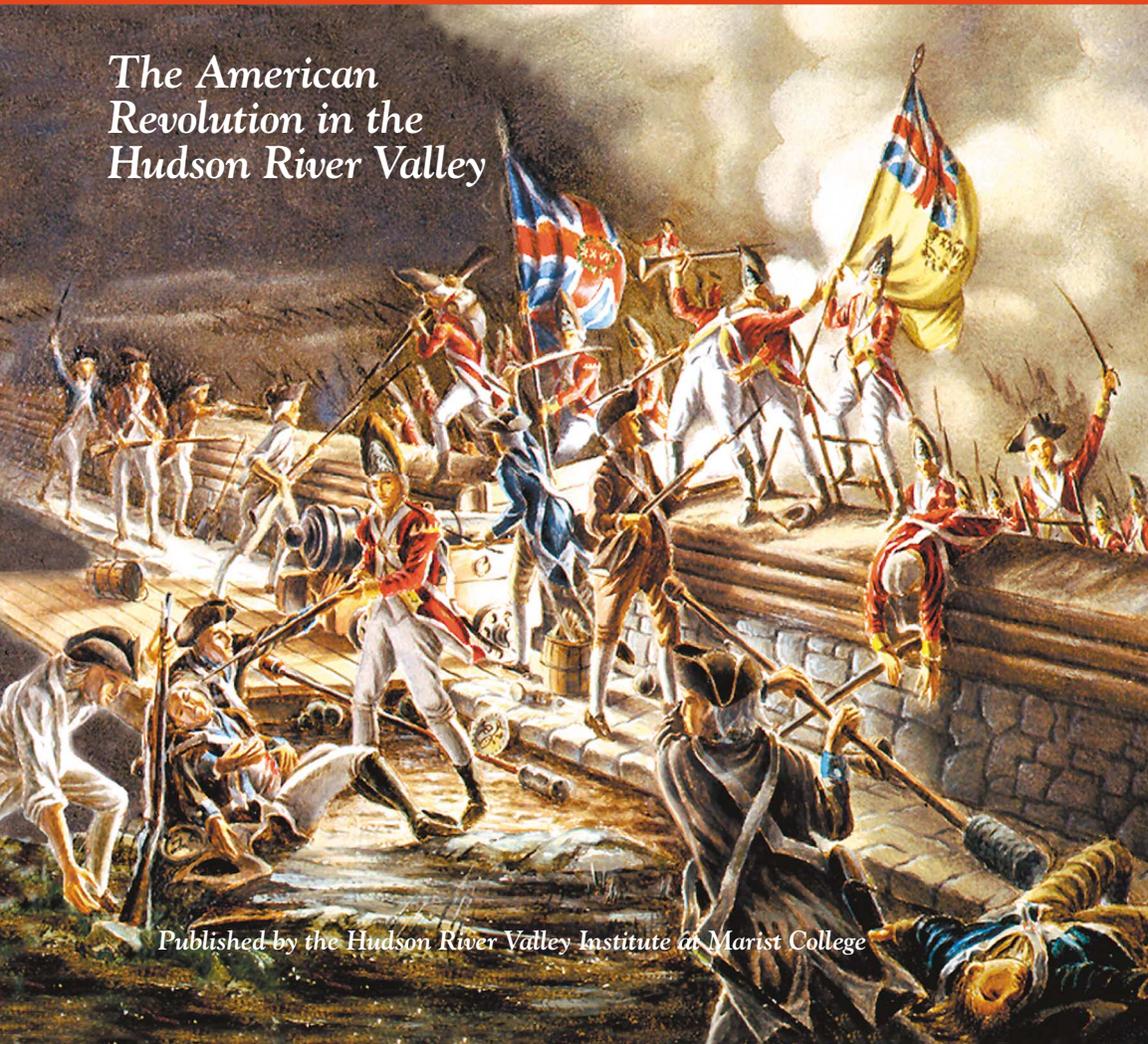


SUMMER 2003

THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

*The American
Revolution in the
Hudson River Valley*



Published by the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College

THE
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RIVER
VALLEY
REVIEW

A Journal of Regional Studies

MARIST

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Call for Essays

The Hudson River Valley Review is interested in considering essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its pre-history, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself.

Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long, along with a computer disk with the clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

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From the Director

It is with great pleasure that the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College, by special agreement with Bard College, begins publishing *The Hudson River Valley Review*. For many years, the journal was published by Bard under the expert editorial direction of Richard C. Wiles, David C. Pierce and William Wilson. The goal of the *Review* is much the same as in the past: to present the most recent scholarship on all aspects of the Hudson River Valley's unique history and culture. The *Review* will continue to publish issues twice a year, with one issue each year built around a special theme. This premier issue focuses on the American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley. Future special issues will be devoted to Hudson Valley architecture and the Hudson River School of art.

Thomas S. Wermuth

Director, Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College

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THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

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Courtesy of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation*



*Panorama of the Twin Forts, Montgomery and Clinton, on the Hudson
(Painting by Jack Meadi; courtesy of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation)*

Split Wide and Split Deep— The Revolutionary Hudson Valley

Edward Countryman

The American Revolution was the real thing, fully as disruptive, painful, and transforming as any revolution in the modern world. But despite generations of historians' hard work, it remains difficult to convince Americans that this was so. Somehow, we think the Founding Generation was different. They escaped all the misery and conflict that plagued the English in the 1640s, the French in the 1790s, and twentieth-century people from China to Cuba. United and harmonious, they faced an external enemy, abandoned the monarchy, and experimented with republicanism until they found a solution to whatever problems they faced. What they wrought—the United States Constitution—has endured. A remarkable elite led them into the conflict with Britain and then led them out. Our revolution was unique. Or so it seems.

I certainly thought that way when I began the doctoral project that led to my own New York book.¹ But as I encountered the evidence that Revolutionary New Yorkers left behind, I grew more and more puzzled. Their actual record just did not fit this perceived image. Finally I realized that the great Cornell historian Carl Becker had been correct all along. Writing nearly a century ago, Becker described New York's revolution not just as a struggle for independence, but also as a profound internal conflict.² Becker dealt only with the period prior to independence, and mostly with New York City. Carrying the subject through the war, the creation of the state government, the disputes about what kind of place independent New York should be, and the movement for the U.S. Constitution—as I sought to do—only bore out his insight.

I wrote then about white men. Now we can see that, one way or another, the Revolution transformed everybody it touched: white, Native American, and African-American; downstate and upstate; urban, rural, and frontier; female and male. We can see as well how all these different kinds of people transformed the Revolution as they lived through it. Their American Revolution was exhilarating and liberating, but also profoundly frightening, very disruptive, and deeply painful. For some, it brought great opportunity; for others, just to survive was success enough. And for more, the Revolution meant great and permanent loss. Each of the essays collected here addresses these themes.

Barnet Schecter tells a story that is both familiar and strange. Virtually anybody who claims to know the Revolution's story can give the outline of General John Burgoyne's attempt to drive down the Champlain/Hudson corridor from Canada toward Albany, and eventually New York City. Burgoyne's great failure at Saratoga often is described as one of the world's truly historic battles, because the outcome brought the French in on the American side. That may overstate Saratoga's importance for diplomacy and alliance-making: there is good evidence that the French already had made their decision to intervene. Like Lincoln waiting for a victory over the South before he announced emancipation, Louis XIV and his advisors were merely waiting for the right moment to act.³ Schecter takes us into the backstabbing, the self-seeking, and the intrigues of the British commanders, Sir William Howe, Sir Henry Clinton, and Burgoyne. The larger thesis of his book, *Battle for New York*,⁴ is that the colony/state was "at the heart of the American Revolution." If it was, the Hudson Valley was the Revolution's aorta.

Both Schecter's pages and the firsthand evidence that survives from the Valley in 1777 show how close that aorta came to being cut. Burgoyne's was not the only invasion. Another expedition burst through the defenses at the Hudson Highlands in October and plundered its way north until it captured and burned Kingston. It stopped there, where it scattered and nearly destroyed the newly created state government. Clinton, directing events from his headquarters in New York City, and his field commander, General John Vaughan, may never have intended to aid Burgoyne, who was trapped in the consequences of his own hubris. But taken together, the expeditions of Burgoyne and Vaughan, along with Barry St. Leger's Mohawk Valley incursion, terrified the people of New York's shrinking Patriot zone. When Burgoyne fell into the trap that Horatio Gates laid for him, and when St. Leger and Vaughan turned around, they had come very close to ending New York's revolution altogether. The ruins of Fort Montgomery, whose historic events and recovery for modern visitors are described here by James Johnson and Gregory Smith, are mute witnesses to a terrible time.

The Valley people's sense of nearly unbearable crisis comes through most strongly in the records of Albany County's Committee of Safety.⁵ The very phrase "Committee of Safety" is frightening. It conjures up images of the French Terror, as that revolution's hapless victims faced former neighbors who had become implacable enemies. Even more frightening is the name of the Revolutionary New York government's political police force, the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies. Their records, and those kept by the county committees, show whole populations stripped of firearms for "disaffection," entire villages called for interrogation, and hapless individuals arrested at midnight and exiled to the

British lines or imprisoned underground at the Simsbury mines in Connecticut.⁶ State policy shifted from just trying to control Loyalists and neutrals to punishing them strongly. So many anti-Loyalist statutes passed through the legislature and the Council of Revision that they filled a good-sized volume. A London printer assembled such a volume in 1786 to demonstrate that Revolutionary New York had no intention of letting up on the king's friends within its borders.⁷ He did not need to comment; just publishing the statutes was enough.

Kenneth Shefsiek's moving tale of the ordeal of Roeloff Josiah Eltinge shows what could happen to someone who fell into the conspiracy commissioners' hands. Eltinge does not seem to have been an outright Loyalist. He was not condemned by name in the 1779 statute that exiled many Loyalists on pain of death and seized their property. There is no evidence that he harbored British spies, or joined a Tory guerrilla group. When it was all over, he did not flee to Canada or Britain (or further away) rather than accept the Revolution's triumph, and he did not have to plead for compensation from the British government. His initial arrest was for nothing more than refusing Continental currency. But by refusing it, he was laying bare something deeper within himself. Clearly, this was a man in real pain as he faced the need to choose, one way or another. By no means was he the only New Yorker who would have preferred to hang back.

The currency that Eltinge refused was offered to him by Esther Hasbrouck Wirtz. Shefsiek shows that her family and Eltinge's had a long history of mutual hostility. Perhaps, as he suggests, what came of her offer and his refusal was just small-town nastiness, writ large. But Thomas Wermuth demonstrates that her involvement, as a woman, had more about it than happenstance or past quarrels. We cannot go far into her mind, but all over the northern states women were finding political voices and roles.

In many instances, what they said and did involved their right to purchase necessary goods like salt and bread and flour at what the community called just prices. Wermuth describes many such events in the Hudson Valley. "Bread riots" of this sort had a long history in the Atlantic world. We can find them in Georgian London, in Hapsburg Vienna, and even in Bogota under the Spanish Bourbon monarchy. There is a direct link between Esther Hasbrouck Wirtz offering Eltinge her depreciating paper money for what she needed and the hungry women of Paris confronting "the Baker" (Louis XVI), "the Baker's wife" (Marie-Antoinette), and their "little boy" (the Dauphin). Eltinge's refusal of Wirtz's money directly prefigures the Queen's contemptuous "They have no bread? Let them eat cake." Marie-Antoinette paid by far the higher price. But Roeloff Josiah Eltinge of New Paltz, New York, suffered enough for doing much the same thing. Though Esther

Wirtz could not have known it, she and other women of the American Revolution were changing the course of very large human events. Like the more famous Abigail Smith Adams, Judith Sargent Murray, and Mercy Otis Warren, she was finding a voice of her own.

Listening to academic papers, donning eighteenth-century costume, honoring the Founders great and obscure, watching the fireworks: these are how we remember the American Revolution. We are right to do so. It does rank among modern history's great events, and it did bring permanent change. But living through it was not easy for anybody involved, as the record of what happened in the Revolutionary Hudson Valley shows.

1. Edward Countryman, *A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981).
2. Carl Lotus Becker, *The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1909).
3. See Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985) and Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980).
4. (New York: Walker, 2002).
5. *Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence, 1775-1778* ed. James Sullivan (2 vols., Albany: University of the State of New York, 1923-1925).
6. *Minutes of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York, Albany County Sessions, 1778-1781* ed. Victor Hugo Paltsits (Albany, 3 vols., University of the State of New York, 1909-1910) and *Minutes of the Committee and of the first Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York, Dec. 11, 1776-Sept. 23, 1778*, ed. Dorothy C. Barck [*Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, vols. 57-58] (New York: Printed for the Society, 1924-25).
7. *Laws of the Legislature of the State of New York, in Force Against the Loyalists* (London: H. Reynell, 1786).

The American Revolution in the Hudson Valley—An Overview

Thomas S. Wermuth & James M. Johnson

Although the “shot heard ’round the world” that ignited the American Revolution occurred a few miles outside of Boston and the campaign that ended it took place in Virginia, the nexus of the conflict was New York’s Hudson River Valley. Throughout the war, officers on both sides made it their top priority to gain control of the Hudson River—and to keep hold of it at any cost.

As a result, the Hudson Valley—the virtual center of the colonies—hosted many key figures, battles, and political events throughout the eight years of war, and its final drama was played out here with the British evacuation of New York City on November 25, 1783. In the years leading up to the Revolution, the Sons of Liberty, as active in New York as they were in Massachusetts, printed broadsides, encouraged boycotts, rallied, rioted, and dumped British tea into New York Harbor. Patriot housewives throughout the Valley threw their own “tea parties” at the expense of merchants and Loyalist neighbors. The region’s social fabric was ripped apart, first by the struggle between the powerful coalitions of DeLanceys and Livingstons, and then by the clash between the Loyalists and Whigs (or Patriots).

The New York Provincial Congress established itself at the courthouse in White Plains in July 1776 and created the State of New York with its acceptance of the Declaration of Independence on July 9. New York adopted its constitution in Kingston on April 20, 1777, and on February 6, 1778, it ratified the Articles of Confederation, tying its fate to the rest of the United States of America.

Prelude to War

On the eve of the American Revolution, the Hudson River Valley was among the most fertile and productive regions in North America. Its grain, flour, and dairy products were sent all over the world. The port towns of Albany, Poughkeepsie, and Kingston were thriving commercial entrepôts that served as regional hubs in the vibrant agricultural trade with New York City.

The Hudson Valley had been settled primarily by the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, and the English soon thereafter, with some French Huguenots and Germans following. Much of the Hudson’s west bank was still ethnically

Timeline

- 1763 Treaty of Paris concludes French and Indian War
- 1765 Stamp Act Riots in New York, Albany, and Boston
- 1766 Stamp Act Repealed
- 1770 Boston Massacre
- 1773 Boston Tea Party
- 1774 Coercive (or Intolerable) Acts
Quebec Act
- 1775 Battle of Lexington (April); Battle of Bunker Hill (June)
- 1776 British Invasion of New York City
- 1777 Campaign for the Hudson River Valley
- 1778 Washington's Encampment at Pawling (Fredricksburg)
- 1779 Battle of Stony Point
- 1780 Fortress West Point opened
- 1781 Battle of Yorktown
- 1782 Washington's army encamped at New Windsor
- 1783 Evacuation Day (November 1783)

and culturally Dutch, perhaps three generations removed from leaving Europe. Dutch customs prevailed, the Dutch Reformed Church dominated, and while the Second Continental Congress was approving the Declaration of Independence, Dutch was spoken more regularly in many Hudson Valley towns than English. Indeed, through 1774 the Ulster town of Kingston (a mere three years away from being the state capital) kept its official records in Dutch.

As late as 1763, residents of the Hudson Valley still felt strong bonds to the king of England and his empire. A typical outpouring of this affection was the celebration in Kingston of George III's ascension to the throne in 1761. Hundreds of residents paraded through the streets and offered toasts and cannonades to "His most Royal and Sacred Majesty." ¹ Similar celebrations were held throughout the region.

Nevertheless, relations between England and the colonies began to sour. Following the French and Indian War, the British government levied new taxes on the American colonies that were intended to defray its large war debt. The Stamp Act of 1765, which imposed a tax on a variety of goods and services, was viewed suspiciously by Valley inhabitants, as well as other colonists. In towns throughout the region, residents resisted the implementation of the act, and in

Albany and New York City riots broke out in order to prevent the tax from going into effect.²

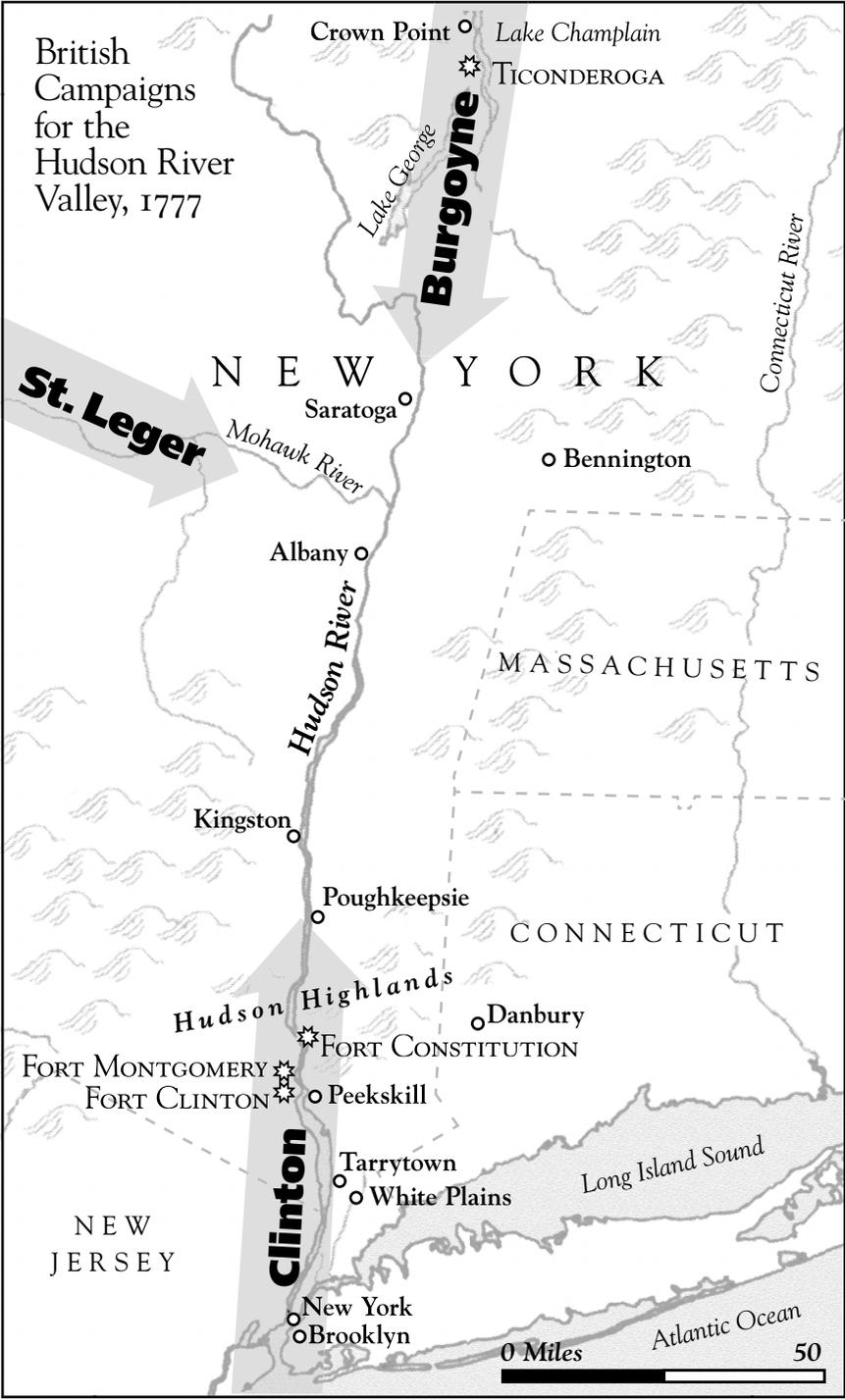
Calm returned to North America following the Stamp Act's repeal in 1766, and over the next several years there was a rapprochement of sorts between England and her colonies. Nevertheless, the quartering of British troops in Boston and New York inflamed tensions in both cities, leading to sporadic outbursts of violence. The Boston Massacre further ignited anti-British sentiment.

The primary debate in the 1770s continued to be over Britain's authority to tax the colonists. Britain asserted this right as essential to the process of governance. Although the colonial argument varied, in essence it recognized the empire's right to tax to regulate imperial relations, but not to raise revenue. Colonists generally agreed with Patrick Henry's famous declaration of "no taxation without representation." Such sentiment led to a variety of responses from British officials, one of the most interesting being the distinction between "actual" and "virtual" representation: The colonists were not physically represented in Parliament (and neither were many English subjects). However, the colonists *were* represented, so the argument ran, in the sense that Parliament represented the interests of all subjects of the realm.³

From 1770 through 1773, relations between the colonies and Britain were relatively stable, but events in late 1773 changed that. The newly enacted Tea Act, offering East Indian tea at reduced prices (and including a tax), inspired "tea parties" throughout the colonies, including the Hudson Valley. The most famous, of course, occurred in Boston, where members of the Sons of Liberty dressed as Mohawk Indians and dumped British tea overboard.⁴

The Coercive Acts of 1774, implemented to punish Boston following its Tea Party, ignited resistance throughout the colonies. New Yorkers had their own tea party on April 22, when "Mohawks" dumped tea from the ship *Hook* into New York harbor, forcing another ship, the *Nancy*, to return to England. In communities up and down the Hudson, committees of safety, observation, and inspection sprang into action to challenge recent British policies.⁵

Characteristic of this resistance was the Kingston Committee of Safety's anger over Parliament's attempt to establish "the Romish Religion in America," a feature of the Quebec Act of 1774. The Kingston committee was equally shocked by the "avowed design of the [British] ministry to raise a revenue in America." The New Windsor Committee of Observation articulated its fear of Parliament's desire to levy taxes "on us without our consent" and for asserting absolute legislative authority over the colonies. The committee resolved that such powers were "subversive of our natural and legal rights as British subjects, and that we would



be deficient in point of duty to our King and the British Constitution were we to yield in tame submission to them.”⁶

As war began in New England in 1775, the people of the Hudson Valley began to choose sides. Throughout the war, there were pockets of Loyalism in the region, but devotion to the Revolutionary cause remained strong. The Valley was able to muster several Continental and militia regiments.

The Campaigns for the Hudson River Valley

Control of the Hudson Valley was one of the primary strategic objectives of the British high command. The Valley’s defense was equally important to General George Washington, whose army was to spend more than a third of the war in (or in close proximity to) the region. In 1776, Washington stated that “the importance of the river in the present contest and the necessity of defending it, are so well understood that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them.” Whereupon he proceeded to enlarge upon those reasons, citing its strategic significance for transportation and communication, as well as the importance of its agricultural production.⁷

That July, the largest armada the British Empire had ever sent abroad entered New York Harbor. Five hundred ships carrying more than 34,000 British Regulars, sailors, and German mercenaries under the joint command of the brothers Howe, Admiral Richard and General Sir William, landed at the southern tip of Manhattan Island. Facing them across the East River, atop Brooklyn Heights, were some 20,000 Continentals and militia under Washington’s command.⁸

In late August, Howe’s army slipped around Washington and attacked from the rear. The Americans were driven across the river to Manhattan. In mid-September the two armies clashed again near Kip’s Bay, sending Washington’s army reeling northward up the island. In early October, the British again seized the advantage, striking Washington at Pell’s Point; later that month, the two armies battled to a draw at White Plains. In just three months, the Continental Army had been pushed out of New York City and into the lower Hudson Valley.⁹

The British engaged in several small raids in the mid-Valley in 1776 and early 1777. Their subsequent campaign to control the region consisted of an elaborate three-pronged invasion. The main force, under General John Burgoyne, was to depart from Canada and push its way south through the Adirondacks to Albany, where it was to meet up with a combined British-Indian force pushing eastward along the Mohawk Valley. The third force was to be an expeditionary unit under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, who had been left in command of New York

City when General Howe unexpectedly sailed south to Philadelphia in July 1777. Clinton's push up the Hudson aimed at either meeting with, or giving support to, Burgoyne's forces. Military scholars have often noted the lack of proper planning and coordination of this major invasion, whose failure led directly to the British defeat at Saratoga, "the turning point of the war."¹⁰

As Clinton's army made its way up the Hudson, about 1,500 soldiers from the 5th New York Regiment, Lamb's Artillery, and the Ulster and Orange county militia garrisoned Forts Montgomery and Clinton. The state's new governor, Brigadier General George Clinton, commanded the posts. His brother, James, commanded the troops at Fort Clinton. On the morning of October 6, after a day of fierce fighting, British troops captured both forts and spent the next several days destroying them, along with an iron chain that had been stretched across the Hudson there. The main part of the American force was able to escape.¹¹

Despite the British victory, Henry Clinton's troops suffered almost 200 casualties and were delayed by the action. They resumed their movement upriver and stopped at several points along the way, landing small units for limited forays against local militia units. British forces reached Kingston, the state capital, ten days later.

Advance British units approached Kingston before dawn on October 16. Many residents had already escaped in the days before the British arrival, and local militia were prepared to conduct a delaying action if large numbers of troops came ashore. Major General John Vaughan led a British raiding party of several hundred men that quickly drove local militia units west from the town in pre-dawn fighting. Determined to punish the region, British troops burned large portions of the town before departing later that afternoon. Henry Clinton pushed another ten miles upriver over the next few days, dropping landing parties at various points (including the Livingston estate at Clermont, which, with the nearby Belvedere, was burned to the ground) before heading back to New York City. By this time, Burgoyne had surrendered and Clinton's northward movement had been made irrelevant.¹²

Although there was limited military action in the mid-Valley in 1778, the Hudson remained the primary target of both British and American strategists. In May 1779, Henry Clinton attempted a second invasion, seizing Stony Point. However, Washington kept his army between Clinton and the northern stretches of the Valley, and on July 15 he sent a force under General "Mad" Anthony Wayne to drive the British from Stony Point. The surprise nighttime attack was a huge success, and all British troops in the vicinity retreated downriver in the fall.¹³

It was the importance of maintaining control of the Hudson that had led Washington, in 1778, to order construction of fortress West Point—a complex of forts and redoubts that he dubbed “the key of America.” A feature of the fortress was an iron chain, which was laid across the river to prevent any future British naval incursion upriver. In 1780, the British made one more attempt on the Hudson, when Henry Clinton opened secret negotiations with General Benedict Arnold, recently appointed commander of West Point, to gain control of the fort. Arnold’s plans were discovered when Clinton’s aide-de-camp, Major John Andre, was captured. He was hanged as a spy in Tappan; Arnold escaped to safety in New York City.¹⁴

In the last years of the war, the mid-Valley remained central to Washington’s plans. After the British were defeated at Yorktown, they continued to occupy New York City for two more years, and their continued threat to the Valley kept Washington and his army stationed nearby. The Continental Army encamped in southern Ulster County, in and around the town of New Windsor, while Washington himself took up headquarters a few miles north, at Newburgh. In the summer of 1781, the French commander, the Comte de Rochambeau, marched his 5,000-man army from Rhode Island to Philipsburg, in Westchester, to join the Continental Army, first in the siege of New York and then in the pivotal Yorktown Campaign in Virginia.

War and the Home Front

With the gradual collapse of New York’s colonial government, the committees of safety, observation, and inspection emerged to fill the vacuum of power. In most towns, these developed alongside existing town boards and governments. In many communities, they maintained a strong presence by exerting their influence not only in the political sphere, but also in the economic arena. The committees regulated prices, controlled the importation and exportation of goods, and set maximum- and minimum-wage rates for local labor.

Often the powers invested in the committees were greater than those that town officials possessed. In 1776, the Provincial Congress gave the committees the authority to tax and appoint tax collectors and assessors. During the war, the committees gradually gained additional powers and became the de facto governing authority in many Valley towns. Besides control over local taxation and legislation, they also assumed judicial and police powers. The committees could use their authority over local militia units to enforce their rulings.¹⁵

Usually, the committees did not have to resort to displays of power; they were able to employ community pressures against those suspected of unpatriotic actions

or of any activity seen as threatening. These punishments included public denunciations of those who were considered to be enemies of the cause, symbolic burnings of effigies, or boycotts of shopkeepers and tradesmen who seemed lukewarm to the Revolution. Committees instructed residents not to patronize businesses whose patriotism was suspect because “every shilling of property we put in their hands...enable them to purchase the chains to bind us in slavery.”¹⁶

The issues upon which committees expended the most energy tended to be economic. Food shortages, inflated prices, currency of questionable value, rising taxes, and, on the Hudson’s east bank, tenants demanding land redistribution all helped to shape some of the most revolutionary aspects of the Revolution. On the eve of the war, the local committees of observation supervised economic activities in their counties and towns. Initially, the role of the committees was to promote non-importation and the boycott of British goods. Once the war began and shortages and inflation became rampant, the local committees started to scrutinize and regulate the trade and economic activities of local shopkeepers to ensure that they engaged in business practices that promoted the war effort and supported a vibrant local economy.¹⁷

The End of the War

Following the American victory at Stony Point, the British never directly threatened the Hudson Valley again. (The last engagement in the region occurred in the summer of 1779, when Chief Joseph Brant, leading a mixed band of Mohawks and Loyalists, conducted a raid on Minisink.) Following their dramatic victory at Yorktown, Washington and the Continental Army spent the last two years of the war encamped at New Windsor and Newburgh. On November 25, 1783, Governor George Clinton led the Americans into New York City after the British evacuation. And on December 4, the commander in chief bid a tearful farewell to his officers of the Continental Army at Fraunces Tavern in Manhattan. The war that started in Massachusetts and had centered in New York at last ended there.

Notes

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4. Alfred Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston: Free Press, 1999), 99-107.
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7. Washington's comments are cited in Louis V. Mills, "Attack in the Highlands, the Battle of Fort Montgomery," *Hudson Valley Regional Review* (Sept. 2000), 39-40.
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9. William Polf, *Garrison Town: The British Occupation of New York City* (Albany: New York State Library, 1976), 5-7.
10. Mark Lender and James Kirby Martin, *A Respectable Army: The Military Origins of the Republic* (New York: Harlan Davidson Press, 1981), 83-7.
11. Robert Venables, *The American Revolution in the Hudson Valley* (Albany: New York State Library, 1975), 12-13.
12. Schecter, 286-299.
13. Venables, 18.
14. Willard Sterne Randall, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor* (New York: Morrow, 1990), 526-37.
15. Countryman, 137-40.
16. "Minutes of Committee of Ulster, May 11, 1775" in Force, 2:833.
17. Thomas S. Wermuth, "The Central Hudson Valley and the American Revolution," in Joseph Tiedemann and Eugene Fingerhut, *The Other New York: The Revolution Outside New York City* (forthcoming, SUNY Press).



*Governor George Clinton amid the ruins of Fort Montgomery
(Painting by John Trumbull; courtesy of the City of New York)*

Interpreting the Battle for the Hudson River Valley: The Battle of Fort Montgomery

Gregory Smith & James M. Johnson

The remains of Fort Montgomery are situated in the Hudson Highlands, the most dramatic stretch of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. They sit 120 feet above the Hudson River on the west bank of Popolopen Creek, and are surrounded by Bear Mountain Bridge, Anthony's Nose, and Bear Mountain State Park. With Fort Clinton, its sister work to the south, Fort Montgomery played a decisive role in the Saratoga campaign of 1777, "the turning point of the American Revolution."

When Governor George E. Pataki dedicated the Fort Montgomery State Historic Site on October 6, 2002, he guaranteed that the ruins of one of the nation's important Revolutionary War battlegrounds would be forever preserved. This essay will explain how the Fort Montgomery Plan Team approached the challenge of interpreting this National Historic Landmark.

Two hundred twenty-five years to the day of the governor's dedication, Forts Montgomery and Clinton earned their place in history. On October 6, 1777, 1,500 Continental soldiers and New York militiamen confronted 3,000 British soldiers, sailors, and marines under Major General Sir Henry Clinton, in what was the beginning of the British attack against the fortifications of the Hudson Highlands. Sir Henry had designed his plan to support Major General John Burgoyne's expedition into New York from Canada. He began the operation with a feint against Verplanck's Point at King's Ferry, twelve miles south of the forts. His goal was to keep the forces of General Israel Putnam, commander in the Highlands, on the east side of the Hudson. The ruse was a success: American Brigadier Generals George and James Clinton would wind up defending the twin forts of the Popolopen, Clinton's main objective, with only 700 men.

Fort Montgomery was a sprawling work overlooking an iron chain that stretched 1,700 feet across the river, from a cove below its Grand Battery to the base of Anthony's Nose. Until he could place booms in the river to protect the chain, George Clinton, the state's governor and Fort Montgomery's commander, had substituted a cable made by splicing together three smaller cables from the

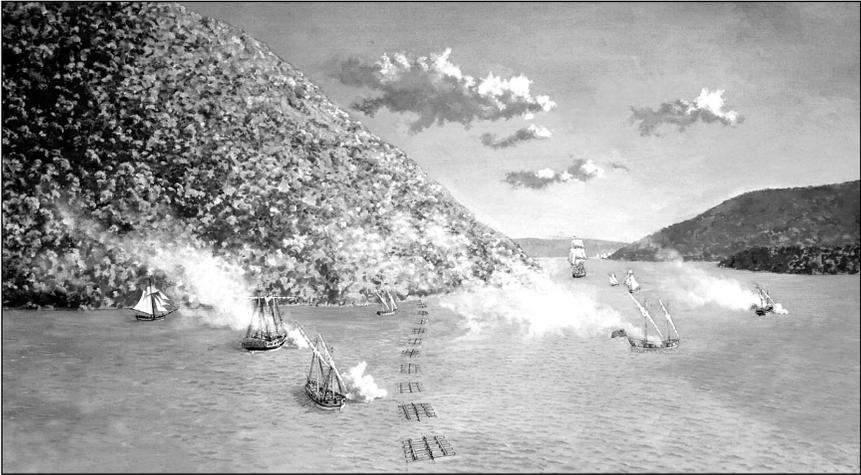
Continental frigate *Montgomery*.¹ The length of the fort itself, from the tip of “Round Hill” redoubt on the northwest to the Grand Battery on the southeast, was over 1,400 feet. The heart of these defenses against an expected attack from the river was the 100-foot-long Grand Battery, with walls eighteen feet thick. According to first Lieutenant William A. Patterson of the 15th Regiment, its line of five 32-pounders “Rakes the River Pretty Well For Three Miles.”² The rest of the fort had one more 32-pounder, ten 12-pounders, fourteen 6-pounders, and two 3-pounders. The landward ramparts were “comparatively open with the works poorly situated and incomplete.”³

On higher ground to protect its southern approach, and connected to Fort Montgomery by a pontoon bridge across Popolopen Creek, was Fort Clinton. Two star-shaped redoubts were the key defensive works in what could only loosely be called a fort. Colonel Lewis Dubois, commander of the 5th New York Regiment, estimated that a garrison of 2,000 men was needed to defend both forts properly.⁴

General Putnam did have one other trump card to play: a naval flotilla was present north of the chain to provide firepower and support in case of attack. A committee of Continental generals had recommended this step in its report in May, and the Continental Marine Committee had acted almost immediately, ordering two frigates—the *Montgomery* and the *Congress*—south from Poughkeepsie.⁵ By July 13, they had been joined by the New York sloop *Camden* and Continental row galleys *Shark* and *Lady Washington*. Captain John Hodge of the *Montgomery* and Captain Thomas Grennell of the *Congress* had scraped together crews from experienced sailors, soldiers, and even “Deserters, Boys, &ca.”⁶

Undermanned and under-gunned, this small navy suffered from its organization and the mission that senior leaders had assigned it. The Continental Marine Committee had established a workable command relationship that linked its ships with the ground force: Grennell and Hodge (who was in overall charge of the flotilla) were “to follow and obey such orders as they may receive from General [George] Washington or the Commanding officer who may direct the operations in that quarter.”⁷ Because the mission of the ships was to protect the chain, they had “become a part of the work itself.” This meant that it was not Putnam but George Clinton, as overall commander of Forts Clinton and Montgomery, who exercised authority over them.

One other twist complicated the issue of authority: Hodge did not assume command over the *Congress*, which was ordered by General Clinton to sail on October 5 to Fort Constitution, near West Point, “lest she should meet with a Disaster.” Although Hodge rated the galleys “manned and in a proper state of



The naval battle during the attack on Forts Montgomery and Clinton (Painting by Dahl Taylor; courtesy of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation)

defence” and his own ship “in great forwardness,” he would find that his inflexible mission and the actual state of his small force would limit the contribution he would be able to make to the outcome of the upcoming battle. Nonetheless he predicted that “we shall be able to give the enemy (when they approach) a warm reception.”⁸

At dawn on October 6, under cover of fog, Henry Clinton began his overland attack against the two forts by landing all but 400 of his troops at Stony Point. (The British ships and transports anchored off Peekskill so they would be in position to support the final assaults.)⁹ His plan of attack, designed with the assistance of Loyalist Colonel Beverly Robinson—who had lived nearby prior to the war—involved a two-prong advance over some twelve miles on Fort Montgomery from the west and Fort Clinton from the south. Lieutenant Colonel Mungo Campbell led an advance guard of 500 regulars from the 52d and 57th regiments and 400 provincials under Colonel Robinson from the Loyal Americans, New York Volunteers, and Emmerich’s Chausers. He was to seize the pass through the Dunderberg, march behind Bear Mountain, and attack Fort Montgomery. Major General John Vaughan, with 1,200 soldiers, led the main attack through the Dunderberg Pass and Doodletown against Fort Clinton.

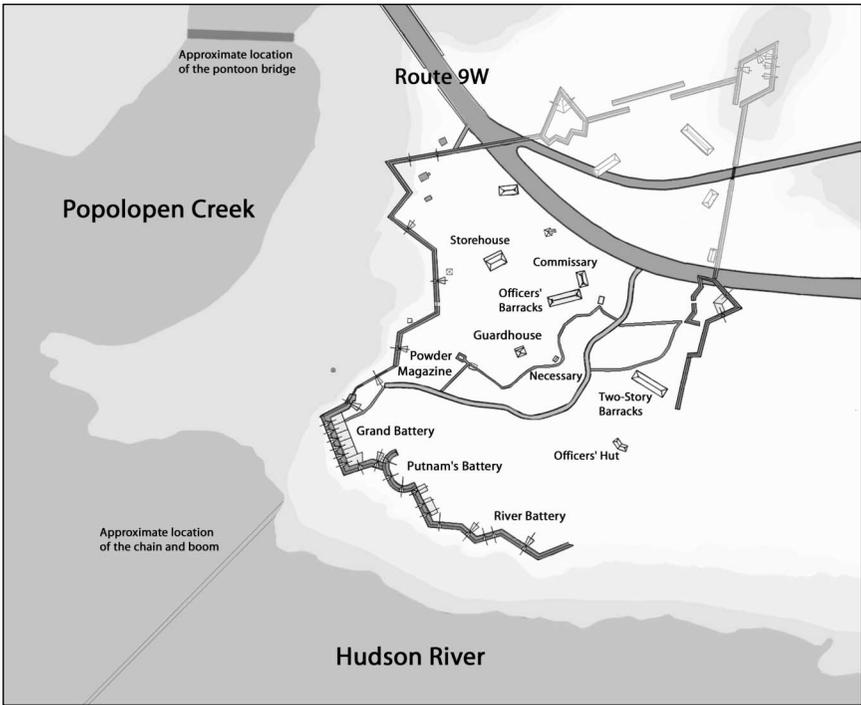
Colonel Campbell had a difficult task. After taking the morning and part of the afternoon to complete the long march, he and his troops had to fight their way past a fieldpiece and 70 militiamen that George Clinton had sent out at about 1 or 2 p.m. Around 4 p.m., Campbell triggered the main offensive. According to

Captain-Lieutenant Thomas Machin, who had commanded the fieldpiece, the Americans were deployed “in three redoubts formed by three bastions of the fort—the men were in a single rank behind the parapet and were not sufficient in number to occupy those lines of the redoubts from whence opposition might have been made to the assailants—the garrison at first gave the assailants a regular fire by platoons or divisions—but soon run into a promiscuous fire as did the enemy—the assailants frequently changed their ground, but still continued their approach.” In fact, “the enemy came up several times—within 80 paces of the fort and were broke and repulsed, finally they formed a solid column from the center by files under cover of a rock at about 100 paces from the fort and in that form run up the parapet. . . .” Although Campbell was killed leading his 52d Foot into the works, the momentum of his assault carried Fort Montgomery in about forty-five minutes. Still, the firing of “the artillery and small arms continued until dark.”¹⁰ Henry Clinton waited “a favorable Moment” following the start of Campbell’s fight at Fort Montgomery and then ordered Vaughan to launch his attack against Fort Clinton—using the bayonet only—across an open area of 400 yards filled with abatis and covered by the fire of ten cannons.¹¹

The mountainous terrain had prevented the British from using artillery, so the attacks were supported by what cannon fire could be brought to bear from row galleys. In the face of a fierce cannonade from the American ships, the H.M.S. *Dependence* fired ninety-five 24-pound shot and six 4-pounders against these vessels and the forts. Despite inadequate crews and too few guns, the *Montgomery* and her consorts made a gallant if futile fight of it.

Despite the determined efforts of the American Clintons, the unfinished twin forts fell to overwhelming British attack by nightfall. By 10 p.m. the victors had the pleasure of observing the blazing *Montgomery*, which had been torched by its crew to prevent it from falling into British hands. The *Shark* and the *Congress* would suffer similar fates near Fort Constitution. Only the *Lady Washington* escaped; it would oppose the British at Rondout Creek two weeks later. With the forts reduced, the ships dispersed, and Putnam and his forces withdrawing northward to protect the pass to Fishkill, Sir Henry would complete his control of the Highlands in a matter of days.¹²

At the cost of some 70 killed, 40 wounded, and 240 taken prisoner, the Americans nonetheless exacted a substantial price, killing 40 and wounding 150 of the attackers. While the British won the battles of Forts Clinton and Montgomery, the stubborn defense put up by the Americans caused the British to delay their northward thrust to join General John Burgoyne, who surrendered at Saratoga less than two weeks later. The results might have been different had



*Map showing Fort Montgomery; stabilized and interpreted ruins are labeled
(Map by Jack Mead; courtesy of NYS Office of Parks,
Recreation and Historic Preservation)*

Henry Clinton's substantial forces arrived in time. Most historians credit the American victory at Saratoga as being the turning point of the war: the French recognized that Washington's army possessed the ability and the desire to win a major engagement.

Since the historic battle in the autumn of 1777, Fort Montgomery has lain in ruins, awaiting the proper recognition of its contribution to victory. For the last five years, Governor Pataki; the Hudson River Valley Greenway; the Palisades Interstate Park Commission (PIPC); the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP); and the Fort Montgomery Battle Site Association have worked to preserve, stabilize, and interpret the fort that helped change the course of American history. Their efforts made it possible for New York to open the site to the public last year.

Visitors now have a remarkable opportunity to tour the fort, whose stone foundations have survived largely intact. Fort Montgomery comprises some twenty-five archaeologically significant features on 14.42 acres of land owned since 1914 by the PIPC. As shown on the map above, the ramparts of the irregu-

larly shaped fortification follow the contours of the bluffs overlooking the Hudson River and Popolopen Creek and connect three landward redoubts (South, Round Hill, and North) and three river batteries (Grand, Putnam's, and River). Thomas Machin constructed gun batteries on the lower riverbank to protect the chain and boom. A stone wharf on the north bank of Popolopen Creek provided access to the fort and to the bridge connecting the twin forts. Within the fort itself, soldiers built structures to support the outerworks and its garrison, including the guard-house, powder magazine, main barracks, officers' commissary, a second barracks, storehouse, bake house, soldiers' necessary, provision stores, soldiers' hut, a "spring head," and four additional barracks. The remains of almost all of these structures are clearly visible and are in the process of being stabilized.

Interpreting a fort with the foundations of almost all of its features preserved proved challenging. Fortunately, the team had a wealth of archaeological data to rely upon. In 1916, archaeologists working for the New-York Historical Society began the first excavations at Fort Montgomery. More excavations were conducted in the 1930s, 1950s, and in the late 1960s/early 1970s by staff at Trailside Museums, located where Fort Clinton once stood. Much of what we know about the fort comes from the work done by these dedicated "diggers," particularly by the late Jack Mead, who supervised the last of these excavations. Although not formally trained as an archaeologist, Mead kept meticulous records of all of the excavations, which yielded well over 100,000 artifacts. (In 2002, archaeologists from the state's Peebles Island Resource Center conducted some additional, limited explorations in conjunction with the development of the site.)

Why did Mead and his predecessors do so much work? Their vision was one that many people in the 1960s and 1970s shared: They wanted to reconstruct the fort. It was not a new idea; in fact, it dates to at least 1930, when Arthur P. Abbott, a local author and friend of the PIPC, wrote the commission expressing his thoughts regarding reconstructions.¹³ Even then, reconstructing Revolutionary War forts was an old concept; the rebuilding of Fort Ticonderoga dates to 1908. So when the Fort Montgomery Plan Team began meeting in the late 1990s, it had to address whether or not to reconstruct the fort.

The idea appealed to some members of the team. A reconstruction would help visitors envision and appreciate structures that no longer existed. Reconstructions set the scene for the imagination to take over. They have their place, but they are problematic. It is almost never possible to know all of the details of a building, a fort, or a hut. This is certainly true for eighteenth-century buildings for which there are no photographs or neat blueprints. Although historians know a great deal about Fort Montgomery, both from a wealth of documentary sources and



*Artifacts unearthed during archaeological digs at Fort Montgomery
(Courtesy of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation)*

from the archaeological excavations, they know precious little about the buildings themselves. Because reconstructed buildings tend to be permanent, they cannot be changed easily to reflect advances in scholarship. And no matter how clear the interpretation that a building or a feature is a reconstruction, there are always visitors who either believe it to be the real thing or come away with the mistaken impression that the reconstruction is based on specific knowledge of the original structure.

Weighing the pros and cons of reconstruction, the Fort Montgomery Plan Team decided not to rebuild Fort Montgomery, but it recognized the need to help visitors imagine and appreciate those parts of the fort that no longer exist. The challenge, therefore, was to help present the story of the fort and the battle so visitors can imagine what took place, but in a manner that is flexible enough to address new information that may come to light. The team chose to tell the story of Fort Montgomery through a variety of media, including interpretive signs, commissioned artwork, an audio tour, three-dimensional exhibits, and, most important, professional interpretive staff.

Interpretive signs are used effectively at many parks and historic sites. Computer design and advances in printing processes have made it possible to create full-color panels that can withstand weather, ultraviolet fading, and moderate attempts at vandalism for at least a decade. Signs are made of phenolic resin in which a computer-generated image is embedded. At Fort Montgomery, there are twenty interpretive panels, in kiosks and adjacent to foundations, earthworks, and other features. Each sign includes color images and concise, descriptive text that explains not only what the visitor is viewing but also the story of the construction of the fort, significant archaeological discoveries, the battle, etc. The first phase of these signs was installed in October 2001. The second phase was added in September 2002, just in time for the site's grand opening.

Many of the signs incorporate interesting, high-quality images. In addition to being an archaeologist, Jack Mead was a talented artist. He left numerous sketches and paintings of the fort's buildings and scenes from the battle. To those, the plan team added other artwork and historic images to create visually engaging panels.

In cases where no images were obtainable, the OPRHP commissioned local artist Dahl Taylor to paint four scenes that highlight certain details of each feature but leave others to the imagination. For example, his painting of the guardhouse leaves a clear impression that this was a place where soldiers who had done something wrong were brought. It suggests that there was a building there, but its details are intentionally sketchy. Taylor's painting of the North Redoubt depicts this feature during the early part of the battle. It suggests what the redoubt looked like, but



Soldiers manning a redoubt at Fort Montgomery (Painting by Dahl Taylor; courtesy of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation)

it does not make a definitive statement about the details of its construction. Visitors are left with an impression—a “mental snapshot”—of what happened there, yet it is clear that there is no definitive record of what the actual scene looked like.

The “one-story” barracks, another of Taylor’s illustrations, is a perfect example of why reconstructions are problematic. When Jack Mead excavated this building in the late 1960s, he concluded, based on the chimney found by his excavation team, that this building was one story tall. However, while Taylor was working on preliminary sketches of the building for his painting, he forced a re-examination of the documentary evidence relating to the forts’ barracks. In the past, historians had been guided by Colonel Thomas Palmer’s description of “...one barrack, eighty feet by twenty, two stories high, with a cellar under half of it.”¹⁴ Like Mead, they assumed that Palmer’s letter referred to the other 80 x 20 barracks building, located just to the north of this one.

But just as Taylor was about to begin painting the “one-story” barracks, a colleague made a crucial observation—that the key documents correspond with two historic maps of the fort drawn contemporaneously with Palmer’s letters.¹⁵ When the documents are put together with the maps, it becomes very clear that the “one-story” barracks was actually described by Colonel Thomas Palmer and others as a two-story building. In the first of two maps drawn by Colonel Palmer, there is only one 80 x 20 barracks shown. This map was drawn in April or May of 1776. Palmer’s letter, describing a “barrack, eighty feet by twenty, two stories high,” dates to April 27, 1776. Palmer’s letter goes on to say that this two-story barracks was completed, and that another barracks was planned. Furthermore, the dotted outline of another barracks different from the “one-story barracks” is faintly visible on this map, as if to indicate that this is the barracks to be built next.

Palmer's second map of Fort Montgomery, which accompanied advice written by Lord Stirling and incorporated in instructions issued by George Washington on June 10, shows a second 80 x 20 barracks.¹⁶ Conveniently, the "new" building is labeled "E." In his instructions, Stirling writes that "The barracks E, which are begun and considerably advanced, should also be finished." Clearly, this cannot be the same building that Palmer had previously described as two stories high and completed.

The connection made between the documents and the maps caused a flurry of activity at the Peebles Island Resource Center, as archaeologists and architectural historians carefully examined all of the documents and Mead's field notes and debated whether the barracks was the "one story" or "two-story" building. In the end, they agreed that the documents in hand painted a convincing picture that this barracks had, in fact, been two stories tall. However, since all of the information that Mead left behind has not been examined, they may yet discover in his voluminous notes something that convinces them he was right. So, Taylor reoriented his final artwork of the barracks from one story to two. This is a good example of how information and interpretations can change over time. Fortunately, the Fort Montgomery Plan Team has chosen interpretive methods that can change as new information is discovered.

Although interpretive signs and paintings do a marvelous job of helping visitors envision what Fort Montgomery might have looked like, the plan team felt it was important to add another dimension to the fort's interpretation. Acoustiguide in New York City has helped develop an audio tour of the site. The tour combines music and sound effects with narration, dramatic readings, and interviews with experts. There are thirteen stops planned for the tour. Each stop has a main message that explains a particular feature of the fort. Most stops have four additional thematic messages that interpret the daily routine, military history, archaeology, and major personalities associated with Fort Montgomery. Because the audio players use random access .mp3 technology, they will allow visitors to choose those layers of information that appeal most to them.

The third form of interpretation will be a visitors' center to exhibit many of the archaeological artifacts recovered from the fort. These treasures tell the story in a way that no media can. What kind of people garrisoned the fort? Based on the many ornate buckles and buttons recovered from the enlisted men's barracks, we get the sense that many of the common soldiers were comfortably well off. Are there items that we can connect with specific people? Nearly all of the spoons recovered from the fort bear the initials of their owners. Why were these men here? The inscription "Liberty" on a pair of cufflinks is certainly part of the

answer. Because so many artifacts were excavated from the fort, there is a large pool from which to choose. Currently, the New York State Museum is completing a report on these items to help us better interpret them.

Interpretive signs, an audio tour, and exhibits will go a long way toward helping visitors appreciate what the men who built and defended the fort experienced. However, there is no substitute for knowledgeable interpreters who can interact with visitors, answer questions, and truly bring the fort to life. Some of the interpreters will wear period costumes and provide hands-on activities and demonstrations to engage children and adults. But they will also continue to research and assemble more information on the fort, and this is critical. Although historians and archaeologists have been studying the fort for almost a century, they have only scratched the surface of the potential sources of information that are available for further research. For example, the pension records of the soldiers who served at the fort have not yet been studied. And who knows what may be hiding in the Public Records Office in England?

As research expands our understanding of Fort Montgomery, the OPRHP will update its interpretation to keep pace. Interpretive signs, illustrations, audio tours, and even exhibits can be changed much more readily than reconstructed buildings. And just as important, these media will convey—in a way that reconstructions cannot—one of the most important facts about the site: that there is a great deal yet to learn about Fort Montgomery. Readers should come to experience the treasures of this great site themselves to understand Fort Montgomery and the men who fought there for America's independence.

Notes

1. Brigadier George Clinton to Washington, July 11, 1777; Captain John Hodge to New York Council of Safety, July 13, 1777; William Bell Clark, William James Morgan, and Michael J. Crawford, eds. *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, 10 vols. to date (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1964-), 9: 260, 281.
2. "W^m A. Patterson to Hon. &c.," April 22, 1776; "A Plan of the Intended Works at Fort Montgomery By W^m A. Patterson 1st Lieut of the 15th Reg^t —April 22 1776," Sheffield Research files, from originals in the Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.
3. William H. Carr and Richard J. Koke, *Twin Forts of the Popolopen: Forts Clinton and Montgomery, New York, 1775-1777*, Historical Bulletin no. 1. (Bear Mountain, N.Y.: Commissioners of the Palisades Interstate Park and the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, July 1937), 29. (It is unclear how many of these might have been at Fort Clinton.) "A Return of Ordinance Stores at Fort Montgomery this twentyeth Day of June 1777," *Public Papers of George Clinton, first Governor of New York, 1777-1795-1801-1804*, 10 vols., ed. Hugh Hastings (Albany: State printers, 1899-1914), 2: 45.
4. "Genl. Putnam, N^o. 25," *ibid.*; George Clinton to Washington, Oct. 9, 1777, *Naval Documents*, 10: 94.
5. Continental Marine Committee to the New York Council of Safety, June 26, 1777, *ibid.*, 9: 177.

6. Aug. 14, 1776, "Memorandum of Stores Necessary for the Sloop Hudson & . . . Camden," Papers of the Secret Committee; George Clinton to Putnam, June 15, 1777; Captain John Hodge to the New York Council of Safety, July 13, 1777, *ibid.*, 9: 118, 281; "Capt Hodge's Evidence, N 7," "Report of the Court of Inquiry on the Loss of Fort Montgomery" to Washington, April 5, 1778, McDougall Papers, United States Military Philosophical Society Records, 1789-1813, microfilmed by the New York Historical Society, Reel 2, USMA Library, West Point, N.Y., hereinafter cited as "Court of Inquiry."
7. Continental Marine Committee to the New York Council of Safety and to Captains Grennell and Hodge, June 26, 1777, *Naval Documents*, 9: 176-77.
8. Putnam to the New York Council of Safety, June 5, 1777; Phil. Livingston and Wm. Duer to Pierre Van Cortlandt, President of the New York Council of Safety, May 31, 1777; Hodge to Council of Safety, July 13, 1777; Cortlandt to the President of Congress, June 11, 1777, *ibid.*, 9: 24, 42, 90, 281.
9. Orderly Book, King's American Regiment, 18 December 1776-12 November 1777, typescript, USMA Library, West Point, N.Y.; Hon. J.W. Fortescue, *A History of the 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge's Own)* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1895), 43-44; S. H. F. Johnston, *The History of the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles) 26th and 90th*, vol. 1, 1689-1910 (Aldershot, UK: Gale & Polden Limited, 1957), 148; W.S. Moorsom, ed., *Historical Record of the Fifty-Second Regiment (Oxfordshire Light Infantry from the Year 1755 to the Year 1858)* (London: Richard Bentley, 1860), 16; H.H. Woollright, *History of the Fifty-Seventh (West Middlesex) Regiment of Foot, 1755-1881* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1893), 64-65; Colonel H. C. Wylly, C. B., comp. *History of the Manchester Regiment (Late the 63rd and 96th Foot)* (London: Forster Groom & Co., 1923), 65; W. Wheeler, *Historical Record of the Seventh or Royal Regiment of Fusiliers* (Leeds: Private circulation, 1875), 72; journals, Oct. 5, *Mercury*, *Dependence*, and *Diligent*, Hotham to Admiral Howe, Oct. 9, and Clinton to General Howe, Oct. 9, *Naval Documents*, 10: 42-43, 96, 98.
10. Captain Machin's Evidence, N 5, "Court of Inquiry."
11. Commodore William Hotham to Admiral Howe, Oct. 9, 1777; Clinton to General Howe, Oct. 9, 1777; journal of *Dependence*, Oct. 6, 1777; George Clinton to New York Council of Safety, Oct. 8, 1777, *ibid.*, 10: 42-43, 47, 70, 96, 98-99.
12. Hotham to Admiral Howe, Oct. 9, 1777; Clinton to General Howe, Oct. 9, 1777; journal of *Dependence*, Oct. 6, 1777; George Clinton to New York Council of Safety, Oct. 8, 1777, *ibid.*, 10: 42-43, 47, 70, 96, 98-99; "Capt. Hodge's Evidence," "Court of Inquiry."
13. Arthur P. Abbott to Commissioners of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, Feb. 16, 1930, and March 11, 1930. Palisades Interstate Park Commission files. Abbott's letters seem to be contradictory, at least without more information regarding the context of the letters. His first letter seems to support reconstructing the forts' buildings, while the second letter warns that "The desecration of these works by the obliteration of their most valuable and interesting features by 'restorations' is wrong and must not be done."
14. Thomas Palmer to New York Committee of Safety, April 27, 1776, in *American Archives*, by Peter Force, 4th series, vol. 5, pp. 1095-96.
15. Thomas Palmer Map Number One of Fort Montgomery, in *Twin Forts of the Popolopen*, pg. 23. The original of this map was in the possession of the New York State Library when it was destroyed by fire in 1911.
16. Lord Stirling's advice, incorporated in General Washington's directions to the Commissioners in the Highlands, in *American Archives*, 4th series, vol. 6, pp. 792-93.

A Suspected Loyalist in the Rural Hudson Valley: The Revolutionary War Experience of Roeloff Josiah Eltinge

Kenneth Shefsiek

In the years leading up to the War of Independence, battle lines were being drawn not only between the British government and its American colonies, but also among the colonial citizenry itself. For the radical revolutionaries who believed in the existence of a British governmental conspiracy to deprive the colonists of their liberty, as well as for those whose strong conservative stance enabled them to accept British authority in whatever form it was foisted upon them, matters of allegiance were fairly clear. But these two positions were the extremes, and the opinions of many resided in “the twilight zone between wholehearted support of the American cause and overt identification with the British.”¹ Most of the populace, whether or not they eventually became Patriot or Tory, were thoroughly uncomfortable with the innovative methods Parliament had enacted to raise revenue directly from the colonies. As William Nelson states, in regard to taxation the Tories “were as indignant as other Americans as to what seemed an unjust and arbitrary exercise of British authority.”² What separated the Revolutionaries from the Tories was not the belief that the British government was overstepping its bounds. Where they differed was in their opinion of the role of the British Crown and Parliament in relation to the elected governments of the colonies and the means open to them for resolving the controversy. There were, of course, Loyalists who actively fought on the side of the British. However, there were also many who considered themselves Loyalists because they felt negotiation and readjustment within the current imperial system was the proper approach to resolution. Then there were those who opposed the radical Revolutionaries because “they were alarmed at the prospect of strife between Britain and the colonies;” however, it took years for the “the issue of allegiance [to] crystallize.”³

The issue of allegiance was particularly complicated in New York, where the heterogeneity of the population in terms of ethnicity, religion, and wealth resulted in a similar heterogeneity in political beliefs. Whereas the greater homogeneity

© Congress 16 July 1776
 Resolved Unanimously that all persons who
 = being within the state of New York and deriving pro-
 = tection from the laws of the same are allegiance to
 the said laws and are members of the state; and that
 all persons passing thro' visiting or making a tempo-
 rary stay in the said state, being entitled to the protection
 of the laws during the time of such passage, visitation
 or temporary stay owe during the said time allegiance
 thereto
 That all persons members of or owing allegiance to
 this state as before described who shall levy war
 against the said state within the same or be ad-
 versely to the King of Great Britain or others the Enemies
 the said state within the same, giving to him or
 them aid and comfort are guilty of treason
 against the state and being thereof convicted
 shall suffer the Penalties of Death & etc

Attest: *M. M. M. M.*

The Oath of Allegiance required of all New York citizens.
 At right, a transcription of two oaths: to the new state (top) and to the king
 (Courtesy of NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation,
 Senate House Historic Site)

In Congress 16 July 1776

Resolved Unanimously that all persons abiding within the state of New York and deriving protection from the laws of the same owe allegiance (to) the said Laws and are members of the state, and that all persons passing thro visiting or making a temporary stay in the said state, being Intitled to the protection of the Laws during the time of such passage visitations or temporary stay owe during the same time allegiance thereto - That all persons members of or owing allegiance to this state as before described who shall levy War against the said state within the same or be adhesions to the King of Great Britain or others the Enemies of the said state within the same, giving to him or them aid and comfort are guilty of Treason against the state and being thereof convicted shall suffer the penalties of Death

Rob:t Benson, Sec.

In Testimony Of our Unshaken Loyalty and Incorruptible Fidelity To the Best of Kings Of our Inviolable Affection and Attachment To Our Parent State and The British Constitution Of our abhorrence of and Aversion To a Republican Government Of our Detestation of All Treasonable Associations Unlawfull Combinations Seditous Meetings Tumultuous Assemblies and Execrable Mobs And of All measures that have a Tendency To Alienate the Affections of The People from their Rightful Sovereign or Lessen their Regard for Our Most Excellent Constitution And To Make Known To All Men That We are Ready Chearfully Ready when properly Calld upon at The Hazard of our Lives and of Every thing Dear and Valualbe to us To Defend The King To Support The Magistrates in the Execution of The Laws And to Maintain The Just Rights of Constitutional Liberty of Freeborn Englishmen This Standard By The Name of The Kings Standard Was Erected By a Number of His Majestys Loyal & Faithful Subjects In the Precincts of Shawangunk & Hanover in the County of Ulster On the 10th day of February in the 15th Year Of The Reign Of Our Most Excellent Sovereign George the Third Whom God Long Preserve

of society and political belief in New England and Virginia resulted in a greater clarity of political divisions, the heterogeneity of New York resulted in a greater distribution throughout the possible range, from left to right.⁴ Additionally, New York's extensive experience in dealing with political and social division resulted in a culture of negotiation and moderation.⁵ The way of moderation was also followed in New York as a means of preventing a renewed outbreak of violence, like that experienced during the Stamp Act Riots of 1765.⁶

Once the war began, the situation became increasingly difficult for those who were unable to support the Patriot cause fully, and even for those "who have affected to observe . . . a dangerous and equivocal neutrality."⁷ To a Revolutionary, there was no middle ground: moderates were considered potential Tories. It was these moderates who faced some of the greatest personal challenges of conscience during the war. Since the Revolutionaries, who held the reins of government and the law, would accept nothing less than full, unequivocal support, the moderates were forced to compromise their principles by choosing either the far left or the far right, or simply lying and stating that they supported the Patriots.⁸ Those of questionable allegiance were particularly vulnerable in New York because the state was wedged between the British forces occupying New York City and the threat of invasion from the north. Both the British and the Americans believed that silent Tories would be encouraged to declare their true allegiance and threaten the state from within if the British forces were able to advance into the interior.

It was therefore incumbent upon the authorities in New York to find a method to deal with the Loyalist threat, whether real or phantom.⁹ The government imprisoned suspected Tories, often in extremely substandard facilities and without due process of law. Particularly feared Tories were exiled, others were put to hard labor (although many authorities denounced such punishment). The property of some Loyalists was confiscated; Patriot vigilantes occasionally tarred and feathered their opponents. Alexander Flick contends that the treatment was "firm but comparatively moderate,"¹⁰ and other historians also declare it "moderate and fair, all things taken into consideration."¹¹ Robert Calhoon is generally forgiving of the governmental organization charged with suppressing Loyalist activity; he notes that it was "more concerned with identifying persons of doubtful loyalty than with punishment or harassment." Tories, Calhoon adds, were given the opportunity either to take an oath of allegiance or "move to New York City." (By "move," he means exile.)¹² Although exile is neither punishment nor harassment, it was rather harsh, especially when forced upon those who did not pose any real threat, even if they did have Tory leanings. Calhoon also states that in New England, county committees provided suspected Loyalists with the opportunity to

end their “estrangement from the community through a recanting of any loyalistic statements,” and thus “served to define the moral and inclusive character of a community in crisis.”¹³ The same was true in New York. Being given the chance to recant before a committee that had the power to punish hardly suggests the “inclusiveness” of a community in regard to political opinions. Philip Ranlett is not so forgiving, stating that the treatment of suspected Loyalists “was not kind.”¹⁴

Many of the recent investigations into New York Toryism focus on sophisticated political ideology. The high-minded constitutional principles that were the basis for discussion and dispute were primarily the domain of the politicians and gentry. However, they were not the only Tories of the day: they were found in all ranks of society. It is more difficult to investigate the issue of allegiance for people of the middle and lower ranks of society because suspected Loyalists who were neither belligerent nor socially prominent were handled by local committees, and few of their records survive.¹⁵ Jonathan Clark has attempted to define allegiance for residents of all walks of life in Poughkeepsie, but he categorizes so many as “occasional loyalist” or “occasional patriot” that it is apparent that the issue of allegiance is often unclear.¹⁶ It is also difficult to investigate fully how such suspects were treated by the Revolutionary authorities. In the archives of the Huguenot Historical Society in New Paltz, a town of modest size during the eighteenth century, there survives a collection of documents relating to the wartime experience of one resident, Roeloff Josiah Eltinge (1737-1795), which substantially documents his treatment at the hands of the Revolutionaries. His story provides insight into both the mind of a man who was neither an avowed Patriot nor a staunch Loyalist and the methods and motives of Patriot authorities during the early years of the conflict.

Roeloff Josiah Eltinge was a third-generation resident of New Paltz, which had been founded by French Huguenot refugees in 1678 on a patent of nearly 40,000 acres. The first Eltinge who moved to New Paltz was Roeloff Josiah’s grandfather, a man of Dutch descent also named Roeloff (1689-1746/7), who married Sara DuBois (1682-c.1746), the daughter of New Paltz Patentee Abraham DuBois (1657-1731). According to tradition, the first Roeloff’s son, Josiah, began to operate a general store in New Paltz around 1740 and was considered the wealthiest man of the town.¹⁷ Roeloff Josiah took over the business from his father and was involved in many entrepreneurial endeavors.¹⁸ He was one of New Paltz’s most prominent citizens, but his influence did not extend outside the town. Although it is difficult to say where Roeloff Josiah fit in the overall social structure of his time and region, New Paltz was a small, isolated, relatively unimportant town in the eighteenth century, thus his social position would have been restricted. His



*The Roeloff Josiah Eltinge House in New Paltz
(Photograph by Christopher Pryslopski)*

small house, with three above-ground rooms, still survives, and it attests to his modest social standing.

Eltinge's Revolutionary War experience begins with his signing of the Articles of Association in May 1775. The articles had been prepared by the Committee of New York City on April 29, 1775, ten days after the battles at Lexington and Concord, and they had been transmitted to the counties of New York for signing in every town. The purpose of the association was to create a "firm union of its inhabitants in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for safety (because) of the necessity of preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend a dissolution of the powers of government." It was a response both to Britain's taxation of the colonies and its subsequent aggression in Massachusetts. The association was an early statement of the independence movement, so many future Revolutionaries signed it. So, too, did many future Loyalists. This sometimes occurred because of pressure by the local committees and other townspeople, but moderates would have generally felt comfortable signing because it also stated that "we most ardently desire . . . a reconciliation between Great Britain and America on Constitutional Principles."

Whether or not Eltinge willingly signed the articles is unknown, but his signature ensured his continued safety for the following eighteen months. This was

to change on October 26, 1776, when he was brought before the Ulster County Committee meeting at the home of his kinsman, Abraham DuBois.¹⁹ This extra-legal governmental committee had been in existence since January 6, 1775, when five town committees had met in Hurley, near the county seat of Kingston. County, town, and district committees, some of which had been formed as early as 1774, were becoming increasingly central to the war effort and served to fill the function of regional and local government with the collapse of the colonial government. After the Declaration of Independence, they became the local governments in a free state until the new government was set up under the state constitution of 1777. Whether or not these committees were truly representative of the people is questionable. As Hugh Flick states, "In speaking for the people (in 1774-1775), active minorities were usurping the functions of local governments and, for the most part, without hindrance by the more passive conservative(s)."²⁰ And as Samuel Seabury noted at the time, "It is notorious that in some districts only three or four met and chose themselves to be a committee. . ."²¹ By the time Eltinge came before the Ulster committee in 1776, it probably was more representative of the public voice than in earlier years because sentiment against the British had been growing, especially since the struggles began in Massachusetts. Nevertheless, there was still a question in the eyes of many, particularly those with conservative tendencies, whether the committees had the right to assume governmental functions. Thus Eltinge might have approached his examination with severe misgivings.

The county committees were essentially the regional representatives of the New York Provincial Congress, and it was their responsibility to assist the Congress in its Revolutionary efforts. One of these activities was to confront the internal threat posed by those who were loyal to the British crown—the "disaffected." This became an increasing concern with the close proximity of British forces after the occupation of New York City in the fall of 1776, as well as the ongoing possibility of attack from the north. This effort to apprehend Tories had begun in May 1776, and it was stepped up with the creation of the Committee for Defeating and Detecting Conspiracies (to which the county committees were subordinate) on September 21, 1776. It was in its capacity as locator of Tories that Eltinge was brought before the Ulster County Committee.

Eltinge was forced to appear because he refused to take Continental currency in his store. According to his statement to the committee, he never entirely trusted the value of the currency, and although he initially received it, his trust in it subsequently eroded further. After the withdrawal of Continental forces from Long Island and a "general rumor amongst the people of [his] neighbor-

hood that in a little time Congress money would be good for nothing as the King was likely to overcome,” others came to his store to purchase goods with the currency, but he believed they did so simply because they also considered it would soon be worthless. Although he refused the currency, he told his customers that he would allow purchases on credit. According to the New York Provincial Congress, such actions were unacceptable according to their resolves passed on June 5, 1776, which indicated that those who prevented the circulation of paper money “were to be imprisoned, put under bond for good behavior, or removed from their localities on parole.”²² This local statement reflected the policy of the Continental Congress promulgated on January 11, 1776: those who did not accept currency should be treated as enemies. Although activities such as Eltinge’s were nonbelligerent in nature, such an extreme position was taken because the acceptance of Continental money was absolutely necessary to fund the war effort, and the Revolutionaries feared that “Tories” such as Eltinge might influence others, directly and by example. The committee chose to take the most extreme action they could under the Provincial Congress’ resolves, and Eltinge was sentenced to the prison in Fishkill, Dutchess County.²³

While Eltinge’s refusal to take Continental currency was in itself unacceptable to the authorities, the fact that he was brought before the committee and soundly punished might also have been reflective of personal animosities in both New Paltz and nearby Kingston. Tradition has it that there was an ongoing feud between the Eltinges and another prominent local family, the Hasbroucks, whose progenitors—the brothers Jean and Abraham—had been founding members of New Paltz (along with Abraham DuBois). According to Ralph LeFevre, the disagreement between the families resulted from a dispute over a land grant received by Eltinge’s uncle, Noah, which some landowners in New Paltz protested because they claimed that part of the land was contained in the New Paltz patent.²⁴ Jacob Hasbrouck, Jr. (grandson of Jean Hasbrouck), and Abraham Hasbrouck (grandson of patentee Abraham Hasbrouck) instigated proceedings over this dispute in 1748. Unfortunately for Eltinge, the woman from whom he first refused to take the Continental currency was Esther Hasbrouck Wirtz, the daughter of Jacob Jr. Both Jacob Jr. and Abraham were active Patriots. Jacob Jr. (of New Paltz) was a member of the Ulster County Committee and a major in the militia, while Abraham (of Kingston) was a colonel, and a rather petulant one at that.²⁵ Thus, Eltinge’s run-in with the authorities might have had an extremely personal side to it, as small-town politics often do.

From that point until after the signing of the peace treaty in 1784, Eltinge’s freedom was circumscribed by the authorities. After a stay of more than a month

at the jail in Fishkill, he was sent to New Hampshire for confinement.²⁶ He and others were exiled from New York, according to John Jay, a member of the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, because it was “indispensably necessary to remove a number of dangerous and disaffected persons, some of whom have been taken in arms against America, to one of the neighboring states.”²⁷ The committee’s prime concern was the men’s proximity to the British stronghold of New York City. The Council of New Hampshire was willing to take them. Leaving Fishkill on December 4, 1776, Eltinge arrived in Atkinson, New Hampshire, on December 13. He was confined at the home of a Lieutenant Belknap for several days before being moved to the home of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Welch until February 3, 1777, when he was placed in prison at Exeter.²⁷ Even though Eltinge and the other prisoners had been confined against their will, they remained responsible for their own “expenses and diet,”²⁹ a policy made necessary because of the limited financial resources of the provincial government.

While officials in New Hampshire were willing to take the prisoners, the New Hampshire Council had some misgivings about their guilt. “Their clamours of being sent here without an examination at home and consciousness of their innocence which they assert, has had considerable influence among the people . . . And as a great number of them make such protestations of their not being sensible of their having ever given occasion for any person to suppose them unfriendly to the American cause, we wish an impartial inquiry might be made into their characters,” wrote council President Meshach Weare.³⁰

Eltinge remained in jail in Exeter until March 25, when he was released back to New York in response to a March 13, 1777, request by the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies to return all prisoners except those who were “closely confined in Goal (sic),”³¹ to administer an oath of allegiance. If the prisoners refused, they were to be forced to remove themselves behind enemy lines. Eltinge arrived in Poughkeepsie to see the commissioners on May 13, but there is no evidence that he was asked to take an oath at that point. Nevertheless, he was given an order on May 21 to report to the fleet prison in Kingston in six days. Opened on May 2, 1777, the prison originally consisted of two former privateer vessels anchored off Kingston, but as the need arose, other boats had been added. Initially intended to house prisoners whom the commissioners feared might lead rumored uprisings in Dutchess County, Westchester County, and Livingston Manor, the prison later swelled with detainees from Albany and Orange counties, as well as with those, like Eltinge, who had been recalled from New England. Eltinge remained on board until June 18, when he was paroled to the home in Hurley of Jacobus Hardenburgh, his brother-in-law, who had petitioned for his

release. This was the first time in almost eight months that Eltinge was able to enjoy a modicum of freedom and be with family. It was to be short-lived.

In his diary, Eltinge does not record any dealings with the authorities for the subsequent four months, but on October 6, 1777, after being accused of breaking his parole, he was taken back to Kingston to appear before the Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies. He proved that he was innocent of the charge, and he was again paroled back to Hardenburgh's, although his parole was to last only a few more days. Forts Clinton and Montgomery, about forty miles south of Kingston, had been taken on October 6 by British forces under General Sir Henry Clinton; General John Burgoyne's forces were eighty miles north, at Saratoga. Meeting on October 8 in Kingston, the Council of Safety was not yet aware that Burgoyne's forces had been defeated on October 7, and in its eyes, the northern and southern armies were too close for comfort. Fearing that inactive Loyalists would be emboldened to act if British forces pushed into the region, the council felt it was necessary to remove all prisoners in and around Kingston to Hartford, Connecticut. Within hours, the militia was at the home of Jacobus Hardenburgh, where it again took Eltinge into custody. It also detained Eltinge's luncheon companion, Cadwallader Colden Jr., who was on parole to the Van Deusen House in Hurley. From that moment on, the wartime fates of these two men would be bound together.³²

Colden was the son of Cadwallader Colden Sr. (1688-1776), of Coldenham, near Newburgh. The elder Colden had been a member of the Governor's Council from 1721 through 1776 and lieutenant governor from 1761 until his death. During several periods—most importantly throughout the Stamp Act crisis of 1765-1766—he filled the position of acting governor. He was the owner of a great deal of land, although not to the extent of families such as the DeLanceys or Livingstons. He was a thorough supporter of royal authority and prerogative, and as a high-ranking royal official he made considerable use of the power of his office in furthering the interests of both himself and his family. The Colden name was synonymous with the colonial royal government, and the family was soon to be considered the enemy of the Revolution, which they were.

David Colden, Cadwallader Jr.'s younger brother, was a resident of Long Island who "actively supported royal government, and as a leader of the Loyalists who outnumbered whigs in Flushing, [he] prevented the creation of local protest committees in 1775 and '76."³³ Also, as the leader of 1,293 freeholders and inhabitants of Queens County who had "steadfastly maintained their royal principles,"³⁴ he petitioned the governor for the reinstatement of royal government when the British took New York City. After the war, David Colden was denied



*Remains of paneling and the front door
from Cadwallader Colden Jr.'s
Orange County home, on display at the
Montgomery Town Hall
(Photographs by Erin Gilhooly)*



admission to the State of New York (as an active Loyalist, he had been forced to flee when the British evacuated New York City), and his property was confiscated after his death in 1784.

The Loyalist activities of Cadwallader Colden Jr. were not as forward as those of his brother, possibly because the smaller number of Tories in Ulster County made it extremely difficult and dangerous to be so blatant. Nonetheless, his sympathies were identical. On April 14, 1775, he, Walter DuBois, and Peter DuBois³⁵ published a protest in response to the election of delegates from Ulster County to the Provincial Congress. They stated that the election was bogus because it had been executed by a group that in no way represented the eligible voters, and that the only legal governmental body was the Assembly. (Both were common Loyalist complaints.) They also declared that they would remain loyal “to our Parent State and British Constitution.”³⁶ Although Colden signed the Articles of Association in April because of pressure from the local committee, he continued to espouse his Loyalist rhetoric. He was arrested by the committee in June 1776 so they could disarm him. (Because he was considered an active Loyalist, he was assumed to have a large cache of guns at his home. Only a broken gun and his son-in-law’s fowling piece were found.) On July 4, he was asked to sign an oath stating that he would abide by the Association. He refused to sign when a codicil was added stating that, if necessary, he would bear arms against the British army. As a result, he was sentenced to jail as a Loyalist. On August 22, 1776, his case was given to the state Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies. His troubles with the authorities would last throughout the war, as would Roeloff Eltinge’s. Although Colden consistently claimed that he would obey the rules of the state and remain neutral throughout the struggle, he later stated that he could never swear an oath to the state in God’s name, since his oath to the king was completely binding and could not be superseded. During the Revolutionary War, however, neutrals in New York were believed to be “cowardly tor(ies)”³⁷ and could not be countenanced. While Eltinge’s condemnation as a Loyalist was not based on any overt support of the power of the king and Parliament, keeping company with an avowed Loyalist—especially one from such a hated family—was extremely compromising.

After the militia burst in on the luncheon at the Hardenburghs, it took Colden and Eltinge to Kingston along with other parolees it picked up along the way. Meeting in the Ulster County Courthouse in Kingston, the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies issued a list of those who were to be sent out of state; for some unrecorded reason, Colden and Eltinge were left off. They were ordered by the “officer of the guard to come out of the ranks and (were) left

on the street.”³⁸ Not knowing what to do, both returned to Hurley, obeying their parole.³⁹

Eltinge was taken by guard back to Kingston on October 12 and confined to “close goal by the Council of Safety till further orders.”⁴⁰ He remained there for only a short time, as he and the other prisoners were removed on October 16, and “As soon as we got out of town it was in flames.”⁴¹ The British forces under Major General John Vaughan arrived in Kingston on October 15, having been sent by Sir Henry Clinton in the Highlands to meet up with Burgoyne at Saratoga. Burgoyne had already asked for surrender terms on the 13th, but Clinton had been unaware of this when he dispatched Vaughan. On the 16th, the residents of Kingston had fled, and Vaughan’s forces burned the town nearly to the ground.

Colden was still under parole in nearby Hurley at the time of the burning, and he was subsequently sent to appear before the State Council of Safety meeting in Marbletown. He stated before the council a few days later that he was bound by oath to the king, but would remain neutral and subject to the laws of the state. The council responded that he must remain a prisoner if he was a subject of the king, and it paroled him to the Hardenburghs’. Eltinge had been held as a “close prisoner” at the house of Johannes Tack, in Marbletown, since the burning of Kingston.⁴² On November 5, an order was issued by the Council of Safety that both men were to be sent away to a remote district of Dutchess County called the Nine Partners. There were so few Tories in that region, it was felt, that the two would have little opportunity to influence others.

Although they petitioned the council for a reprieve or postponement, Colden and Eltinge did not receive a response and arrived in Nine Partners, near the Connecticut border, on December 9. On January 27, 1778, they went to Poughkeepsie to confront the state legislature. Since their arrival in Nine Partners, Colden had been campaigning to be allowed to return home. He had approached the council, spoken with and written letters to Governor George Clinton (his former lawyer), and contacted many others, including his “old friend Coll [Levi] Pawling,” an important Patriot. His entreaties were apparently of no avail.⁴³ With the reorganization of the state government under the new constitution of 1777, there was a question of jurisdiction regarding the cases of the men. Colden attempted to use the influence that he thought he possessed with Clinton and others to have the state legislature decide their case, but that body decided that their fates should be under the purview of the reorganized Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, which had not yet met. Colden and Eltinge contacted the two available members of the old committee, who agreed to allow them a two-week parole to their own homes until the new commission

met. Eltinge left for New Paltz on January 30.

During the period of Eltinge's incarceration, which had begun back in October when he was initially to be sent to Connecticut, it is obvious that various governing bodies were unsure about how to deal with him, as well as with Colden. While the two did not pose any direct threat to the war effort, their being designated Loyalists required that their influence on others be contained. Furthermore, the jurisdiction that was to deal with their situation—whether local, county, or state—was unclear, and there was no defined protocol to be followed on any level. Thus the two were in a state of legal limbo that would last a few months longer.

As directed, Eltinge returned to Poughkeepsie on February 13, but he was not accompanied by Colden, who had received a one-month extension because he anticipated he would not be able to cross the ice-bound Hudson. This was probably a ploy to remain home longer, as Eltinge had been able to make the crossing. Eltinge was also given an additional month at home, quite possibly because the commission considered the two cases to be a single issue. Colden arrived in Poughkeepsie on March 15, Eltinge on the 18th. According to Eltinge, he was "detained"⁴⁴ until March 23, but Eugene Fingerhut states that "For four days Colden parked himself outside the Assembly door, awaiting his fate,"⁴⁵ so the status of their level of freedom is unclear. Colden was told that he could return home until further orders, while Eltinge "was . . . permitted to remain at my place of abode. . . till I could be exchanged for some well-affected citizen or prisoner with the enemy."⁴⁶ While Colden's status was still uncertain, Eltinge's situation was apparently coming to a head.

On June 30, the legislature passed "An Act More Effectively to Prevent the Mischieffs ariseing from the Influence and Example of Persons of Equivocal and Suspected Character in this State." No longer would the state accept neutral persons in its midst; with British forces so close, it felt the risk was too great. While people like Eltinge and Colden never aided British forces or bore arms against the Revolutionaries, the state thought it would be better to be rid of them. However, they were given one last chance to regain their freedom and stay: Loyalists were given a final opportunity to take an oath of allegiance to the laws of New York. If they refused, they would be banished. This oath would also require the person to declare that the state had a right to be free and independent. Colden was the first person to be dealt with under the new law, and on July 4 he declined to take the oath. Although he could abide by the state laws, his oath to the king could not be superseded. On July 6, Eltinge also refused to take it.

Following Eltinge's refusal, he was paroled back to New Paltz, but on July 26 he received a notice from the Commission for Detecting and Defeating

Conspiracies. "Pursuant to the act of the Legislature," he was to appear at Fishkill on August 3 "in order to effect his removal within the Enemy's lines, that he be permitted to take with him his family (males capable of bearing arms excepted) one week's provisions and as much of his effects as together with his family and provisions as would be transported in two wagons."⁴⁷ Colden also was to appear on August 3 for the same purpose. Eltinge met up with him at Coldenham, and when they arrived in Fishkill they remained there for two days because no one knew how their transport would be effected. It was decided that they would travel to New York City on a sloop that had been obtained by another banished Loyalist, William Smith Jr., under the guard of Colonel Aaron Burr.⁴⁸ Even though Eltinge had been permitted to take his family, they remained in New Paltz, and he arrived in New York City on August 11. On September 8, 1778, he indicated that he "took (his) boarding at Anthony van Noorstrandt in Wolves Hollow on Long Island in Queens County," where it appears from his diary that he primarily remained throughout the war, although he made trips into the city every few months.

Also living in New York was Eltinge's younger brother Solomon (1742-1809). He, too, had been in trouble with the authorities. On November 8, 1776, he had been sent by the conspiracy commissioner to Exeter, New Hampshire, for being "notoriously disaffected to the American cause, which [he has] evinced by refusing to receive in payment the Continental currency, and endeavouring to depreciate the same"—the same charge originally levied against his brother.⁴⁹ Solomon followed Roeloff in his refusal to take the oath of allegiance on August 1, 1778, and he, too, was banished. Records indicate that the brothers were in close contact during their exile.⁵⁰

Although some account information concerning Roeloff Eltinge's financial situation during his exile survives, no descriptive information about his day-to-day life exists. His financial situation must have been precarious, since it would have been impossible for him to perform his livelihood as a merchant. To earn money, it appears that he turned to crafts such as "patching shoes" and "making a slay." Additionally, from January 1780 through March 1783 he left a considerable amount of "stoves," pails, piggins, "koolers," sugar boxes and "canteens" to be sold at various locations. This provided him with a steady, albeit small, income.⁵¹ Food, other essential goods, and housing were difficult to come by because of a significant surge in Loyalist refugees and the large garrison of British troops. Making matters worse, inflation rates were dramatic. However, Eltinge appears to have survived reasonably well. The last entry in his wartime diary and account book indicates that in 1784 (presumably at the conclusion of his exile) he had amassed £26.2.8.

Provisional articles of peace between Britain and the United States were signed at Paris on November 30, 1782, thus beginning the process for Loyalists either to emigrate or reconcile with and remain in the new nation. Article five provided for “the restitution of . . . the estates, rights, and properties of persons resident in districts in the possession of his Majesty’s arms and who have not borne arms against the said United States,” but this provision was only to be “earnestly recommended . . . to the legislatures of the respective states.” The provisional articles were included in the final treaty, which was signed by representatives of both countries in Paris on September 3, 1783. Because the agreement concerning the appropriate treatment of Loyalists was not binding on any state, Roeloff Eltinge’s position in relation to New York remained unaltered at the conclusion of the war. In other words, he remained banished. Thus, when the British army began the process of evacuating New York City in the spring of 1783, it was necessary for him to leave the state. A letter from Eltinge to his son (probably his eldest, Ezekiel) dated September 29, 1783, indicates that he and Solomon had moved to Achqueckkononck, New Jersey (now Passaic). In this letter, he informed his son that “if any of my friends want to see me [they] may come here, because I see no probability as yet to come to see them with Safety.”⁵² He and Solomon were still there on January 11, 1784, as indicated in a letter Roeloff wrote to his wife. He stated that “I [will] not be able to come home as soon as I had expected on account of the definitive triety [sic] not being published . . . and not knowing yet . . . whether [the state government] will or can do anything for us.”⁵³

The peace treaty was ratified by Congress on January 14, 1784, but New York refused to consider its recommendations regarding the treatment of Loyalists. On February 12, 1784, Roeloff and Solomon Eltinge petitioned the state legislature to be “released from the disagreeable situation to which they have been so long exposed and humbly pray the Honorable Legislature to make such order in their behalf as may remove the effect of the law under which they suffer and enable your Petitioners to return with safety to their families.”⁵⁴ Several other banished Loyalists, including Cadwallader Colden Jr., also submitted petitions. The Assembly voted to reject them all, and the Senate voted to postpone consideration. According to Alexander Flick, “In early 1784 the wartime policy of the state legislature was still clear and certain.” It had no intention of revoking the banishment of Loyalists.⁵⁵

On May 12, however, Roeloff and Solomon Eltinge and 25 others (including Cadwallader Colden Jr.) were permitted to return to their homes. This permission was passed in conjunction with an anti-Loyalist act that upheld the banishment of those who actively took part in the war on the side of the British. Only 36

Loyalists had their banishments revoked in 1784. It was not until 1792 that all of those who had been exiled were allowed to return.

The exact date of Roeloff Eltinge's return to New Paltz is unknown, but it is likely that he returned forthwith. Few records survive that indicate the process of his reintegration into society. Because he never took an active part on the side of the British, his property was never confiscated, nor he did face persecution extreme enough for him to emigrate from his native land. According to Alexander Flick, "Those whose worst crime was open loyalty, who had been arrested, imprisoned, exiled, or paroled, but never charged with treason, were found in every community, and, although subjected to more or less abuse, were for the most part allowed to remain after the war was over, and to keep their property. While never fully forgiven, in time they came to be looked upon as true Americans, and were given full political rights."⁵⁶ Roeloff Eltinge's experience in New Paltz supports Flick's assertion. Within a few years he was respected enough to serve in several elected government positions, first as overseer of the poor in 1790 and then "as one of the New Paltz Twelve Men for the share of Louis DuBois from 1791 until his death in 1795."⁵⁷ He also returned to his mercantile activities in partnership with his son Ezekiel.

It is clear that the Revolutionary authorities believed that Eltinge was a Tory, but were they accurate in their perception? His refusal to take the oath of allegiance clearly indicates that he did not embrace the Patriot cause, but in and of itself that might not indicate that he harbored pro-British sentiments. Before the issue of Eltinge's allegiance is considered in depth, his involvement in an earlier dispute concerning the relation between the colonies and Europe must be considered.

Eltinge was a lifelong member of the Dutch Reformed Church, having joined the Kingston congregation in 1762, at the age of 25. In 1737, the same year as Eltinge's birth, a controversy began to develop in the Dutch Reformed congregations in the colonies. The governing organization of the church, which was responsible for doctrine, ordination, dispute resolution, and all general ecclesiastical business, was the Classis of Amsterdam. Because of its distance from the colonies, a movement began in the 1730s to establish an organization in America to conduct church business, but this organization—the Coetus—would remain subordinate to the Classis. When the Coetus was formed in 1737, several congregations refused to send representatives because they believed that some congregations had obfuscated their true intention of ultimate independence from the Netherlands. Indeed, in 1754 the Coetus expressed its belief that it should serve as an independent, American Classis. The result was a schism in the colonial

churches, with those that desired maintaining ties with Amsterdam forming a separate, smaller body of congregations called the Conferentie, meaning “conference.” The schism was not mended until 1772, when the Articles of Union (which resulted in virtual independence of Dutch Reformed congregations in America) was signed by the American congregations with the approval of the Classis.

The New Paltz congregation sided with the Coetus, but there were residents who wished to remain subordinate to the Classis, and this resulted in the formation of a new, Conferentie congregation on August 29, 1766. Ten of the original 15 members of this new church had never been official members of the New Paltz church, but rather were congregants in the Dutch church in Kingston. (However, it appears likely that these Kingston members attended services in New Paltz on a regular basis.) The other five were members of the New Paltz congregation, although four of them had previously been members in Kingston. Although there was a great deal of strife in the Kingston congregation, it officially remained in the Conferentie party. Interestingly enough, one of the protagonists in the dispute within the Kingston congregation was Colonel Abraham Hasbrouck (of the reputed Eltinge-Hasbrouck feud), who was attempting to force the church in the direction of the Coetus. This would have placed the Eltinges in opposition to the Hasbroucks once again.⁵⁸ The founding members from the Kingston church had been granted a dismissal by the Kingston consistory in order to form the new church, as “they [were] living too far away from the church of Kingston to dutifully and stately attend divine worship there . . . in the pure doctrine of the truth, and to lead them to the communion of a Reformed (and to the Reverend Classis of Amsterdam subordinated) congregation.”⁵⁹

A leading member of the new congregation was Roeloff Josiah Eltinge’s father, Josiah Eltinge, who provided a large portion of the funds for construction of a house of worship. Roeloff Josiah (who was a member of the Kingston congregation) and his three brothers joined the church the year after its creation. Roeloff Eltinge was active in his new congregation, serving as both elder and deacon at various times. The last elections for elder and deacon of the second church in New Paltz for which evidence survives is dated December 16, 1776, four years after the Articles of Union had been signed, but the churches did not unite until May 25, 1783.⁶⁰

The fundamental question in this dispute was whether or not the colonial church should remain subordinate and dependent on the mother country or should it, as a result of growth and maturation and the need to manage its own affairs, become independent. That these issues were being faced in the Dutch church at the same time that the political independence movement was gaining

momentum was not coincidental. American society in many ways was considering its position in relation to Europe, with many in America leaning toward separation. That Roeloff Josiah Eltinge sided with the Conferentie party suggests a conservative mindset; when faced with the issue of political independence, the implication is that he would have possessed more of a Loyalist mentality.

While it is true that members of the Conferentie faction were cultural conservatives, those who were opposed to the Coetus party were not necessarily *political* conservatives as well. The controversy concerning religious independence did develop at the same time as the political independence movement, and both movements were guided by similar principles regarding American and European relationships. But it also occurred at a time when Dutch culture and language was being diminished by the dominating English influence, and those who expressed a desire to remain subordinate to Amsterdam might have been led by an equal desire to retain their cultural identity. Additionally, there were many in the Coetus who tended toward evangelical style of worship, thus encouraging those “uncomfortable with the vagaries of revivalism” to join the Conferentie opposition.⁶¹ Thus, all members of the Dutch conservative faction, including Eltinge, were not necessarily anti-Revolutionaries by definition since they were also being influenced by other cultural and spiritual concerns.

What, then, is the evidence that sheds light on Eltinge’s allegiance? His involvement in the conservative faction of the Dutch church suggests that even before the American political independence movement began he was a proponent of continued cultural connections with Europe. However, the incident that marked him as a Loyalist in the eyes of the Patriots—and by the definition of the Continental Congress—was his refusal to take Continental currency. At his trial, he never stated any support for the British government other than indicating that he did not feel that the Patriots would prevail. His decision not to take the currency was based on economic pragmatism and his belief that he was being taken advantage of. If he was truly a Loyalist, at that point it is likely that he would have made statements to that effect; both his involvement in the less-powerful Conferentie faction and his future refusal to take the oath suggest that he was a man of principle who was willing to declare publicly his ideology, whether it was popular or not. It must also be remembered that in the fall of 1776, even though independence had been declared, Loyalist and Patriot ideologies had not yet polarized the people into two camps. It is likely that, given his conservative mindset, Eltinge leaned toward the Loyalist side without fully committing to it—at least in 1776.

When he refused to take the oath in 1778, however, the situation had changed. By that time, a person had to be either a Loyalist or a Patriot because it had become a matter of one party against another, rather than an issue of a somewhat fluid ideology. Refusing to take the oath in itself was not a clear statement of pro-British sympathies; it could also have been an *anti-Revolutionary* declaration. During the previous two years, Eltinge had been shuttled around from place to place, confined in prisons, and in general treated poorly by authorities whose right to punish was questionable, particularly in the early years before the state had been officially formed. If we keep in mind that he did not declare pro-British opinions (if he in fact possessed them) when he would likely have done so, it is quite possible that his treatment at the hands of the Patriots hardened his heart against them and made it too galling for him to take the oath. *Thus, it is likely that he was a conservative forced into the Loyalist camp by the harsh treatment to which he was subjected for a perceived offense that was simply a matter of financial self-preservation.*

The other piece of evidence that might suggest a Loyalist stance was Eltinge's relationship with Cadwallader Colden Jr. Although the two were at least acquainted with each other before the war, their close interaction did not begin until both had difficulties with the Patriot committees. While it appears that the committees treated the two almost as a unit, suggesting that they believed the men shared a common ideology, there is no evidence to suggest that Eltinge held the same staunch Loyalist outlook that Colden did. Their relationship, then, was substantially a matter of circumstance. Finally, Eltinge's lack of involvement in the Patriot movement might have been a response to the active part played by such influential Ulster County leaders as Major Jacob Hasbrouck Jr. and Colonel Abraham Hasbrouck. If indeed there was a feud between the two families, it is possible that Eltinge was loath to support the Patriots in Ulster County due to personal conflicts.

Eltinge's political ideology will, unfortunately, never be known. During the Revolution itself, it is quite likely that his position was equally unclear in the eyes of his community, and his treatment was a direct result of this ambiguity. To the authorities, his actions would have marked him as a suspicious person, but because he did not pose any clear threat, they were at a loss to determine an appropriate method of containing him. Had he taken up arms against the Patriots, or otherwise blatantly assisted the British, the appropriate punishment would have been clear. But Eltinge's suspiciousness placed him in limbo, and his resulting treatment might have influenced his inability to sign an oath that would have resolved his predicament and allowed him to return home.

It is also clear that Eltinge's ambiguousness was considered a substantial threat; otherwise, he would not have been removed from the area whenever the possibility of British invasion increased. This highlights a different dimension of the activities of committees in relation to the Loyalists from that suggested by Jonathan Clark, who states that their primary goal was "to enforce a patriotic consensus" within the community by requiring that suspicious individuals "choose between acting like Patriots and silent acquiescence."⁶² Unfortunately, pretending to be a Revolutionary and/or keeping one's mouth shut would not have been sufficient to satisfy the Patriots. Even if oaths were taken by those whose actions suggested a Loyalist mentality, "Many participants remarked upon the difficulty of knowing who had sworn the oath with conviction, and who was simply being pragmatic in order to save his property or his skin."⁶³ Because those of ambiguous allegiance—many of whom did take an oath of allegiance—were still feared as potentially active Tories, the committees were additionally required to deal with the silent threat that they posed.

It is difficult to compare Eltinge's experience with that of others whose political allegiance was unclear, as there is little modern research on the subject other than that which concerns key figures, or the experience of Tories in general. But certainly Eltinge would not have been alone. In Poughkeepsie, Clark contends that 130 out of the 239 residents whose allegiance can be sufficiently determined were not fully supportive of the Patriot cause, although the level of their support (or lack thereof) varied.⁶⁴ He also states that "Perhaps the most unjustly treated victims of patriotic justice were men who belonged . . . in one of the 'occasional' categories."⁶⁵ This is likely because they were seen as unknown quantities and therefore unpredictable. As to the experience of Loyalists, or suspected Loyalists, after the war, Alexander Flick contends that nonbelligerents were generally accepted back into their communities, although not always fully forgiven.⁶⁶ Clark's investigation suggests a similar postwar treatment in Poughkeepsie, possibly because "Ties to family, to farms, and to the community . . . proved to a surprising extent stronger than political causes," although they were excluded from political affairs.⁶⁷ Eltinge was apparently successfully reintegrated, possibly more so than many in similar circumstances in Poughkeepsie, but this might have been because the affairs of New Paltz were heavily influenced by the original founding families through the organization known as "The Twelve Men," and Eltinge was the dominant member of the line of patentee Abraham DuBois. As long as his family accepted him, he would retain a position in the community.

Even though Eltinge's experience was far from unique, his story is rare for its completeness given his social standing. It demonstrates the sticky issue of alle-

giance, both in its time and in retrospect, as well as the motivations of a suspicious community in an anxious time. While those in the higher ranks of society were involved in an ideological struggle to understand how, and if, the colonies should remain attached to Great Britain, there were many in the middle ranks whose allegiance—although not always without philosophical foundations—was also determined by small-town politics, familial animosities, suspicion, and pride.

Notes

1. Robert M. Calhoun, *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America, 1760-1781* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 300.
2. William H. Nelson, *The American Tory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 5.
3. Calhoun, xii.
4. Nelson, 41.
5. Nelson, 43-45; Philip Ranlett, *The New York Loyalists* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 10-25.
6. Ranlett, 26-51.
7. Robert Benson, "To Aaron Burr," 2 Aug. 1778, Matthew L. Davis, ed. *Memoirs of Aaron Burr* (New York: Da Capo, 1971), 131.
8. Michael Kammen, "The American Revolution as a *Crise de Conscience*: The Case of New York," in Richard M. Jellison, ed., *Society, Freedom, and Conscience: The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York* (New York: Norton, 1976), 125-89.
9. Both British and American authorities of the period felt that New York was rife with Loyalist sympathizers. Most modern histories follow the lead of Alexander Flick who contended that half of all New Yorkers were against the Patriot cause [*Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution* (1901; New York: Arno Press, 1969), 180-182]. Most historians who followed Flick accepted his analysis until Ranlett questioned this accepted view in his 1986 reevaluation of the issue [*The New York Loyalists*]. He suggests that "New York was probably similar to the other Revolutionary states in its degree of loyalism" (186-7). The issue of Tory strength in New York is sticky at best and irresolvable at worst, since it would have been almost impossible to determine allegiance of many at the time, let alone hundreds of years hence.
10. Alexander Flick, *Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution*, 71.
11. University of the State of New York, Division of Archives and History, *The American Revolution in New York: its Political, Social and Economic Significance* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1926), 225.
12. Calhoun, 410.
13. Calhoun, 304-5.
14. Ranlett, 162.
15. The only extensive group of documents related to a local committee are those of the Albany Committee.
16. Jonathan Clark, "The Problem of Allegiance in Revolutionary Poughkeepsie," in David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate, eds., *Saints & Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (New York: Norton, 1984), 285-317.
17. Ralph LeFevre, *History of New Paltz and its Old Families* (Albany: Fort Orange Press, 1903), 487.
18. The archives of the Huguenot Historical Society and Senate House (Kingston, New York) contain a great deal of information about Roeloff Josiah Eltinge's financial activities, but these have

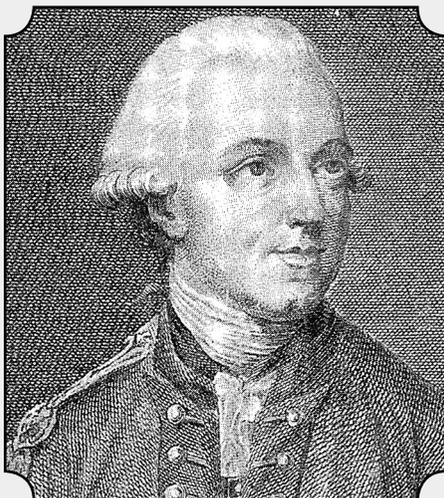
yet to be fully studied.

19. Roeloff Eltinge's paternal grandmother was Sara DuBois, daughter of Abraham DuBois (1657-1731), one of the holders of the patent of New Paltz. Also, his mother was Magdalena DuBois, his father's first cousin. As there were several men with the name of Abraham DuBois alive in 1776, the familial relationship between Eltinge and this Abraham DuBois is unclear.
20. Hugh Flick, "The Rise of the Revolutionary Committee System," in *History of the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933) III, 232.
21. Quoted in H. Flick, 230. However, Seabury's analysis cannot be entirely trusted because his staunch Loyalism might have clouded his perceptions. Additionally, in his desire to discredit the Revolutionaries, he might have overstated his case.
22. A. Flick, 67.
23. According to his parole of June 17, 1777, he had been "confined since last Fall." Additionally, his diary attests to his leaving Fishkill on December 3, 1776. *Roeloff and Ezekiel Eltinge Family Papers*, Huguenot Historical Society, New Paltz, N.Y.
24. LeFevre, 485. While this supposed feud is a matter of folklore, it is said in New Paltz today that animosity extended well into the twentieth century.
25. Abraham Hasbrouck resigned his position as commander of the Ulster Fourth Regiment because he had been passed over for generalship in favor of George Clinton. The return of his commission was described as "childish" by the provincial government [quoted in Marius Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York* (New York: Burr Printing House, 1888), 175].
26. Prisoners were also sent to Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania.
27. New York State, Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, 1777-78. *Minutes of the Committee and of the first Commission for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York*, Minutes of Committee, October 13, 1776, The New-York Historical Society, *Collections* (New York, 1918), 414.
28. Lt. Col. Welch was an officer of New Hampshire who had been assigned to New York by Washington and was made responsible for removing the prisoners to New Hampshire. It is not clear from the Minutes exactly to whom Welch had been assigned, but he had a great deal of interaction with the Committee of Conspiracies in 1776-7.
29. Receipt of February 15, 1777 from Roeloff Eltinge to Joseph Stacy of the Exeter Gaol. *Eltinge Papers*.
30. Meshach Weare, President of the Council of New Hampshire, "To William Duer, Chairman of the Committee for Conspiracies," December 27, 1776, *Minutes of the Committee...Defeating Conspiracies*, 417-418.
31. Commissioners for Conspiracies, "To the Honourable Committee of Safety of New Hampshire." March 13, 1777, *Minutes of the Committee... Defeating Conspiracies*, 433-5.
32. Eugene Fingerhut suggests in *Survivor: Cadwallader Colden II in Revolutionary America* (Washington, University Press of America, 1983), 27, that the two might have become acquainted while involved in court cases in Kingston in the previous years, when Colden served as a judge. Their first recorded meeting of a personal nature occurred on June 18, 1777, when Eltinge was paroled and left several items, including eating and cooking utensils, in the care of Colden, who remained incarcerated on the prison ships. *Eltinge Papers*.
33. Fingerhut, 40.
34. Quoted in A. Flick, 97.
35. Peter DuBois was Roeloff Josiah Eltinge's third cousin. Walter DuBois is not identified in the published DuBois family genealogy.
36. Cited in Fingerhut, 44.
37. Fingerhut, 92.

38. *Eltinge Papers*.
39. It is not clear if Eltinge returned to Van Deusen's house in Hurley with Colden or if he returned to Hardenburgh's, also in Hurley. His diary simply states "went to Hurley again."
40. *Eltinge Papers*.
41. *Eltinge Papers*.
42. *Eltinge Papers*.
43. Quoted in Fingerhut, 88.
44. *Eltinge Papers*.
45. Fingerhut, 92.
46. *Eltinge Papers*.
47. In his diary, he recorded that he was to report on July 30. *Eltinge Papers*.
48. William Smith Jr. (1728-1793) was a prominent lawyer and historian who had been appointed to his father's seat in the Governor's Council in 1767 and subsequently served as Chief Justice of the Province of New York (appointed in 1780 by the royal governor during the British occupation of New York). He left for Canada after the British evacuation of New York City and was appointed Chief Justice of Quebec in 1786. While Smith was also banished from the State of New York for refusing to take the oath of allegiance, and while he was adamantly against independence, he was also staunchly opposed to Parliamentary taxation and was for the "cause of truth and liberty," as he stated in the first issue of his 1752 weekly, *The Independent Reflector* [as quoted in William Sabine, introduction, *Historical Memoirs of William Smith from 12 July 1776 to 25 July 1778* (Hollis, N.Y.: Colburn & Tegg, 1958), 2-3]. He was a close colleague of many other patriot radicals, including John Morin Scott, the Livingstons (to whom his wife belonged), and Alexander McDougall.
49. *Minutes of the Committee....Defeating Conspiracies*, 11.
50. Eltinge's diary indicates that he loaned Solomon six half guineas in April 1781, and two letters written from New Jersey in September 1783 and January 1784 state that they were together there pending the decision regarding their being allowed to return to New York. Roeloff had additional contact with his family during his exile; his wife, Maria, visited him in the company of Mrs. Colden, who was given permission to visit her husband in April 1781 for a total of 11 days. Eltinge's eldest son, Ezekiel, who was eighteen years of age, began the journey with his mother but was sent home when the American General William Heath detained their sloop at West Point. Additionally, when the general found "a quantity of provisions . . . over and above what appeared necessary to support the families on their way to the enemy," he seized the goods and put them in the public stores [New York State. *Public Papers of George Clinton* (New York and Albany: State of New York, 1899-1914) VI, 756].
51. A piggin, or pipkin, is a small wooden vessel with a handle. A "stove" probably refers to a foot-stove or footwarmer. A "kooler" might refer to a wooden vessel for cooling wine, and a canteen is a type of wooden keg. While Eltinge's account book does not definitively state that he made these objects himself, it is quite likely that he did; if he was serving as a middleman, he would probably have dealt in a greater variety of objects.
52. *Eltinge Papers*.
53. *Eltinge Papers*.
54. *Eltinge Papers*.
55. Fingerhut, 125.
56. A. Flick, 165.
57. Eric Roth, "Finding Aid, Elting Family Papers," Huguenot Historical Society Archives. The Twelve Men was a quasi-governmental organization in New Paltz that was charged with the administration of the land patent received in 1678 by the twelve founders of the town. Organized

in 1728, the Twelve Men were primarily involved in dividing land in the early years, but by the 1790s they were generally only responsible for resolving disputes concerning land titles. They were elected by the freeholders of the town, with each man serving as the representative of the share of one of the original twelve patentees. Only a person descending from an original patentee could represent the share of his ancestor, in this case, Louis DuBois, Roeloff Eltinge's great-great-grandfather.

58. Abraham Hasbrouck, a supporter of the Coetus, forced the domine (the minister) of the Kingston church to take an oath of allegiance to the king, which he felt would nullify any connection between the American churches and the Classis since the oath taker would be forced to declare "that no foreign prince, person, prelate, State or potentate had, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, dominion or authority ecclesiastical or spiritual within this realm" (quoted in Schoonmaker, 216). It was later determined that Abraham Hasbrouck had no right to administer an oath.
59. D. Veersteeg, *Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Paltz, N.Y.* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1896), 9. If they felt that they were too far from Kingston to worship, that would have been the case even prior to the internal disputes, thus suggesting that they had been previously attending the New Paltz church without becoming official members.
60. The last two elections are recorded on a single sheet of paper, rather than in a book or other such longer document, suggesting haphazard record keeping. It is possible there were additional elections for which no records survive.
61. Randall Balmer, *A Perfect Babel of Confusion: Dutch Religion and English Culture in the Middle Colonies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 147.
62. Clark, 306.
63. Kammen, *Crise*, 156.
64. Clark, 296. Clark created four categories of allegiance: Patriot, Loyalist, Occasional Patriot, and Occasional Loyalist. He states that "While another investigator might, in a very few instances, decide to assign to an individual an allegiance slightly different from the one I assigned, the general conclusions regarding allegiance would, I am confident, still stand" (310). Clark probably would have categorized Eltinge as a Loyalist, considering that he refused an oath. But as we have seen, Eltinge's allegiance is questionable. Using Clark's categories, I would define him as an "Occasional Loyalist."
65. Clark, 306.
66. A. Flick, 165.
67. Clark, 309.



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Commander in Chief William Howe

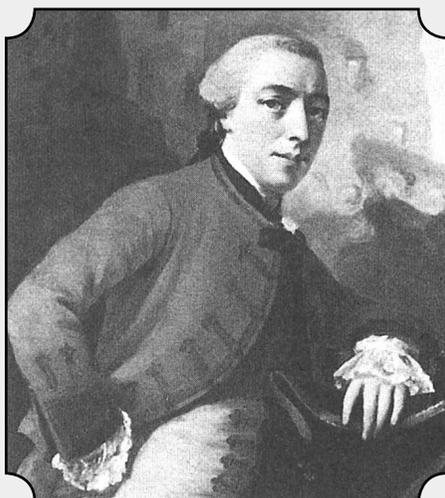
Saratoga, Philadelphia, and the Collapse of Britain's Grand Strategy

Barnet Schecter

At the beginning of July 1777, Lieutenant General Henry Clinton returned to New York as Sir Henry. The previous December, he had done a professional job of seizing Newport, Rhode Island, and establishing a naval base there. Once that mission was accomplished, he went on leave to England, fixated (to the point of obsession by some accounts) on the slights, real and imagined, that Commander in Chief William Howe had inflicted on him. He was determined to resign as soon as he arrived.¹ “The many circumstances which occurred in the course of the last campaign to hurt my feelings made me very desirous of retiring,” Clinton wrote plaintively in his account of the war.² However, the king welcomed him like a conquering hero and, conferring a knighthood on Clinton, asked him to remain in the service. Cajoled by the knighthood and by friends who appealed to his sense of duty, Clinton reluctantly agreed “to recross the Atlantic and resume my former station in Sir William Howe’s army. I was determined, however, to request I might not be forced to retain it any longer than the present campaign.”³

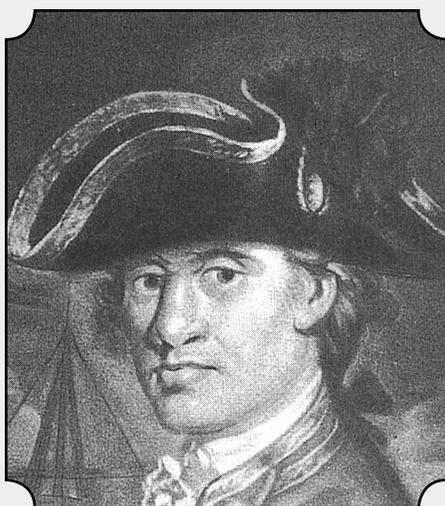
Clinton would have preferred a separate command, and he had lobbied strenuously to replace General Guy Carleton at the head of the army in Canada. However, another general, Sir John Burgoyne, had reached London first and submitted a plan for a march to Albany in 1777 that won him the post. By early May, he was in Quebec; less than two months later, hundreds of British vessels, accompanied by Indian allies in canoes, set out across Lake Champlain toward Ticonderoga.⁴

Back in New York, Clinton was astonished to find that Howe’s army had not struck out from the city even after months of good campaigning weather had gone by. Worse still, Clinton believed the move Howe was finally ready to make was a serious strategic blunder—one that promised to dismantle Britain’s grand strategy of severing the colonies in two along the line of the Hudson River.⁵ Instead of attacking the American forts in the Hudson Highlands and proceeding to Albany for a rendezvous with Burgoyne, Howe planned to set sail in mid-July for an assault on Philadelphia. By threatening the Highlands, Clinton argued later,



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General Sir John Burgoyne



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Admiral Richard Howe

Howe might have forced Washington to defend the vital waterway in the kind of “general action” he feared. Once again, however, Howe preferred the prospect of simply conquering more territory where he believed numerous Tories eagerly awaited him. The news that Burgoyne had captured Fort Ticonderoga during the first week of July merely assured the commander in chief that the northern army could take care of itself without his help.⁶

Howe placed Clinton in command of New York and its environs with some 7,000 men fit for duty, then in early July he loaded the bulk of the army on the fleet of his brother, Admiral Richard Howe, and sailed down to the entrance of the Lower Bay. Since Britain’s great expeditionary force seized New York in 1776, Admiral Howe had drawn steadily mounting criticism from the first lord of the Admiralty, the Earl of Sandwich, for dedicating too many ships to the support of General Howe’s army and not enough to blockading the Eastern Seaboard. The strategy of severing the colonies along the Hudson was designed primarily to strangle New England, and stopping the region’s trade was a vital component of the plan. After a base was established in New York, the Admiralty expected Admiral Howe to shift his emphasis from the army to the embargo. With his squadron of 73 warships, he was to patrol not only the Northeast, but all 3,000 miles of coastline down to Florida.⁷

Originally, the expensive strategy of raising a huge army for a land campaign was chosen in order to win the war quickly, before Britain’s European enemies could intervene. The cheaper but slower approach of using a blockade was to follow if necessary.⁸ After the campaign of 1776 failed to end the war in New York, the British eventually faced not only the demands of an embargo, but the absolute necessity of deploying ships rapidly for naval combat. They soon discovered that the sandbar between Coney Island and Sandy Hook made New York’s harbor the worst possible location for a naval base.⁹ Day after day, the Howes’ expedition to Philadelphia waited for a wind that would take the largest ships across the sandbar. It finally departed on July 23.¹⁰

Reports in early July that Burgoyne was descending on Ticonderoga convinced Washington, whose main army was encamped at Middlebrook, in New Jersey’s Watchung Mountains, that the fleet in New York City had to be destined for Albany and a rendezvous with the northern army. However, still loath to leave Howe a clear overland route to Philadelphia, Washington took his army only as far as Morristown, twenty miles to the north, and dispatched two brigades across the Hudson to reinforce General Israel Putnam, who was in command in the Highlands. The elaborate preparations in New York for the Howes’ voyage suggested that they might be headed for Philadelphia, or even Charleston, but

news on July 12 that Burgoyne had taken Ticonderoga kept Washington poised to intercept a move up the Hudson.¹¹ When he learned that the British fleet had sailed from Sandy Hook, Washington divided his forces to meet each threat, and Clinton reported the disposition of American troops to Howe by messenger.

“...Mr. Washington, who had his spies in New York who gave him the earliest intelligence of all our movements, lost no time in putting his army into immediate motion,” Clinton wrote in his narrative. “The gross of it marched with himself [from Morristown] directly toward the Delaware, after detaching a considerable body of men to join the northern corps under Schuyler; and Putnam was left with about 4000 at Peekskill, where on Rattlesnake Hill they had begun throwing up works for the defense of the Highlands on the east side [of] the Hudson.”¹²

Clinton had begun to feel vulnerable with only 4,000 regular troops and 3,000 Loyalists to defend Manhattan, Kingsbridge, Staten Island, Long Island, and Powles Hook—far fewer men than the Americans had had for the same purpose in 1776. A week after General Howe left New York, he infuriated Clinton again by writing to him with a vague promise of reinforcements as soon as he could spare them, and with the suggestion that, “if you can in the meantime make any diversion in favor of General Burgoyne’s approaching Albany (with security to King’s Bridge), I need not point out the utility of such a measure.”¹³

In Clinton’s view, this contradicted Howe’s parting admonition to stay put and protect New York until “I knew he was landed [near Philadelphia] and Mr. Washington was decidedly gone to meet him.”¹⁴ Clinton therefore assumed the letter was a bureaucratic attempt by Howe to protect himself from the charge of neglecting Burgoyne in the event that the northern army ran out of supplies or was otherwise threatened. Clinton felt Howe had set him up to take any possible blame. Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the American colonies, bore ultimate responsibility for coordinating strategy, albeit from London. On May 18, he had written Howe authorizing the move against Philadelphia, but admonishing him to return quickly and join forces with Burgoyne. This might have been possible if Howe had gone by land in both directions, an option discouraged by Washington’s vigilance in New Jersey along the road to Philadelphia. By the time Howe received Germain’s letter in August, he was already at sea and wrote back that he would not be able to support the northern army.¹⁵

Burgoyne’s plan did not prescribe that Howe’s forces should come all the way up to Albany to meet him, and until mid-August his dispatches contained no requests for help. However, on August 16, Burgoyne’s march encountered its first severe setback: He allowed a Hessian foraging party of 1,600 men to search for horses and a rebel arms depot near Bennington, to the southeast, but the

detachment was attacked and soundly defeated by an American force before it even reached the Vermont border. The engagement itself cost Burgoyne almost 1,000 men, and most of his 500 Indian allies deserted him in its aftermath. Soon after the battle Burgoyne received Howe's letter informing him of the expedition to Philadelphia.¹⁶

In New York, Clinton had barely enough troops to defend the city and far too few to carry out Howe's discretionary order that he protect Kingsbridge and assist Burgoyne at the same time with an expedition up the Hudson. This became apparent when the ongoing battle for New York flared up again on August 23 and pinned Clinton's forces to the city: He couldn't venture north to make a diversion, because of "the enemy's attacking me in three parts of my command at the same time."¹⁷

As Washington moved south toward Philadelphia, he detached General John Sullivan to Hanover, New Jersey, for an attack on Staten Island. Coordinated strikes at Kingsbridge and the east end of Long Island, timed to distract the British from Sullivan's assault, produced a far more credible show of force than Brigadier General William Heath's fumbled mission the previous January.¹⁸ According to Clinton, Major General William Tryon reported from Kingsbridge "that a considerable body of rebels [had] made their appearance near his foreposts and had cut off part of his advanced picket."¹⁹ This turned out to be a feint, however, and more intense clashes took place at the other two points, where the units of diehard Loyalists enlisted in 1776 bore the brunt of defending New York.

"General [Samuel Holden] Parsons' attack of the post at Setauket on Long Island was, after a brisk cannonade and five hours' perseverance, repulsed by Lieutenant Colonel Hewlett of [Oliver] DeLancey's [Regiment], who commanded there with only 150 provincials," Clinton wrote.²⁰ "But General Sullivan's descent on Staten Island, being made with less alarming preparation and in greater force, might have been attended with the most serious consequences" if the British had not responded as rapidly as they did, Clinton continued.²¹ Sullivan landed in two places at once, overwhelmed the Loyalist units, set fire to their powder magazines, and had started to march toward the town of Richmond before British regulars drove him back and captured some of his men and boats.

The American attacks on New York "were certainly most admirably well combined," Clinton wrote in his narrative. "And, if Mr. Washington had made them with fourteen instead of seven thousand men, they might probably have succeeded" in capturing Staten Island or Long Island, or both.²² In a letter to Commodore William Hotham on August 27, Clinton implied that Washington would have done well to capitalize on Howe's blunder by ignoring his expedition

to Philadelphia—a city that had symbolic but not strategic value. Clinton wrote that “if Washington is not a blockhead, he will leave our chief where he is and exert his whole force against Burgoyne or me.”²³

The Howes’ armada of 260 ships, carrying 13,000 men, spent more than a month at sea before it finally sailed up Chesapeake Bay and landed at the head of the Elk River on August 25. The Delaware River would have been a far shorter route, but General Howe had received exaggerated—albeit convincing—intelligence from a British ship at the mouth of the river warning of American fortifications and sunken obstructions on the route to Philadelphia. Howe also believed that by landing in the Chesapeake he would sever the link between the middle and southern states across the Susquehanna River; once he had seized Philadelphia, he expected to have an easier time clearing the Delaware and securing it as a supply line.²⁴

Detachments from Washington’s army of 8,000 Continentals and 3,000 Pennsylvania militia harassed Howe on his subsequent march to Philadelphia, and the main body of troops tried to stop him completely on September 11 at Brandywine Creek, about halfway to the capital city. As he did in the Battle of Long Island, Washington left one of his flanks open, and Howe seized the opportunity to beat him: 1,000 Americans were wounded, killed, or captured.

Once again, however, Howe did not press his advantage, and Washington’s army slipped from his grasp. As Washington retreated over the next two weeks, he tried to block the path to Philadelphia, but Howe outmaneuvered him and marched into the city on September 26. Congress had already fled to York, Pennsylvania, and Howe had to be content with the city itself as his prize, and with the cheers of the citizens who lined the streets.²⁵

While Howe was marching on Philadelphia, in the north Burgoyne’s situation became critical, exacerbated by Clinton’s hesitancy over diverting troops from New York City, and by the difficulty of communicating from the wilderness. In a letter to Burgoyne on September 11, Clinton had offered to make a diversion at the Americans’ Highland forts in about ten days—a move, Burgoyne hoped, that would draw off some of the American forces that had begun to surround him.²⁶ On September 13 and 14, Burgoyne assembled a bridge of boats across a relatively narrow stretch of the Hudson below Saratoga, marched his army across to the west side of the river, and headed south toward Albany. However, General Horatio Gates, who had replaced Philip Schuyler at the head of the northern army in mid-August, stood directly in Burgoyne’s path with 7,000 troops. On September 19, the armies clashed in the first of two battles at Freeman’s Farm, just north of the American position. Burgoyne, who started the engagement with fewer than

5,000 troops, lost another 600 men.²⁷

Gates, by contrast, had received an influx of volunteers eager to repel the British invasion, and his ranks quickly swelled to 11,000 men. One catalyst for these enlistments was the old feud between New York and New England. The appointment of Gates over Schuyler, his New York rival, elicited an enthusiastic response from the northernmost states.²⁸ Even more powerful was the propaganda surrounding the murder of Jane McCrea, a 23-year-old American woman who had been scalped by some of Burgoyne's Indian scouts on her way to marry her fiancé at the end of July. A letter of protest from Gates to Burgoyne found its way into every newspaper in the region, and McCrea was enshrined as a martyr of the Revolution. The fact that McCrea's fiancé was a Loyalist serving under the British convinced Americans that Burgoyne could not guarantee their safety if they heeded his calls to join him or supply his army, and they fled behind the American lines.²⁹

Clinton's promised attack on the Highlands was supposed to take place on or about September 21, the same day that Burgoyne received Clinton's encouraging letter. His supplies and salted provisions dangerously low, and his line of communications with Canada threatened, Burgoyne decided to let his troops recuperate instead of taking the offensive, hoping that Clinton's diversion might improve the situation. Instead, it grew steadily worse. Clinton was afraid to leave his base in New York exposed, so his offer to move up the Hudson was contingent on the arrival of reinforcements from England, which did not reach the city until September 24. Clinton also awaited a response from Burgoyne, which finally arrived on the 29th, because he hoped such a formal request for help would in some measure relieve him of responsibility for leaving New York City and putting it at greater risk. On October 3, Clinton belatedly sailed up the Hudson with 3,000 men.³⁰

As Clinton prepared to seize the Highland forts, he received a new letter from Burgoyne in which he tried to shift responsibility back to Clinton. Burgoyne enjoyed the power and prestige of an independent command in the north, but now that he was stuck, he suddenly wanted Clinton, who was more than 100 miles away and had no part in his campaign, to issue orders and take responsibility for whether he attacked "the enemy in his front or retreated across the lakes while they were clear of ice," Clinton wrote.³¹

The interplay of cautious and self-serving personalities within the British command structure—the bureaucratic game of enhancing and protecting reputations while avoiding responsibility for the fallout from military decisions—had come full circle. Howe had shifted the burden of helping the northern army to

Clinton, as did Burgoyne in his turn, stipulating that if he did not hear from Clinton by October 12, he would retreat to Canada by way of the lakes.³²

Clinton did an exemplary job of capturing the forts in the Highlands and clearing the river of American ships and obstructions by October 6. When Clinton landed 1,000 men on the east bank of the Hudson, General Putnam thought his position at Peekskill was under attack and retreated northward in search of support. He commanded fewer than 1,500 troops at this point, having sent reinforcements both to Gates in the north and to Washington. Clinton's landing was a feint, however, and he deployed most of his force on the west side of the Hudson to seize Fort Clinton (named for the Governor of New York State) and Fort Montgomery, where he overwhelmed the 700 American defenders. Clinton also took a third fort, Constitution, further upriver.³³

"However, the small number of men which would remain to me for further operations, after garrisoning the extensive posts I had taken—which I was obliged either to defend or dismantle—and securing my communications with New York, precluded every idea for the present of penetrating to Albany..." General Clinton wrote after the war in defense of his actions.³⁴ He had not heard from Howe for more than a month and feared that Washington might send a strong detachment, or even arrive with his whole army, to strike below him on the Hudson and cut him off from the city.

Abandoned, outnumbered, and trapped, Burgoyne despaired of hearing from Clinton and recklessly launched an attack against the fortified American position on October 7. In the Battle of Bemis Heights, the British were driven back to Freeman's Farm, lost another 600 men, and with them the last remnants of their morale. Benedict Arnold, who had commanded and fought brilliantly in the first battle at Freeman's Farm, was a hero of the second engagement as well.³⁵

As Burgoyne's shattered army fled north toward Saratoga, Clinton dismantled one of the three forts he had captured so he could hold the Highlands with fewer men, and prepared to drop back down to New York. However, when he received word that 1,000 reinforcements could be spared from Rhode Island, he decided to make another effort to help Burgoyne. Returning quickly to the city, he ordered "six months' provisions" for Burgoyne's "five thousand men to be directly put on board vessels of proper draft for running up river to Albany." He then dispatched 1,700 men under Major General John Vaughan up the Hudson in galleys "giving him orders to feel his way to General Burgoyne and do his utmost to assist his operations, or even join him if required."³⁶

Vaughan reached Kingston on October 15 and burned it to the ground. He then proceeded as far as Livingston Manor, only forty-five miles south of Albany,

at which point his pilots mutinied and American forces under Putnam, reinforced at this point by Parsons, blocked his advance. The final blow to Clinton's rescue effort, however, came from Howe himself. Vaughan had to be recalled and the Highlands abandoned completely on October 26, after the commander in chief ordered Clinton to send him additional troops on the Delaware and deploy his remaining forces to defend New York City.³⁷

Howe called for reinforcements because Washington had proved to be far more aggressive than he expected. On October 4, while Clinton was in the process of occupying the Highland forts, Washington attacked the British encampments at Germantown, five miles north of Philadelphia. General Nathanael Greene's units briefly put the redcoats to flight, but the morning fog and the overly complex battle plan led to a lack of coordination between the four American columns. American casualties were high, but the troops had savored the sight of British regulars in full retreat. Another positive outcome was the replacement of an incompetent American general who had been drunk during the battle by the Marquis de Lafayette, a young Frenchman who had recently arrived in America to support the Revolution.

The attack at Germantown put Howe on the alert and forced him to consolidate his troops within a more defensible perimeter just north of Philadelphia. At the same time he had to contend with Washington's attempt to cut off his line of supply from the south. By occupying two forts several miles below the city—one on an island in the Delaware and the other across from it on the New Jersey shore—Washington was able to interdict all river traffic coming up from the Atlantic. By also controlling the roads in and out of Philadelphia, Washington had effectively besieged the city. Howe began attacking the forts in mid-October, but the Americans held them tenaciously.³⁸

Howe's demand for reinforcements from New York ended Clinton's attempt to help Burgoyne, but that effort was already too late to be of any use. On October 17, Burgoyne surrendered his entire force to Gates at Saratoga. In the end, the only effect of Clinton's diversion in the Highlands was to make Gates rush somewhat during the negotiations that set the terms of Burgoyne's capitulation. Eager to close the deal quickly when he heard of Clinton's and Vaughan's forays up the Hudson, Gates accepted Burgoyne's demands for a "convention" instead of his surrender.³⁹ This arrangement was supposed to allow the 5,000 captives to return to England on the condition that they not participate further in the current war. However, since their release would allow Britain to use them elsewhere around the globe, thereby freeing up an equal number of troops to fight in America, Congress eventually seized on a pretext to abrogate the convention. Burgoyne and his top

aides returned to England, but the soldiers of the “convention army” spent the rest of the war as prisoners in Virginia.

News of Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga—written on a piece of paper and baked into a large loaf of bread—was smuggled to American prisoners in New York City before most of the town had heard. When the entire prison on the Commons “[r]esounded with three Cheers,” the jailer raced the second floor to see what had happened. He instantly branded the report a “Damned Rebel lie,” but when the news became official that the rebels had their hands on so many British soldiers, the treatment of the American prisoners in New York improved considerably.⁴⁰

Even after the capture of the northern army, the British grand strategy would still have succeeded, Clinton argued later, if he had simply been allowed to keep enough men to preserve his hold on the Hudson Highlands. When Howe depleted the garrison in New York to bolster his campaign in Philadelphia, he also prevented Clinton from replenishing it by countermanding the transfer of the 1,000 troops from Rhode Island. Thus, Howe not only doomed the attempt to help Burgoyne, Clinton wrote, but also threw away Britain’s last real chance to win the war.

Clinton had hoped that as soon as Howe “found I had opened the important door of the Hudson, he would have strained to every nerve to keep it so and prevent the rebels from ever shutting it again—even though he had been obliged to place the back of his whole army against it. And I hope I shall be pardoned if I presume to suggest that, had this been done, it would have most probably finished the war. And Sir William’s southern move [to Philadelphia], instead of being censured, would perhaps have been extolled as one of the operative parts of a judicious and well combined plan, and even the loss of General Burgoyne’s army looked upon as a necessary sacrifice, as having both essentially contributed to draw off the two grand armies of the enemy to a distance from that very strong and important hold [the Hudson Highlands], which might possibly have been placed beyond our reach had either remained in its neighborhood.”⁴¹

Proud of his bold stroke against the Highland forts, and angry that Howe had not come back to support him in consolidating the British hold on the river, Clinton had relinquished the insight that he seemed to grasp fully during the campaign of 1776: that the only way to win the war was to capture or destroy Washington’s army, not to seize a strategic waterway or piece of ground. This maxim applied to both sides in the conflict: Burgoyne’s army, in fact, was not expendable under any circumstances.

In the world of international politics, the surrender at Saratoga could not simply be dismissed as a necessary cost of war. The American victory reverberated across the Atlantic, and by early December, the news had reached Paris. Two months later, encouraged by the former colonies' improved prospects, France formally recognized American independence and signed a commercial treaty with the United States. After the French declared war on Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands eventually followed suit. The rebellion of thirteen colonies rapidly became a global conflict, which strained Britain's resources and ultimately brought down the ministry, ushering the opposition into power. The abandonment of Burgoyne had led to his surrender at Saratoga, which proved to be the great turning point of the American Revolution, and it was the misguided strategy of settling comfortably into America's two largest cities that brought it on. When word reached Benjamin Franklin in Paris that Howe had captured Philadelphia, he famously and presciently replied: "No, Philadelphia has captured Howe!"⁴²

Notes

1. Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents*, William B. Willcox, ed. (New Haven: Yale University, 1954). Clinton's obsession with his grievances: xxiv-xx; Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 2:514.
2. Clinton, 61.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Symonds, Craig L. and William J. Clipson, *A Battlefield Atlas of the American Revolution* (Baltimore: Nautical and Aviation Publishing Company of America, 1999), 39.
5. Clinton, xxv, 61-62.
6. *Ibid.*; Ira Gruber, *The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1972), 230-33.
7. Howe and the Admiralty; fleet in disrepair: Gruber, *Howe Brothers*, 136-142, 221, 273-74.
8. William B. Willcox, *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War for Independence* (New York: Knopf, 1964), 42.
9. John A. Tilley, *The British Navy and the American Revolution* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 84.
10. Delays at Sandy Hook: I.N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909: Compiled from Original Sources and Illustrated by Photo-Intaglio Reproductions of Important Maps, Plans, Views and Documents in Public and Private Collections*, 6 vols. (Union, NJ: Lawbook Exchange, 1998), 5:1054; Gruber, 234.
11. Ward, 1:328-31.
12. Clinton, 66.
13. Quoted in Clinton, 66.
14. *Ibid.*
15. Howe's abandonment of Burgoyne and Germain's role: *ibid.*, 67.
16. Details of battle near Bennington: Symonds, 45.

17. Clinton, 67.
18. Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography*, 7 vols. (New York: Scribner's, 1948-1954), 5: 464.
19. Clinton, 67.
20. *Ibid.*, 68, footnote 20.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 68.
23. *Ibid.*, 69, footnote 22.
24. Ward, 1:331-33.
25. Battle of Brandywine, British capture of Philadelphia: Symonds, 53, 55.
26. Clinton, 70-72.
27. Symonds, 47.
28. Influx of volunteers for Gates: Ward, 2:498, 524; Symonds, 47.
29. American reaction to McCrea incident: Ward, 2:496-98; Symonds, 47.
30. Clinton, 70, footnote 26; 72. Symonds, 49.
31. Burgoyne's sudden desire for help: Clinton, 73, 74, 75 (footnote 35), 82-83; quote on 73.
32. *Ibid.*, 73-74.
33. Symonds, 49.
34. The quote is in Clinton, 79. Clinton's fear of Washington cutting him off from the city: *ibid.*, xxvi-xxviii; 79 (footnote 43).
35. Arnold's role in the battles was heroic, but because of friction between him and Gates, his behavior was also the subject of controversy. See Boatner, 27, 77-78.
36. Clinton, 79-80.
37. Howe, in Philadelphia, drew men from New York: Clinton, 80-81.
38. Details of Germantown and siege of Philadelphia: Symonds, 57, 59.
39. Ward, 2:537.
40. Quoted in Thomas Jefferson Wertebaker, *Father Knickerbocker Rebels* (New York: Scribner's, 1948), 139.
41. Clinton, 81-82.
42. Mark Boatner, *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (New York: David McKay, 1974), 865.

“The women! in this place have risen in a mob”: Women Rioters and the American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley

Thomas S. Wermuth

Historians have long assessed the role of women as participants in pre-industrial riots. One of the most famous of these, of course, was the 1789 “March of the Fishwives” at the beginning of the French Revolution. The 1863 Confederate Bread Riots are another example. Less attention has been given to the role of women in American Revolutionary riots.¹ This essay examines the important role of Hudson Valley women in the crowd actions that characterized that era.

From the beginning of the war through the late 1770s, popular disturbances and crowd actions became a part of the social landscape in the Hudson Valley. Usually aimed at Tories, many of these actions were sanctioned, or at least tolerated, by the local governments or the popular committees that directed Revolutionary activities.

Crowd actions were not peculiar to the Revolutionary period, nor were they specific to this region. Indeed, as historians like Natalie Davis, George Rude, and E.P. Thompson have pointed out, mass disturbances and riots were seen as acceptable resolutions to a community’s social or economic problems in the early modern period.² Throughout the eighteenth century, crowds engaged in popular action served as quasi-official forces, sometimes with authority delegated by local governments, sometimes without. For example, in 1740 a Kingston “delegation” investigating an ongoing boundary dispute between Johannis Wynkoop and Christian Nedick was given the authority to “pull down his Fence” if “Wynkoop did not comply w/the proposition they make to him.” Others who threatened community standards, such as monopolizers or prostitutes, were threatened with “skimmington rides” and “charivaris” in Poughkeepsie, while residents representing more dangerous threats in Kingston and Saugerties witnessed the destruction of their property.³

These actions conform to the model described by historians of popular protest: a group of community residents act with “quasi-official” authority to address



William Hogarth's depiction of a riot in eighteenth-century England

and redress a problem threatening their town or village. Classic examples of this in early America include crowds harassing price-gouging merchants, press gangs, or prostitutes.⁴

The number of such crowd actions increased substantially during the American Revolutionary period. This was true for several reasons. First, the official government was in disarray, leading townfolk to take matters into their own hands more frequently than would have been the case under normal conditions. Second, the Revolution created a series of problems and threats—political, social, and economic—that had not existed earlier and that needed speedy resolution, and which official authorities seemed unable to resolve.

Some of the crowd actions were clearly political, as with the arrest of Loyalist Cadwallader Colden Jr., son of the former acting governor, at his home near Newburgh. Acting on the authority of the local Committee of Safety, a “delegation” stormed his estate at midnight on June 21, 1776. The group searched and ransacked his house and ordered him arrested. Although the raiding party threatened him with the humiliating possibility that he would “be rode upon a rail” to the local jail if he did not accompany them willingly (a punishment traditionally reserved for prostitutes, wife abusers, or other community miscreants), he was ultimately arrested far less dramatically. Nevertheless, to threaten one of the most substantial men in the mid-Valley with such a fate—and Colden’s apparent belief that the committee would make good on their threat—reveals the extent of the challenge to the existing social and political order.⁵

Shortly before the British invasion of New York City, crowds there seized Tories, rode them on rails, and stripped them of their clothes. In Albany, crowds made suspected Loyalists run a gauntlet, beating them as they ran.⁶ Riots of this nature, aimed primarily at Tories, continued throughout the war.

Many other popular disturbances were not so well coordinated with local authorities and were aimed, not at Loyalists, but at resolving social and economic threats to the community. It is important to keep in mind the social and economic context in which these riots occurred. The day-to-day workings of village economies in the Hudson Valley were not left to the vagaries of the free market. Local town governments, as well as New York provincial authorities, enforced formal legislation or exerted informal community pressures that sought to encourage neighborly behavior and discourage any economic actions that might threaten the corporate body of the community. Old medieval injunctions against forestalling (withholding goods from the market in order to drive up prices) and engrossment (the monopolization of products destined for markets) remained on the law books throughout New York, although before the American Revolution they were irregularly enforced.⁷

Regulation of the local economy relied heavily on the force of community tradition. Where informal means proved insufficient, responsibility for balancing competing economic interests fell to the local governing boards. These policies generally reflected the communities' consensus of the primary importance of fostering a healthy agricultural trade. Nevertheless, local regulations—whether of prices, trading practices, or quality standards—were shaped as much by broad community concerns as by a desire to protect the interests of producers.

The government regulation that began with the original acts of incorporation in the seventeenth century carried into the early nineteenth. The charter of Kingston called for a public market, eventually located at Hendrick Sleght's, where the weights and measures were inspected, sellers and butchers licensed, financial exchanges supervised, flour and meat routinely inspected, and prices on various goods capped.⁸ The towns of New Paltz and New Windsor set maximum prices on bread and salt, among other goods, and scrutinized wages as well. The regulation of prices and quality of goods continued well into the early nineteenth century in Kingston and Poughkeepsie, where the "assize of bread" was regularly posted. The assize listed the price and size of the normal loaf, and set these prices according to the price of local flour. It also ordered that "each loaf shall be marked with the initials of the Christian and surname of the baker."⁹

The Corporation of Kingston also kept wheat on hand in the common store for local use, with limits on the amount one could purchase, a ceiling on prices,

and instructions for its use. This wheat, rye, and “indian corn” was sold at a further reduced rate to poorer residents, so long as it was to be used “for Bread” and not sold.¹⁰ The trustees also regulated interest rates for money put out on loan, with six percent the maximum allowed to be charged within the town. Additionally, no more than five percent could be charged to the town’s poor or to freeholders, but seven percent could be “Lett out upon Interest out of the Corporation.” The trustees also lent money, usually to the poor or freeholders. However, the corporation mandated that “such persons as are able to let money out themselves, shall not have it unless they pay 8%.”¹¹

Thus social settings, personal relations, family and personal reputation, and even economic needs and demands that could not be met through commercial markets helped determine proper economic behavior.

During the economic crisis of the Revolution, shortages of necessary items (particularly bread and salt) were blamed on “ingrossing jockies,” and high prices were believed to be the work of price-gouging merchants. As early as 1776, residents of Kingston and New Windsor took matters into their own hands when they felt that their elected officials were not going far enough in regulating the economy and prosecuting monopolizers.¹² The Ulster County Committee reported in 1776 that “we are daily alarmed, and our streets filled with mobs.” According to the committee, the situation had grown so desperate in Ulster that if the legislature could not solve the economic woes affecting the central valley, local committees would have to assume authority in the name “of the People at Large.”¹³ Kingston’s Johannes Slegt appealed to the Provincial Congress for help, declaring that “mobs” were “breaking of doors, and committing of outrages.”¹⁴

The years 1776 through 1779 witnessed regular boycotts, forced sales of necessary products, and riots in the mid-Hudson Valley. Many of the participants in these riots were women. The first of these occurred in Kingston in November 1776, when a crowd raided warehouses and stores, seizing tea. Two weeks later, one of Orange county’s first families, the Ellisons of New Windsor, were the victims of a riot. A large crowd, composed of both men and women, came to William Ellison’s store, and after accusing him of price-gouging and engrossment, it seized all the salt “except one bushel,” which it left for the use of his family.¹⁵

Poughkeepsie-area shopkeeper Peter Messier suffered a crowd action in early 1777. Claiming that he was selling tea above the Poughkeepsie Committee’s imposed price-cap, a crowd of women used their own weights and measures to weigh and distribute the tea among themselves. The women, accompanied by two Continental soldiers, offered Messier “their own price,” which was considerably lower than his selling price.¹⁶ The women returned twice more over the next

several days to repeat these actions.

Two Albany merchants who had purchased tea in Philadelphia had the misfortune of sending it overland through New Windsor in 1777. A crowd of both “men and women” besieged the transporters and seized the load, asserting that it was being marketed at a higher price than the six-shilling limit set by the local committee. They then sold it to themselves at that price.

The New Windsor and Poughkeepsie riots reveal that the rioters drew upon the legitimacy of the local government in order to explain their own activities. The rioters at Ellison’s store reminded the shopkeeper of the committee’s price regulations, which he was allegedly breaking. The women who confiscated Messier’s tea specifically stated that “they had orders from the Committee to search his house.” However, it is important to point out that in each of these actions, the rioters exceeded the committee’s dictates. Neither riot was authorized by the local authorities.¹⁷

The actions of the rioters in seizing foodstuffs reveal traditional economic beliefs that denied the role of an unregulated market during times of economic crisis. Further, these rioters questioned the very essence of private property when they seized goods, making clear their belief that a shopkeeper was not the only person who could decide what to do with his or her merchandise, and that the community had a legitimate voice in its distribution. What is remarkable is that during the Revolutionary War, these beliefs and activities became associated, even synonymous, with patriotic behavior. Those who participated in the riots claimed that by their actions they were revealing their loyalty to the cause, while their targets, such as William Ellison, were exhibiting signs of Toryism.¹⁸

Also remarkable is that many of the rioters were women, who had no public or political role in the mid-Valley at this time, for voting, jury duty, and even unlimited control over property were denied to them. However, during the Revolution, women often took the lead in Hudson Valley riots. It was a crowd of women, for example, who first confronted New Windsor shopkeeper Mrs. Lawrence in 1777 for price-gouging, and by so doing forced the committee to act. At another riot in New Windsor, a local observer complained to a tea merchant that “the women! in this place have risen in a mob, and are now selling a box of tea of yours [the owner] at 6s per lb.” A store in Fishkill was raided by female relatives of the owner.¹⁹

The action of women in relation to economic controls was not limited only to seizures and crowd action. Women also made it clear that they would use their power as wives and mothers to halt the war effort if certain measures were not taken to regulate the economy. In August 1776, the women of Kingston sur-

rounded the chambers of the Committee of Safety and demanded that if the food shortages were not resolved, “their husbands and sons shall fight no more.”²⁰ In this way, these riots were not only protests against the economy; they had clear political implications as well. The site of the women’s action was not the Kingston public market, nor a shopkeeper’s warehouse, but the meeting house of the town’s political authorities. It was not simply a symbolic location for the women to make their statement: it was the place where policy-makers met. And far from making threats of boycotts or disruptions, these women were warning of political action if their demands were not met.

Women tended to exert a public voice around those issues in which the needs of the domestic sphere crossed those of the public. The ability to get salt, tea, or flour at good prices fell firmly within the socially and culturally constructed gender roles of eighteenth-century America. Like their counterparts in the French Revolution, women’s political action usually formed around issues of family and domestic concerns, particularly food and supplies.²¹

Generally, historians have agreed that women’s participation in bread and food riots was based on their socially constructed gender roles as being responsible for providing food for their children. Also, as Natalie Davis has suggested for early modern France, women’s participation could be excused by the fact that they were not viewed as responsible for their actions, and therefore could not be held accountable for their behavior. Since a riot was, at best, of questionable legality, those with limited legal and political roles could not be held fully responsible. English officials complained during the 1605 enclosure riots that women were “hiding behind their sex.”²²

Nevertheless, as E.P. Thompson has pointed out, women were primarily responsible for marketing, most sensitive to price fluctuations, and more likely to detect irregularities in sales or inferior products.²³ Women, therefore, would probably detect subtle price changes or questionable marketing practices and were more likely to act on them.

The involvement of women in food riots reveals a level of public participation often overlooked by traditional histories of the American Revolution. Although women did not actively take part on the battlefield, they were involved in important economic decisions concerning the just allocation and availability of goods at affordable prices. Further, their actions had clear political significance: when they could not obtain the necessary goods and items for the home, they threatened the ability of authorities to wage war. In this way, the actions of women-led crowds were not peripheral to the Revolution, but must be seen as an important component of wartime activities.

Notes

1. For a useful corrective, see Barbara Clark Smith, "Food Riots and the American Revolution," *William & Mary Quarterly* (1994), 3-30.
2. Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), 102-5; George Rude, *Ideology and Popular Protest* (New York, 1980), 27-37; E.P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York, 1993), 185-89.
3. "Kingston Trustees Minutes," May 14, 1740; 1721.
4. Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 77-78; Edward Countryman, *A People in Revolution: The American Revolution and Political Society in New York, 1760-1790* (Baltimore, 1981), 37-45.
5. Cadwallader Colden Jr. to Ulster County Committee, June 27, 1776, in Force, *American Archives* 6:1112
6. Countryman, 170.
7. *Ibid.*, 56-59.
8. "Kingston Trustees Minutes," July 27, 1753, describes the market at Hendrick Sleght's. Petrus Smedes was appointed the "first manager of the market." See "Kingston Trustees Minutes," Oct. 19, 1753 and Jan. 29, 1790, Ulster County Clerk's Office, for various aspects of market supervision.
9. "Kingston Trustees Minutes," Apr. 12, 1779, U.C.C.O.; "Kingston Directors Minutes," Apr. 20, 1807, and May 14, 1819, Kingston City Hall; Edmund Platt, *The Eagle's History of Poughkeepsie, 1683-1905* (Republished by Dutchess County Historical Society, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1987), 75.
10. For price ceilings on corporation wheat, see "Kingston Trustees Minutes," Mar. 22, 1772; Feb. 6, 1785; Jan. 29, 1790. For restrictions on its use, see Feb. 19, 1790, U.C.C.O.
11. For regulation of usury see "Kingston Trustees Minutes," Mar. 2, 1728, New-York Historical Society. This rate was reduced to five percent in 1750, but raised back to six percent in 1752. "Kingston Trustees Minutes," Dec. 10, 1750; Nov. 8, 1752, U.C.C.O. "Trustees Minutes," Mar. 2, 1728, NYHS.
12. "Henry Ludington to New York Council of Safety, Dec. 3, 1776," *Journals of the Provincial Congress*, 2:355.
13. "Ulster County Committee to New York Convention," Nov. 18, 1776, *Journals of the Provincial Congress*, 2:229-30.
14. Clark Smith, "Food Riots and the American Revolution," *William & Mary Quarterly*, 15.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Correspondence of John Hathorn, Dec. 2, 1776 in Ruttenber, *History of New Windsor*, 67-68; Countryman, 183.
17. Correspondence of John Hathorn, Dec. 2, 1776 in Ruttenber, *History of New Windsor*, 67.
18. For a discussion of the political implications of Revolutionary rioting, see Clark Smith, 5-12. For suspicions that Ellison was unpatriotic because of his economic dealings, see "Boyd to Clinton, July 3, 1776," *Public Papers of George Clinton*, 10 vols. (Albany, 1899-1914), 1:244-47.
19. "James H. Kip to James Caldwell, New Windsor, July 14, 1777," *Journals of the Provincial Congress*, 506; Clark Smith.
20. New York Convention Proceedings, Aug. 1776, in *American Archives*, 5th Series, 1:1542-43.
21. Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (New York, 1980), 44.
22. Davis, 146
23. Thompson, 234.



Mount Gulian (Photographs by Amy Mathason)

Regional History Forum

Each issue of The Hudson River Valley Review will include the Regional History Forum section. This section will highlight one or two historic sites in the valley, exploring their historical significance as well as information for visitors today. Although due attention will be paid to sites of national visibility, HRVR will also highlight sites of regional significance. This issue features Mount Gulian, the headquarters of Baron Von Steuben and the original home of the Society of the Cincinnati. Please write us with suggestions for future Forum sections.

Mount Gulian

Mount Gulian, in Beacon, was the home of the Verplanck family for ten generations. In the late seventeenth century, fur traders Francis Rombout and Gulian Verplanck together purchased 85,000 acres—known as the Rombout Patent—from the local Wappinger Indians. After Verplanck's death, it took fifty years to divide his share of the land among his many heirs. Eventually, Gulian II (the original Gulian's grandson) received 2,880 acres, 400 of which surrounded the new home he built between 1730 and 1740 on a slope overlooking the Hudson River. He named his estate Mount Gulian, in honor of his grandfather.

For nearly 200 years, this Dutch vernacular house offered the Verplancks and their guests a summer escape from New York City, the location of their main residence. Many visitors today come to explore the role the home played in the American Revolution. In 1783, it served as the headquarters of American General Baron Friedrich von Steuben, who served as the Continental Army's drillmaster and inspector general. Under his supervision, the inexperienced American army was transformed into a disciplined military force. It was also at Mount Gulian that the Society of the Cincinnati was formed on May 13, 1783. The society began as a fraternal organization of officers of the Continental and French armies, and its mission was to support veterans. Still in existence today, it has fourteen chapters, one in each of the original thirteen states and France. Fittingly, Mount Gulian is the official headquarters of the New York Society of the Cincinnati.

Tragically, a fire destroyed most of Mount Gulian in 1931, although the stone walls, as well as some furnishings and plants from the garden, were rescued. An immediate reconstruction was considered, but in the end, the house's ruins were left to the mercy of nature. Years later, its historic significance led architect Kenneth Clinton to approach Bache Bleecker, a Verplanck descendant who owned the Mount Gulian property, about rebuilding the house. In 1965, when an

apartment complex was being planned for the site, the Temple Hill Association (represented by Clinton) suggested rebuilding the structure in New Windsor, across the river. The following year, Bleecker—who recognized the importance of reconstructing Mount Gulian in its original location—donated its ruins, along with ten surrounding acres, to the newly formed Mount Gulian Society.

From the start, the society's goal was to restore the original building to its eighteenth-century appearance and to promote the site as a historical, educational, and cultural resource. On March 31, 1967, New York State granted the society a provisional charter; its founders met at the Harvard Club in New York City and named a board of trustees, which included Verplanck descendants.

Work soon began on the reconstruction and refurbishment of such interesting architectural features as the gambrel roof, verandah, original colonial kitchen, and four capped chimneys. Results of an archaeological dig conducted around the ruins allowed workmen to reproduce to the inch the house's original oak beams, pine floor planking, and first-floor door and window frames. In addition, Mount Gulian's stone walls were repointed and the fireplaces restored.

In October 1967, the Mount Gulian Society received title to the property, which had been deeded to it by Bache Bleecker, but financial difficulty delayed the house's continued restoration. The building's exterior was finally completed in 1973, but it remained empty, again because of expenses. The interior required period stairs, paneling, moldings, window sashes, doors, hardware, and furnishings. (Many of the original furnishings from the home—including family portraits painted by John Singleton Copley—are displayed in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum.)

In 1973, the society acquired its first piece of furniture, an American Hepplewhite drop-leaf table. The next year, it purchased an eighteenth-century Dutch barn in Hopewell Junction that was moved to Mount Gulian. The historic house opened its doors to the public in 1975, just in time for the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, and a full year before the organization's target date. The following year, more furnishings were added and Mount Gulian received a permanent New York State charter. Today, the home features a meeting/museum room and a dining room filled with colonial furnishings.

An archaeological dig in 1978 uncovered a midden—in this case, a dump of clamshells left by Native Americans—which indicated that humans had inhabited the site as early as 1000 A.D. As a result of this find, Mount Gulian expanded its exhibits to include Native American artifacts. That same year, it also began sponsoring paid functions, which have helped to finance further work, including the ongoing restoration of Mount Gulian's garden.



The restored formal garden at Mount Gulian (Photograph by Amy Mathason)

The original formal English gardens at Mount Gulian were an important feature of the estate, attracting visitors for over a century. Designed in 1804 by Daniel Crommelin Verplanck (Gulian II's grandson) and his daughter, Mary Anna, they originally comprised six acres, but later were scaled back to three. They contained fruit trees, vegetables, flowers, and formal box-edged beds, as well as a pergola, sundial, and brook. Among the garden's 140 rose bushes was one planted by the Marquis de Lafayette, who stayed at the house.

Gardener James Brown kept an extensive diary about his life and work at Mount Gulian from 1829 to 1868. Brown was born into slavery in Maryland in 1793; at age 25, he ran away. Little is known about his escape, but after his arrival in New York City the Verplanck family employed him as a coachman and waiter at their Wall Street home. Eventually, he became the gardener at Mount Gulian. (According to Verplanck legend, the family was eventually forced to purchase Brown's freedom after a guest at the house recognized the former slave and reported his whereabouts to his Baltimore master.) Mary Anna Verplanck taught him to read and write, and he wound up leaving many fascinating accounts of happenings along the Hudson River—steamboat explosions, ice races, slave uprisings, prayer meetings—as well as material about the day-to-day lives of the Verplancks. He also wrote about his marriage to Julia, another slave whose freedom he purchased in 1826. The New-York Historical Society currently owns Brown's original writings; Mount Gulian has photocopies. Its school program on African-American life at Mount Gulian is centered on him.

In 1996, researchers were thrilled when fifty-nine letters written by Robert Newlin Verplanck were found in the Adriance Memorial Library in Poughkeepsie. The letters, which had been sent to Verplanck's mother and sister at Mount Gulian, describe his service as an officer in the 6th U.S. Regiment of Colored Troops during the Civil War. They vividly document the contributions of the 200,000 African-American soldiers who fought for the Union.

In 1997, trustees of the Mount Gulian Society proudly reported that a five-year plan to pay off debts and make the site profitable had met its goal two years ahead of schedule. Stemming from that success, they began a major new initiative: to purchase acres of wooded land adjacent to Mount Gulian that were slated for a housing development. The urgency of this purchase had been fueled, in part, by a more recent archaeological study that determined that Native Americans had inhabited the Mount Gulian area some 7,000 years earlier than originally estimated.

Since the success of its first Living History Weekend in 1993, interpreters and guides dressed in period clothing have become a staple of Mount Gulian's educational mission. Future plans include the addition of a living history museum. "We envision a site wherein the visitor will be immersed in history, able to see, smell, hear, touch, and even taste it," says Director Elaine Hayes. "All the wonderful stories associated with Mount Gulian will be part of the experience." Mount Gulian's collections grew last September with a generous donation of furniture and other items from William Verplanck. (The gift includes mid-nineteenth-century furniture that belonged to Robert Newlin Verplanck and his wife, Katherine Brinckerhoff.) Also on display—and on long-term loan to the house—is a Cincinnati eagle insignia originally owned by a descendant of Abraham Lincoln.

Since opening to the public, Mount Gulian has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors. School groups and individual tours focus on such topics as Dutch settlers, the Revolutionary War, nineteenth-century domestic life, African Americans, and Native Americans. The facilities feature changing exhibits, workshops, and arts and crafts classes. Special events include a colonial dinner based on authentic recipes, Revolutionary War Living History Weekend, Halloween storytelling, and a Christmas candlelight tour. A gift shop (located in the original kitchen) includes handmade items by local craftspeople, as well as a variety of "Americana" items for adults and children.

—Amy Mathason, *Hudson River Valley Institute*

Mount Gulian, in Beacon, is open 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday from mid-April through December; on Sundays, special events are held. The house is also open by appointment. Group and school visits are offered year-round.

Celebrating 225 Years of the American Revolution in the Hudson River Valley



Oblong Friends Meeting House

Commemorating the Revolution in Pawling through the Years

September 20, 2003, marks the 225th anniversary of the Continental Army's occupation of Fredericksburgh. George Washington and his troops spent two months during 1778 in the precinct, which was founded in 1772 and named in honor of Frederick Phillipse, proprietor of the Phillipse Patent. It included the towns of Patterson and Kent, in present-day Putnam County, and Pawling, in Dutchess County.

The army's two-month encampment there was part of the commander in chief's scheme to maintain forces from West Point, in the Hudson Highlands, to Danbury, Connecticut. The reason for the linear deployment was to facilitate



John Kane House

communications about the movement of British forces from east to west and along the Hudson River to New Jersey. In a letter from Fredericksburgh, Washington plainly stated his reasons for locating there:

“There are but two capital objects which the [British] can have in view, except the defeat and dispersion of this army; and these are the possession of the fortifications in the Highlands, by which means the communication between the eastern and southern cut off, and the destruction of the French fleet in Boston. These objects, being far apart, render it very difficult to secure the one effectually without exposing the other eminently. I have therefore, in order to do the best the nature of the case will admit, strengthened the works and reinforced the garrison in the Highlands, and thrown the army into such a position as to move eastward or westward as circumstances may require. The place I now date from is about thirty miles from the fort on the North River (West Point); and I have some troops nearer, others farther off, but all on the road leading to Boston, if we should be dragged that way.”

Two important events occurred at Fredericksburgh during the army’s stay. The first was the court martial of Major General Philip Schuyler, who was on trial for the northern army’s precipitous abandonment of Fort Ticonderoga to General John Burgoyne’s forces the previous year. (Schuyler was acquitted.) The second was a celebration of the first anniversary of Burgoyne’s ultimate surrender at Saratoga.

“I doubt if we can realize what that event meant to our ancestors,” wrote Martha A. Taber, who presented a paper on the army’s occupation of Fredericksburgh at the Akin Free Public Library in Pawling on August 25, 1928. “We are fortunate,” she continued, “in having the letter written by [a] Mr. Boardman of New Milford describing the celebration on the 17th of October.”

Boardman’s letter, written some seventy years after the event, presents some remarkable details about the celebration and, more important, about George Washington. Here it is in full. (Note: for purposes of clarity, it has been divided into paragraphs.)

I was at that time in my tenth year, and like all boys belonging to ardent Whig families, at that stirring period, was intensely interested in the great events occurring around me. My father and mother took me with them to see the camp, then about ten miles distant from their residence.

The 17th of October was selected as the time for the visit, because it was known that there would be a grand parade and festival on that day, it being the first anniversary of the surrender of Burgoyne. For the same reason many others availed themselves of the occasion to visit the camp, and a large crowd of both sexes was collected. As everybody was eager to see General Washington, they huddled together on the road leading from the General’s headquarters to the camp, all on horseback, as everybody then rode who rode at all.

The cavalcade of officers and their attendants who had gone to headquarters to escort the Commander-in-Chief down to the place of entertainment, soon made their appearance. As it was passing the company of spectators, my father inquired of a soldier standing by the road, whether “his Excellency” was in the train which was just riding by. He answered, I remember thus. . . “Yes, Sir; he’s on the right hand, in front, on the blaze faced horse,” and a noble horse he was.

The cavalcade, immediately after it had passed the throng of spectators, wheeled to the left of the road into an open field at the foot of a very abrupt but short ascent to the flat upon the top, where the tables were set under the shade of green boughs. As soon as the General’s horse came to the foot of the hill he sprang forward with the swiftness of a bird, and ascended by leaps rather than the ordinary gallop and reached the top before any other of the escort got half way up. Certainly never before, nor during the long years since, did I behold so noble an equestrian figure; for General Washington excelled in horsemanship as he did in everything else he undertook.

When the General and his attendance had arrived at their destination, the spectators dismounted, and took their stand outside of the assembly of officers, who joined in numerous parties in conversation for a long time before dinner was served. My eyes riveted during the whole time upon General Washington, whose noble personal appearance and majestic bearing so far exceeded any other present as to leave no room for comparison...I gazed at him for at least two hours, scarcely having patience to have my attention turned to other distinguished officers who my father pointed out to me, such as Baron Steuben, General Knox and Baron De Kalb. I then believed that I was looking at the noblest and best man in the world and eighty years of reading and reflecting which have since elapsed have in no wise changed that early impression.

The General was dressed in a blue coat with buff facings and large gold epaulets with buff colored small clothes and vest and boots reaching quite to the knee. His hair of which he had great quantity, was craped and turned back from the forehead, and dressed in a very large and long braid or twist, upon his back; the whole profusely powdered as was then the fashion. His sword was what was called a hanger, shaped like a sabre but much shorter and lighter. It was worn attached to a belt around the waist under the coat. The handle was green ivory, the hilt and guard of silver and was the same that was presented to congress some years ago by the relatives to whom it was bequeathed by the General's will.

Such was my impression at the sight of the greatest man of his own or any other age. The picture is stamped on my memory in living light and the time seems only to increase the freshness of the coloring.

Pawling's Quaker Hill Historical Society maintains two buildings associated with the occupation by the Continental Army: the John Kane House, which served as Washington's headquarters, and the Oblong Friends Meeting House, which was used as a military hospital. Both sites are open to the public.

The Hudson River Valley Institute's Patriots' Weekend 2003 will celebrate the 225th anniversary of General Washington's occupation of Fredricksburgh on the weekend of September 19 through 21. Festivities will begin with a lecture at Marist College, followed by an encampment by the Brigade of the American Revolution at Pawling's Purgatory Hill field. Events will also take place at the John Kane House and the Meeting House.

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