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The Bermudian Creek Tories

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The Bermudian Creek Tories

Abstract

The history of the American Revolution which most Americans have learned and which is everyday reinforced in the public media is essentially but one of several competing interpretations of that conflict. We rarely think about this, so successfully has that particular history taken root in our culture. Common sense, however, should caution us that the British also possess a version or versions which differ in important ways from ours. The French, our allies during the Revolution, offer yet another construction, one stressing that war's place in their own long history of conflict with Great Britain. And had the northeastern American Indians possessed a written, instead of an oral, tradition, doubtless they would have recorded how their involvement in the war between the two English-speaking opponents hastened the destruction of their culture. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Adams County Historical Society, ACHS, Adams County, Pennsylvania History, American Revolution, Revolutionary War, Loyalist, British

TRUCRO DUCE NIL DESPERANDUM.

First Battalion of PENNSYLVANIA LOYALISTS,
commanded by His Excellency Sir WILLIAM
HOWE, K. B.

ALL INTREPID ABLE-BODIED
H E R O E S,

WHO are willing to serve His MAJESTY KING
GEORGE the Third, in Defence of their
Country, Laws and Constitution, against the arbitrary
Usurpations of a tyrannical Congress, have now not
only an Opportunity of manifesting their Spirit, by
assisting in reducing to Obedience their too-long de-
luded Countrymen, but also of acquiring the polite
Accomplishments of a Soldier, by serving only two
Years, or during the present Rebellion in America.

Such spirited Fellows, who are willing to engage,
will be rewarded at the End of the War, besides their
Laurels, with 50 Acres of Land, where every gallant
Hero may retire, and enjoy his Bottle and Lads.

Each Volunteer will receive, as a Bounty, FIVE
DOLLARS, besides Arms, Cloathing and Accoutre-
ments, and every other Requisite proper to accommo-
date a Gentleman Soldier, by applying to Lieutenant
Colonel ALLEN, or at Captain KEARNY's Ren-
dezvous, at PATRICK TONRY's, three Doors above
Market-street, in Second-street.

Loyalist recruiting poster for General William Howe's army in
Philadelphia, 1777.

The Bermudian Creek Tories

by James P. Myers, Jr.

The historian does not simply come in to replenish the gap of memory. He constantly challenges even those memories that have survived intact.

—Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi¹

The history of the American Revolution which most Americans have learned and which is everyday reinforced in the public media is essentially but one of several competing interpretations of that conflict. We rarely think about this, so successfully has that particular history taken root in our culture. Common sense, however, should caution us that the British also possess a version or versions which differ in important ways from ours. The French, our allies during the Revolution, offer yet another construction, one stressing that war's place in their own long history of conflict with Great Britain. And had the northeastern American Indians possessed a written, instead of an oral, tradition, doubtless they would have recorded how their involvement in the war between the two English-speaking opponents hastened the destruction of their culture.²

At least one other interpretation exists, and we look for it in the scattered documents, published memoirs, and manuscripts of the Americans who lost the war. A great many Americans in colonial America—they may have numbered as high as 40% of the population—remained or tried to remain faithful to their British allegiance. Although a great portion of these British Loyalists tried to make the best of a bad situation by saying or doing nothing—a most difficult endeavor under the trying circumstances—others were not so passive: They refused to accept the new nation and were accordingly punished. The story of these British Loyalists, or “Tories” as they were contemptuously called, is gradually becoming better known, clearer.

In part, the recovery of this Loyalist history began with the earlier groundbreaking work of Carl Van Doren.³ First printed in 1941, Van Doren's appropriately titled *Secret History of the American Revolution* sought to correct the accepted version articulated and publicized by the winners of the Revolutionary War. It is a commonplace that victors of wars write the official histories. Van Doren tried to revise the winners' version by adding to it a part that had been more or less suppressed or simply “lost”—a narrative of the great resistance mounted by the Loyalists. In considerable detail, he tells the stories of various influential and

prominent Loyalist participants who lost their homes, their livelihoods, even their lives. Other historians have since supplemented Van Doren's effort to make the American Loyalist story less of a secret.⁴

Because of the work of these researchers, a growing number of Americans has come gradually to understand the Revolution as also a virulent civil war in which neighbor fought neighbor and in which families often became sadly divided. Pennsylvania Chief Justice Thomas McKean recognized this truth in 1781 when he said that "Pennsylvania was not a nation at war with another nation but a country in a state of *civil war*."⁵ Unknown to many, the conflict that began in 1776 was indeed the United States' *first* civil war. As we know from study of the Civil War (1861-5) itself and of other civil wars, such conflicts are often far more destructive, cruel, and ferocious than "more common" dynastic and territorial wars.

Notwithstanding the recent readjustment in our perception of the Revolutionary War, however, the secret history of what occurred in today's Adams county has remained very much a secret history. Published county histories barely acknowledge that a significant Loyalist opposition existed. A few scattered allusions to the activities of some local individuals and the rediscovery of hitherto unknown or unexamined sources, however, suggest that a local drama of great poignancy and, indeed, tragedy unfolded.⁶ Although perhaps beyond full recovery, it is a history that contributes greatly to appreciating the complex and troubled beginnings of our present community and confronts us with a picture considerably, and disturbingly, at variance with inherited traditions and attitudes. The story that can now be told concerns principally three or four individuals, but it is clear that the hands'-count of Adams county Loyalists who left behind them something of an historical memory simply reflects in obvious ways a surprisingly widespread and powerful groundswell of resistance in Tyrone, Huntington, Menallen, Berwick, and possibly Reading townships to the direction Pennsylvania's more radical patriots were steering or trying to steer the new state. John Curry, James Bracken, John Wilson, Jr., and Daniel Batwelle were not isolated, solitary rebels against the Revolutionary spirit. Commonsense, as well as bits of sketchy and circumstantial evidence, suggest that they were supported by a submerged foundation of Loyalist sentiment in their community.

Three of the four, and possibly the fourth as well, were affiliated with the Church of England or Episcopal church, which in rural Pennsylvania at least remained firm in its fidelity to the British cause. Fearing a resurgence of the political tyranny which had persecuted them in Europe, moreover, the Quakers and a surprising proportion of Germans —

Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites—also refused to support a government which, in Pennsylvania, at first appeared to reflect the intolerance of a militant, radical brand of Presbyterianism.⁷ Having fled to Pennsylvania to obtain religious freedom and having secured relatively secure places in Pennsylvania's pluralistic society, the Society of Friends and the Germans were not about to submit to the rule of a faction whose intolerance and vindictiveness toward other religious sects was a matter of record. Differing from the opposition generally expressed by the Episcopalian church, these religious dissenters had historical cause to suspect the motives of the politicians whom the Quakers distrusted and dismissed as but the latest manifestation of abusive civil authority—of “those in power” to use the phrase customarily used by Quakers to describe the various governments who refused to tolerate them.

The three groups—Anglicans, Quakers, and the various German denominations—who had settled in western York county were sandwiched in, as it were, between heavy Scots-Irish Presbyterian concentrations to the south in the Marsh Creek settlement and to the north in Cumberland county, the latter sometimes thought of as the Presbyterian capital of eighteenth-century Pennsylvania: of necessity, they were thrown together into an awkward, if informal, alliance against what they perceived as their common enemy. And because so many lived in the area drained by Bermudian Creek, they were apparently referred to as the “Bermudian Creek Tories.” One of their number, the Reverend Daniel Batwelle, incumbent of Christ Church (Huntington township), wrote of the upper Adams political dissenters: their Loyalist sentiments “soon brought upon them annoyance from without. They were looked upon with a jealous eye both at York & Carlisle & distinguished by the name of Bermudian Creek Tories.”⁸

Several historians have already explored the radical patriotic faction's rise to power in Pennsylvania during the early days of the Revolution, and the interested reader may consult their works for the detail that cannot be provided here. Suffice it to say, however, that soon after 4 July 1776 an informal association of American patriots gradually consolidated its interests and power to displace both the moderate, more libertarian patriots and other groups it perceived as hostile to its narrower interests. With a long-standing feeling that they had never received their just political desserts in both Pennsylvania and Great Britain, those who largely comprised this faction were predominantly Scots-Irish, Presbyterian, agrarian, and fiercely anti-English. Beyond the more obvious goal of strengthening the new state and the new republic, it also set out to settle grudges it had accumulated against the Pennsylvania Penn

proprietary and its supporters in the Church of England and also against the Quaker faction whose distinctly different religion and ethical code and political inclinations had for so many decades obstructed its own aspirations for a place in Pennsylvania's political and economic sun. These goals it sought to achieve through a combination of legislation and executive decree, once it obtained virtual control of the fledgling Pennsylvania government, and of social harassment and outright vigilantism. Paradoxically, from 1777 through 1779, Pennsylvania, once one of the most vital nurseries of freedom in the colonies, became one of the new nation's most politically and religiously repressive states, a community where, howsoever briefly, the motto "If you're not with us, you're against us" best expressed the philosophy of the ruling faction.⁹

On levels of local and regional politics, mob rule was commonplace. Social ostracism and intimidation were often the norm, and when these milder strategies failed, bands of armed men from nearby York-town and Carlisle, sometimes militia, successfully reinforced the cause: political dissenters were assaulted on the roads or were dragged from their homes and incarcerated in the common jails without respect for legalities and due process. Anarchy reigned in both town and countryside.

On loftier, more formal levels of political organization in Pennsylvania, the apparatus of the state itself came into play. Among other tried and true strategies for enforcing ideological uniformity, the so-called Test-Act or Test-Oath evolved into a particularly powerful instrument for controlling both rabid Loyalists and less-than-enthusiastic middle-of-the-roads alike.

During 1775 and 1776, the Pennsylvania Assembly passed legislation intended to insure political conformity to the American cause. In June of 1777, it ratified one of its most stringent, controversial, and unpopular laws. This "Test-Act" required that all white male inhabitants of 18 years or older take an oath or affirmation to the new state, that they repudiate their earlier oath to the king of England, and that they never act against the freedom and independence of Pennsylvania. At the same time, they had to swear to report any conspiracies and treasons they might know of or witness.¹⁰ Refusal to swear or affirm the oath made the offender liable to imprisonment without bail.

As the war dragged on, and the British obtained increasing military advantage, even occupying Philadelphia itself in the autumn of 1777, more Pennsylvanians gradually questioned the direction in which its assembly was taking them and expressed resentment over the already unpopular Test-Act. The legislature responded by stubbornly and defensively revising the law several times, making each new version more

Draconian than the previous. By April 1778, the Test-Act made it virtually impossible for pacifists such as Quakers, Mennonites, and Schwenkfelders, as well as other political dissenters, to survive without paying heavy fines, enduring imprisonment, and even losing their properties and being banished from the state: refusal to take the oath could ultimately result, among other penalties, in an individual's "forfeiting his personal property to the commonwealth and his realty to the person entitled to inherit";¹¹ banishment from the state inevitably followed. As Wayne L. Bockleman and Owen S. Ireland have observed, by the time the radical-dominated Assembly adjourned in September of 1779, "it effectively disenfranchised most of the pacifist Quakers and Mennonites as well as a sizable number of reluctant revolutionaries among the Anglicans and the German Lutherans."¹² The principal instrument employed by the Assembly was the "state loyalty oath which demanded abjuration of George III and a pledge of allegiance to Pennsylvania, as well as a sworn statement that no aid had been given to the British since the Declaration of Independence." It is thus easy to see why many individuals who simply felt threatened, as well as those openly menaced by this coercive power, might be driven into joining the British cause out of desperation—to survive, they had few if any alternatives. Their property seized, their lives ruined, exiled from Pennsylvania, what had they to lose by joining the British army and thereby possibly get back something of what they had been dispossessed of?

The fate of John Curry illustrates well how social coercion and legal procedures combined to drive a single dissenting voice in Abbottstown into the British military.

John Curry

John Curry is a shadowy, fleeting figure. The little we know of him derives from his formal appeal to the British government for compensation for losses he sustained as a faithful subject of the king. Following the Revolutionary War, thousands of American Loyalists who had fled the United States were, under provisions offered by the British government, allowed to petition the Crown for reimbursement for their services and their lost livelihoods and property. In order to qualify for compensation, they had to submit formal claims to the special commission appointed by Parliament for determining the legitimacy of such petitions. Typically, the claim had to include a personal statement or "memorial" by the applicant detailing the extent of his services and a "schedule" or inventory of his financial losses. Additionally, the claimant also

had to include written statements, "certificates," by British subjects and other Loyalists testifying to the truthfulness of his petition. These American Loyalist claims today provide an invaluable record to anyone looking into the detailed history of the counter-revolutionary activities of the great number of Americans who remained faithful to what they perceived as their higher, inviolable political allegiance.

Other than the few details he provided in his claim to the British government for losses he endured because of his fidelity to the crown, we know virtually nothing of John Curry's existence in Berwick township. A relatively new arrival, he had little time and opportunity to leave much evidence of his life. During his short stay, however, his British loyalism clearly inflamed the anger of his neighbors.

After the war, Curry testified that he was Irish—"your Memorialist is a Native of Hibernia."¹³ His using the Latin term for *Ireland* suggests that he was an educated man and possibly one who wanted to be distinguished from ordinary ethnic Irishmen. He declares further that at the "Commencement of the late Rebellion" he "took a decided part in favour of the [British] Government, and opposed to the utmost of his power the measures recommended and pursued by Congress and their adherents in inferior Stations."¹⁴ Precisely what this entailed we do not know, but later testimony makes clear that he refused to pay the muster fines and to swear the Test-Oath. Possibly, he also argued against what he perceived as traitorous behavior in his neighbors. For "this kind of conduct," he was imprisoned three times and fined close to £400. He finally fled in 1779, abandoning everything.

In New York, he served in various capacities in the British army, mostly in transportation and supply, until he sailed to Great Britain, in the course of which voyage he was shipwrecked off the Isle of Wight, again losing everything. His petition concludes with a "Schedule of Losses sustained . . . in Consequence of his Loyalty and Attachment to the British Government." This included £900 for 300 acres of land in Dublin township in what was then Bedford county; £909.11.4 for his still house and two stills (he was obviously a distiller of whiskey); and £396.12 for his fines. The £2,206 in Pennsylvania currency he valued at £1,323 sterling.¹⁵

His supporting sworn deposition yields some additional information. From this we learn that he arrived in Philadelphia in December 1773 (just in time for the Revolution, we note) with linen worth £200 and two servants, and settled in Lancaster county, although Curry's earlier memorial identified York county (maybe, as many did, he lived first in Lancaster before moving to York county). He then reviews his military

service and describes his financial claims, explaining that he has no actual deed to the Bedford county property (with “15 Acres improved—but no buildings or Fences”) between the Juniata River and Raystown (today’s Bedford). He next recalls that he had constructed a still on the “Property he rented adjoining Abbotts-Town,” this in 1775. Moreover, he claims was fined £900 for carrying on the distillery one day longer than permitted by Congress—upon which transparent evidence legal persecution he fled to New York.¹⁶

Admiral Robert Digby, Joseph Galloway (the famed Philadelphia Loyalist and one-time associate of Benjamin Franklin), the Reverend Daniel Batwelle and others supported Curry’s claim, but their letters, though acknowledged and summarized are not included among the papers. The full text of William Rankin’s certification, however, is preserved as the conclusion to Curry’s appeal. Rankin was one of the most important Loyalists in York county and leader of a far-reaching conspiracy which will be discussed later. He testifies that he knew Curry as a man “looked upon as a Loyalist” and as a distiller in Abbottstown.¹⁷ Rankin inflates the financial claim as best he can—he seems to anticipate that bureaucrats will inevitably deflate the estimate—and goes on to affirm the sincerity of Curry’s Loyalist beliefs: he believes Curry “would have continued in the Country but he believes him [Curry] to have been a strict Loyalist and the neighbours all mentioned that he had refused paying muster Fines.”¹⁸

It is difficult to learn more of John Curry, for he resided in Berwick township for no more than five years, possibly less than that. Surviving tax records show him assessed in 1777 and possibly 1778.¹⁹ He was probably related to the Andrew Curry in Berwick assessed in 1772, 1775, and 1778. In the 1775 and 1776(?) returns, Andrew Curry is identified as having property to rent and is thus possibly the owner of the land John claims he rented. It might be significant that this Andrew was not taxed in 1777, the year John Curry was.

I suspect that John Curry belonged to the Christ’s Episcopal Church in Huntington township. The other two known Loyalists (John Wilson, Jr., and James Bracken) in the area did, and the Church of England minister Daniel Batwelle formally recommended him. *Curry* is, of course, a very Irish name—and the Irish are principally Roman Catholic. But the Christ’s Church records show a James Currie marrying Catherine Armstrong in 1758.²⁰ And *Curry* is also a Scottish name—Scots-born William Curry was an Episcopalian minister near Philadelphia at this time. The name *Andrew* which shows up in the Berwick tax records is, moreover, a favorite Scottish forename. John Curry, who insisted that

he was Hibernian, might well have been one of the numerous Scots-Irish or Ulster-Irish who migrated here, and although we know that most Scots-Irish were Presbyterian, Christ's Church did include a number of Scots-Irish in its records.²¹

It is easy to infer how Curry might have fanned the patriotic fervor of his neighbors. A well-to-do newcomer from Ireland, the language of his petition gives us the image of a man who might have tried to lord it over the backcountry settlers of Abbottstown, Adams county's oldest town, what with his expensive linen, two servants, aspirations to become a local power via of his distilling operation, and 300 acres of land on the Juniata near Raystown—and perhaps as well in his stated insistence that he was a Hibernian, not an American. Refusing the oath and the muster fines would have exacerbated whatever ill-feelings he had already inspired. It is not difficult to imagine him stridently haranguing his customers and townsmen for their traitorous words and deeds—in his own testimony, he “opposed to the utmost of his power the measures recommended and pursued by Congress and their adherents in inferior Stations.”

Curry's claim for losses and services suitably impressed the commissioners in charge of examining petitions. In explaining their decision on 16 February 1784, they observed that

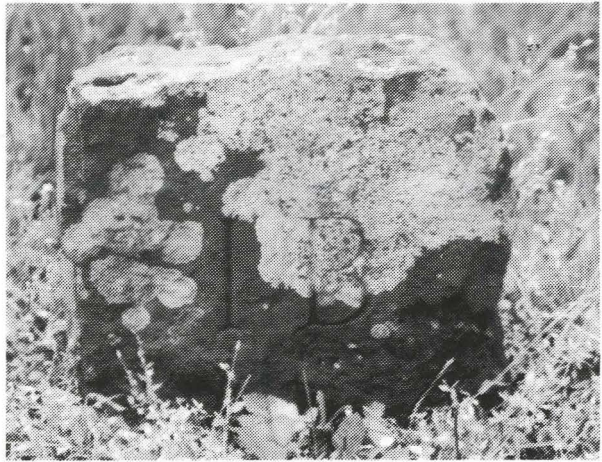
His Conduct seems to have been perfectly loyal from the beginning. The first step which he took was highly meritorious to refuse the Oath to the Rebel States when it was tendered to him & he seems to have objected to all their Proceedings from the first.²²

Recognizing that he was already “in a comfortable or perhaps lucrative Situation,” receiving a “Dollar a Day up to Christmas last,” they hoped “that we shall be considered as not extravagant in recommending to him an allowance of £30 a year.”²³

Curry's repeated fines and imprisonment and the vindictive application of the law's letter when he missed by one day the deadline stipulated by Congress, and then the generous allowance awarded him by the commissioners, compel us to conclude that newcomer John Curry was lucky to escape when he did. Very lucky indeed. The fate endured by most Loyalists was of a distinctly different order, and nowhere is this more obvious than in the instance of American-born James Bracken.

James Bracken

James Bracken, who lived in what is now Centre Mills, Butler township, wrote and signed his last will and testament on 11 September 1778, ironically one year after Sir William Howe, marching to invest Philadelphia, had won the battle of Brandywine over George Washington. We know that he died within a few weeks because on 2 October of the same year Thomas Baldwin and Ephraim Johnston compiled an inventory of his estate and filed it in the countyseat of York-town, on the 29th. A gravestone in the Episcopalian Christ's Church burial ground situated near the marker of his brother, "Iohn Brackon" (who had died the previous year), and inscribed simply with the initials "I. B." (the "I" was often used on older gravestones instead of "J") suggests that James was interred without much ceremony, fuss, or, indeed, expense.



Probable gravestone of James Bracken, located in the Bracken plot, Christ Church ("White Church") graveyard, Huntington township.

If we look closely at the inventory of James Bracken's estate, we immediately see, however, that he was not a poor man. In fact, he died possessed of rather more than most of his contemporary farmers in the part of York county that is now upper Adams—5 horses, 8 cows and 4 calves, 4 pigs and 7 shoats, 20 sheep. His barn, outbuildings, and fields were filled with corn, hemp, flax, oats, wheat, and rye. To this day, the bottom land he once owned, south of where Forked Run joins Opossum Creek, is remarkably fertile and productive.²⁴ Among the listing of the usual household items, clothing, and farm implements, we see, moreover, intimations that James Bracken probably enjoyed some distinction among his peers, for apart from the impressive catalogue of worldly goods which made his farmer's life easier and perhaps more productive—"Grubbing Hoes, 2 Mawl Rings, 2 Old Axes . . . one Side of Harnesses," etc.—we read with some surprise, perhaps, "one Violeen,"²⁵ that is, one violin.

Although not unique among contemporary wills, this single reference to a musical instrument in a farmer's inventory of 1778 is a rare occurrence indeed, and it reminds us that eighteenth-century life among the Episcopalian, Lutheran, Reformed, Quakers, and Presbyterian farmers of upper Adams county was not quite so cheerless as church records and estate inventories sometimes imply. *One Violeen*: what kind of music did James Bracken enjoy, perhaps play?—Handel and Bach? the Scots-Irish tunes that even then were evolving into what became Bluegrass and the folk music of Appalachia?

It is difficult for us today to reconstruct much of the life of James Bracken. He remains a showy factor in these events. We do not know what his ethnic origins were; we do not even know his date of birth. We do know that his brother John had died the previous year at age 40 and that his father, Thomas, died the following year.²⁶ Thomas, his father, was the son of William, a fairly prosperous landowner and farmer who had lived in New Castle county, Delaware, or what was known then as the "Lower Three Counties." Family tradition maintains that William Bracken immigrated from Yorkshire.²⁷ The Bracken surname, however, occurs not only in England, but also in Scotland and Ireland. That the Brackens were Anglican or Episcopalian is also adduced as evidence of an English origin, but in Pennsylvania not a few of the frontier Scots-Irish and, of course, Anglo-Irish were Episcopalian. In fact, the Anglican congregation of Christ's Church in Huntington township consisted largely of Anglo-Irish and, as noted, Scots-Irish families. The Brackens, then, might have well originated in Scotland or, more probably, Northern Ireland.

Beyond the *Violeen*, one other item on the inventory gives us pause. Near the end of the list of James Bracken's worldly possessions, in between "One Slat" and "One Note on Mr Percy" (with no amount entered), we read the curious notation "2 Guns Taken," again with no valuation given. Twelve years later, when James's widow, Mary (Dill) was settling the estate in preparation for moving to Pittsburgh to join those of her children who had already located at the Forks of the Ohio, the executors submitted their accounting. In this document, they itemized all the monies that had come into the estate and all the outstanding claims against it. Under the former, we learn that at least one of the guns had been paid for: "a Sum on Money Rec.^d for a Gun (no Sum put to it) Amounting to £4.0.0." Why the value of the other gun was never recovered we do not know, nor do we know with certainty why the guns originally were "Taken." We can, however, speculate that the reason might have had to do with the unusual circumstances which surround James Bracken's

death in the autumn of 1778 and which may, in fact, be at least partly responsible for his death.

In May of 1778 James Bracken and his presumed acquaintance and possible friend John Wilson, Jr.—they lived relatively near each other and were communicants at Christ Church—were the only inhabitants of today's Adams county to be charged with high treason by Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council on the grounds that they had joined the British army:

John Wilson, late of the Township of Huntingdon; And James Bracken, late of the Township of Tyronne . . . knowingly & willingly aided & assisted the Enemies of this State, and of the United States of America, by having joined their Armies at Philadelphia, . . . on pain that every of them stand & be attainted of High Treason, to all intents & purposes. . . .²⁸

Another decree on the same day provides that if those accused do not appear and stand trial by 25 June 1778, they "shall suffer such pains & penalties, & undergo all such forfeitures as persons attainted of High Treason ought to do."²⁹ Invariably, "Pains & penalties" included expulsion from the state and seizure of the named person's property. (Only in rare cases was execution actually employed.)

Writing a genealogical series featured in the *Gettysburg Times*, Beryl F. MacPherson in 1938 published a notice on James's brother, John, which, although apparently confused with details of the lives of his father and brother, might nonetheless shed some additional light on the former's fate. The account in part reads as follows:

Shortly before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War [John Bracken] made his will and left his entire estate to Christ Episcopal church, for next to his love of country was his love of the established church. . . . During the early days of the Revolution John Brackon [sic] was considered a Tory, and as such was not held in very high esteem. His brother-in-law, Col. Matthew Dill, was a member of the Committee of Safety and in some way he discovered that the authorities planned to confiscate John Brackon's property. Colonel Dill managed to warn his Tory brother-in-law. In any case John Brackon determined that his estate was to become the property of the church. He died very suddenly a few days later and since his property had not yet been confiscated, his will was valid. It is thought that John Brackon committed suicide, although there is no proof that he did.³⁰

As a researcher in local history, Beryl MacPherson suffers the fate of

one who played freely and loosely with facts, often garbling details, sometime manufacturing evidence to advance her own theories and versions of what occurred. Notwithstanding the damage she often wrought, MacPherson occasionally preserved some important nugget of truth that her tireless research had turned up. This seems to be the case with her account of John Bracken's supposed Tory sentiments. Although one cannot be absolutely certain, it appears that MacPherson confused details in the wills of John, James, and their father Thomas. One clue to this mix-up comes from her assertion that, knowing the "authorities planned to confiscate" his property, "John Bracken determined that his estate was to become the property of the church. He died suddenly a few days later and since his property had not yet been confiscated, his will was valid."

Looking at the John's will, we notice immediately two outstanding facts: (1) rather than direct that his estate "become the property of the church," he does not even mention Christ Church in his will. The proceeds from his estate are to be apportioned only to members of his family (MacPherson is even led wrongly to "imagine that he was a bachelor"). And (2), although his gravestone records that John died on "the 20th day of December . . . 1777," the will was signed on 15 May 1777: John Bracken, if the inscription is to be credited, did not die "suddenly a few days" after making his will, as MacPherson maintains.

The matter of the legacy bequeathed to Christ Church may be cleared up readily. In his will of 6 April 1779 (and entered for probate on 14 November 1780), John's father, Thomas, provided that Christ Church receive a bequest of £30, "which shall be put to Interest and the Money arising from s^d. Sum shall be laid out for the use of the poor belonging to Christ Church." The year-and-half gap between the drawing of the will and its date of probate suggests, moreover, that Thomas Bracken also did not die shortly after he made his will. Insofar as MacPherson discusses Thomas Bracken in middle of her notice on John, it is clear that she has mixed up her facts, probably from copies of the two wills before her, and possibly confusing these further with some vague family recollection that derives ultimately from James Bracken, whom she does not discuss and to whose will she never refers.

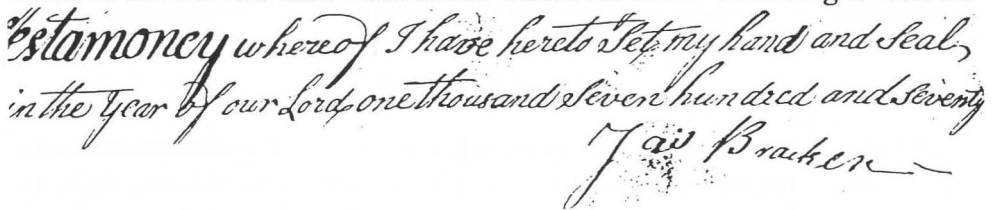
As any historian knows well, family "traditions" indeed often warp, distort, and suppress truth as much as they preserve it. In the case of James Bracken, another such tradition provides the investigator with valuable lessons. Henry M. Bracken's published genealogy of the descendants of William Bracken of New Castle, Delaware, preserves a recollection, the improbability of which draws suspicion as iron attracts

lightning. The passage is so extraordinary that it requires full quotation:

Tradition says that [James Bracken] was a colonel in the Revolutionary army; that he was a friend of Washington; that Washington visited at his home. One descendant has an old chair . . . in which Washington is said to have sat. Another descendant has one of the Colonial fifty dollar bills which is said to have been paid him for services in the army. It is said that he sickened while in the service and went home where he died. The traditional history seems all right, but his name does not appear in the war records. This is not strange, for the war records are very imperfect. The places that he might have filled are occupied by the names of others. It is possible that the name of his successor alone appears, his name having been lost sight of by historians. It is also possible—but not probable—that his war record antedated the Revolution.³¹

In light of the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council's charging James Bracken with high treason for "having joined the British . . . Armies at Philadelphia," Henry M. Bracken's "tradition" appears to be an endeavor to whitewash the family's very black sheep. Although James's having been a colonel in the American army might not perhaps impress one as too improbable, George Washington's taking leave of his hard-pressed army at Boston, New York, or Philadelphia sometime during the years 1776-1778 to sit with his good friend James Bracken on the banks of Possum Creek challenges the imagination to soar to new levels of credulity. Among the unmentioned possibilities explaining why James's name does not appear in the American war records is the obvious one: his participation in the Revolutionary War was as a British Loyalist, as the bill of attainder makes clear. And if we find no mention of him in surviving British records before the date of his death, we must recall that those records are even more incomplete than the American ones.

Beneath the veneer of heavy whitewash, one detail in Henry Bracken's account might preserve a vestige of truth: namely, that "he sickened while in the service and went home where he died." This might well be



Signature of James Bracken as it appears on his will of 11 September 1778 (York County Will Book, D 169).

confirmed in the unusual dispatch with which the legalities of James's will were executed: knowing or suspecting that was dying, James made his will on 11 September 1778; his inventory was taken on 2 October 1778; and his will was probated on 29 October 1778. If James Bracken had "sickened" while in the British service, he might have returned home both to die and to insure that his estate remain legally within the family. Insofar as he had not apparently, as mandated by the bill of attainder, presented himself to the Pennsylvania authorities by 25 June 1778 to stand "legal trial" for high treason, his estate would have been open to seizure by the state—this is what occurred in effect with John Wilson's Jr.'s estate. By dying, with his will legally made and then speedily executed before the proceedings could be initiated, however, James succeeded in passing his estate on to his family. Beryl MacPherson's confused notice in the *Gettysburg Times*, in fact, allows one to speculate that the tradition that John Bracken killed himself to prevent the seizure of his property might actually derive from James.

We have noted that MacPherson's account confuses, for whatever reason, details of Thomas's, John's, and James's wills. We have also seen that, not only did John die in 1777, before bills of attainder began appearing on a regular basis (from 1778 on), but that he was never even legally proclaimed a traitor. The nearly five-year gap in time between his will and its probating, moreover, hardly suggests the haste to secure John's estate that MacPherson writes of.³² James's estate, however, was settled with unaccustomed speediness within a month-and-a-half of the will's date. What appears to be his gravestone, near those of his brother John and possibly his father, is unobtrusively inscribed only with his initials "I. B.," an unusual practice respecting the head of a family, but an understandable one if there were some controversy over burying a suicide in sacred ground. Remembering MacPherson's recollection of a family tradition of suicide, it is not implausible that, knowing that his illness, or possibly war wound, was grave and being warned, possibly by his brother-in-law Colonel Matthew Dill, that the state was about to initiate confiscation proceedings against him now that he had returned home, James Bracken accelerated the inevitable by taking his own life.

John Wilson, Jr.

If James Bracken's activities as a Loyalist and the circumstances of his death are shrouded in obscurity, Lieutenant John Wilson, Jr.'s, career is considerably more open to investigation. Recent discoveries in the British archives and in the published memoirs of his commanding

officer, however, reveal him to have been a man of remarkable dedication and achievement.

John Wilson introduces his memorial by noting, perhaps with some exaggeration or the distortion that comes inevitably with the passage of time, "That about the beginning of the Revolt he was required to enter into Association against Great Britain and to take Oaths renouncing his allegiance to his Majesty, all of which he declined complying with."³³ More than this, Wilson continued, he also took an active part in endeavoring to "promote a spirit of Loyalty in that part of the Country where he had any influence." Very possibly, he joined with his neighbor James Bracken and his minister, Daniel Batwelle, in leading the other so-called "Bermudian Creek Tories" to resist the growing determination of the new Pennsylvania state government to coerce a patriotic uniformity of belief among its citizenry. His actions resulted in his being

seized in Nov. 1776 [and] imprisoned in the Common Gaol of Carlisle and sentenced to be published in the News Papers as an Enemy to the Liberties of America and being thus held up he soon found himself rendered so obnoxious that he could no longer remain with safety in the Country.

John Wilson fled Pennsylvania in May of 1777, making his way to New York on the British frigate *Roebuck*, then on the Delaware River helping blockade Philadelphia. In New York he joined the Queen's Rangers, a Loyalist regiment that had evolved out of the famed French and Indian War unit Rogers' Rangers. Wilson enlisted "first as a Volunteer and soon after received a commission and Continued to serve in that Regiment all the War."

Wilson's war activities are confirmed and described in several sources. A muster roll for Captain Francis Stephenson's company, 25 August to 24 November 1777, names an Ensign John Wilson, who enlisted 12 September 1777.³⁴ This was one day after William Howe's victory over George Washington at Brandywine. Insofar as Wilson's documents show him landing with Howe at Head of Elk, it is reasonable to infer that he fought at Brandywine in the ranks as a volunteer and received his commission when the Queen's Rangers, which had fought with distinction, had to replace its heavy losses. Wilson continued as an ensign (which roughly corresponds to the modern rank of second lieutenant) until February 1779, when the muster roll of Captain Stair Agnew's company lists him as a lieutenant. By 25 October 1780, he had been transferred to Captain John Saunder's company, in which unit he remained for the duration of

the war. Personal certificates testifying to his loyalty and war service were submitted by Colonel John Graves Simcoe, Colonel George Campbell, Joseph Galloway, the most important leader of Pennsylvania's Loyalists, and William Franklin, the loyalist governor of New Jersey and patriot Benjamin Franklin's son.

The fullest account of Wilson's service is provided by John Graves Simcoe in his war memoirs published in 1844.³⁵ During the Revolution, the Queen's Rangers was respected by sides for its efficiency and discipline. Already acclaimed for its successes when it had borne the name of Roberts' Rangers, the Queen's Rangers, led by the dashing and classically learned Lieutenant-Colonel John Graves Simcoe, was singled out again and again by the British high command to execute those tasks best performed by elite irregular troops (that is, "rangers"). It is clear from Simcoe's history, moreover, that he regarded the Virginian Captain Saunders's company, with its lieutenant from Pennsylvania, John Wilson, and its ensign from New York, Thomas Merritt, to be an elite among the elite, for, in a work which extolls the not inconsiderable war record of its own author, Simcoe's memoir frequently identifies that company and its officers for special mention and in one unique instance digresses for several pages to describe an especially successful mission it undertook in Virginia.³⁶ Saunders's company was clearly Simcoe's favorite among all those under his command. In an appendix he reproduces Lieutenant John Wilson's letter congratulating him, Simcoe, while still a prisoner of the Americans, on his survival after the regiment had despairingly thought he had been killed during a spectacularly successful night attack along the Raritan River near South Amboy, New Jersey. The original survives as well in the Clinton papers at the William Clements Library; it reads as follows:

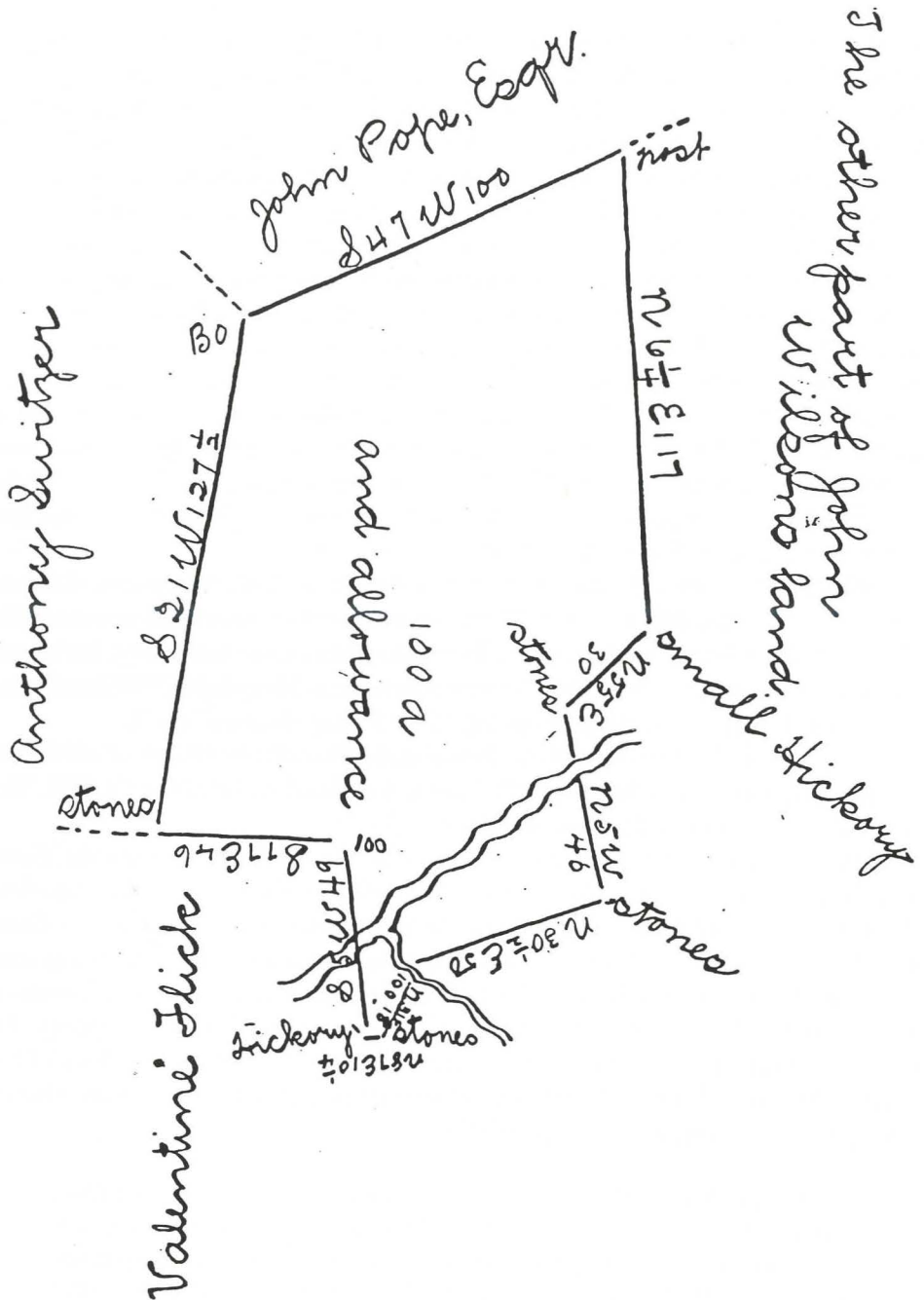
Richmond, Oct. 28, 1779

Yesterday and part of the day before there was nothing but the picture of distress in every Countenance, but this Morning the Soldiers are shouting, the Father of the Rangers is alive—In short, nothing Can exceed the joy which appear [sic] in the Countenance of officer and soldier—and prayers for your speedy recovery—but none can possibly be more sincere than those of . . .

Your truly affectionate

[John Wilson]³⁷

The war-compensation papers Wilson submitted considerably flesh out the life of the shadowy figure appearing in the tax records of Tyrone



Survey of John Wilson, Jr.'s., confiscated lands in the PA, 6th series, 13:131. The survey shows most of Wilson's property lying south of Bermudian Creek, in Tyrone township.

and Huntington townships and, fleetingly, in the minutes of Pennsylvania's Supreme Executive Council. From extant land surveys and confiscation proceedings, we know that Wilson held legal title to about 100 acres of improved land along the Oxford Road where that important north-south route crosses Bermudian Creek, the boundary separating Tyrone and Huntington townships.³⁸ Together with his description of his land holdings, Wilson's "schedule" of property losses reveals him to have been a man of relatively prosperous means. His 100 acres contained "two new Dwelling Houses, Barns, Orchards, Meadows, &c, val^d, at . . . £900." According to a summary of individual documents not included, Wilson "built one House himself and a Man to whom he let a part of the Land built another, his own House was partly Stone & partly Logs."³⁹ Dr. Henry Norris, another witness, adds that "There was a Barn and two or three Little Houses in which he had Tenants."⁴⁰ According to the Reverend Daniel Batwelle, Wilson's plantation "was like a Farm in England for Cultivation."⁴¹

Wilson also claimed two other tracts of land in different parts of Pennsylvania. He had 300 acres in Northumberland county and another 600 acres in the Ohio River country. Because this latter territory, he maintained, was disputed by both Pennsylvania and Maryland,⁴² Wilson tried to secure his right to it by erecting "4 or 5 Log Houses" on it.

Together with the loss of his "Household Furniture Stock of all Kinds & Implements of Husbandry," Wilson submitted a claim for £1,500. The commission eventually awarded him £600.⁴³

Additional testimony sheds light on John Wilson's marital status. Some extant records, apparently derived from descendants of John's brother, James, maintain that he had married an Ann, who appears in documents confusingly associated with the Bermudian Creek property and who can now be identified as the wife of Jasper Wilson.⁴⁴ John, however, refers to his having married a South Carolinian of some property. He does not submit a formal claim for compensation covering the loss of her lands; he does, however, establish grounds for a future claim should that become necessary and possible:

That your Mem.st's Property in South Carolina in right of his Wife is also confiscated but he is uncertain in what State that property is he therefore means nothing more at present, that to prefer a Claim thereunto in Order to preserve a right to Claim hereafter, if it should then appear that the property is lost.⁴⁵

During the last year of the war, the Queen's Rangers was stationed at

Georgetown, South Carolina, where, apparently, Wilson met and married his wife. These circumstances misled Lorenzo Sabine when he came to prepare his note on John Wilson's Loyalist career:

Wilson, John. Of Georgetown, South Carolina. Banished and estate confiscated. Went to England. His wife, who "descended from one of the most respectable and affluent families" of that State, and who, "without hesitation, bade adieu to her native country and numerous relatives, to share his fate," died at London in 1814.⁴⁶

Like the vast majority of expatriate Tories eking out an existence in England after the war, Wilson appears not to have fared well, notwithstanding his government allowance. Driven to extremes, he finally petitioned King George III himself for a long-promised captain's commission in the reorganized Queen's Rangers. Referring to glowing recommendations from a veritable Who's Who of the British military command—Sir Henry Clinton, Lord Rawdon, Major General Leslie, and, of course, John Graves Simcoe—he details the desperate circumstances that he, loyal and unemployed soldier of the king, had to endure. He recalls to the king that

In the progress of the Contest [he had received] several severe wounds; and, from the uninterrupted exposure of that regiment to the fatigues, and hardships of War, in the Various Climates of America [he] now labours under the consequent wretchedness of a dibilitated Constitution added to the unhappiness of the great pecuniary deficiency of his situation.⁴⁷

Wilson apparently never obtained his commission.

With the help of these and other records, we can now understand more

*to said vacancy of Captain of Cavalry in the Queens
Rangers; as with such other Relief, as Your Majesty's benevolent
wisdom shall think meet.*

Your Memorialist will ever pray &c &c

John Wilson

*104 Castle Street
Leicesterfield
July 1st 1785 -*

John Wilson's, Jr.'s, signature as it appears on his appeal to George III, 1 July 1785 (Sir Henry Clinton Papers, 202:37, Courtesy William L. Clements Library).

clearly than earlier the heretofore muddled relationships of the Wilsons who had settled along the Oxford Road and whose 200 acres fell within Tyrone and Huntington townships.

The names of Jasper, John, and James Wilson occur early in the records of Christ Church. The earliest document from that congregation, a 3 October 1748 petition to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for a resident minister, is signed and subscribed to by a John Wilson and a mysterious "Mickal Wilson." The vestry books of Thomas Barton, whose incumbency ran from 1755 to 1759, have been lost, but his successor's, William Thomson's (incumbent 1760-69) frequently list Jasper, John, and James Wilson's names as vestrymen and churchwardens.⁴⁸

Tax records and surveys suggest that Jasper and John, Sr., settled on Bermudian Creek sometime between the years 1741 and 1746. Extant Chester county tax lists for London Grove township (point of departure for many families who settled in upper Adams) show a "Jesper Willson" for the years 1734-40. The Chester tax rolls for 1741-46 are missing, but that for 1747 does not include his name.⁴⁹

Although he does appear on the earliest extant tax roll for Tyrone township, the York county tax for 1762, Jasper Wilson evidently applied for neither a warrant nor a survey for his property. Surveys of adjoining property, however, indicate him as enjoying squatter's rights to the land.⁵⁰ Possibly because Jasper appeared to be dying in 1769,⁵¹ John, Sr., secured legal title to at least some of the property by applying for a warrant on 5 April 1769 and had it surveyed in 1773, at which time the surveyors noted that the 200 acres called "Wilson's Lot" had been "Improved about 24 Years."⁵² Depending on whether we subtract from the year of the warrant or of the survey, this statement suggests a settlement date of either 1745 or 1749.

Considerable confusion concerning the relationships of Jasper, John, Sr., Mary, and Ann Wilson persists to this day. Without unduly obscuring things more than they already are by citing inaccurate versions, the estate and other papers of these four individuals require that we see (1) Jasper and John, Sr., as brothers; (2) Ann as the wife of Jasper; (3) Mary as the wife of John, Sr.; and (4) John, Jr., and James as the sons of John, Sr., and Mary Wilson.⁵³ Although we cannot be absolutely certain, this Bermudian Creek, Church of England family appears unrelated to any of the Quaker and Presbyterian families of the same popular surname settled near Round Hill or near the site of today's Bendersville or on the Manor of Masque or near the Possum Creek Manor or in nearby areas of Cumberland county.

Ironically, Wilson's Loyalist claims papers and Simcoe's history of the Queen's Rangers tell us more about his life after he left Bermudian Creek than what he actually said or did while in that settlement. We know from his own testimony that his refusal to repudiate his oath to King George and to swear allegiance to Pennsylvania and the United States and that his leadership of the Bermudian Creek Tories resulted in his imprisonment, ostracism and persecution. One document recently found shows that he was in some way involved in the conspiracy of the Associated Loyalists (see appendix).⁵⁴ His spiritual leader, the Reverend Daniel Batwelle, however, played something of a key Loyalist role in the area comprehended by today's Cumberland, Adams, York, and even Lancaster counties.

The Reverend Daniel Batwelle

The Reverend Mr. Daniel Batwelle⁵⁵ was clearly one of the central actors in the Loyalist resistance. And, indeed, my earlier curiosity about Batwelle's possible involvement is what gradually led to further investigation into the so-called "secret history." In order to help focus this figure, it might be helpful to recreate here an episode the details of which bring his remote historical moment vividly alive.

About the end of July or beginning of August 1777 on the western bank of the Susquehanna River in Newberry township, York county, a canoe made its way from Prunk's Tavern.⁵⁶ Moving in the direction of Shelly's Island, hardby Three Mile Island, the canoe tipped over—then as now, people were easily deceived by the placid-seeming Susquehanna. It is never clear how many men were in the canoe—possibly it was overloaded and thus top-heavy—but shaken by the accident, they swam and waded the remainder of the way to Shelly's Island, technically in Lancaster county, where one Daniel Shelly, of Swiss Mennonite extraction, made his home. After Shelly returned from a funeral, they laid before him a plan to seize the American arsenals in Carlisle and York: a colonel's commission would be his, Shelly's, if he agreed to join the plot. Each of the men promised to raise large numbers of supporters—Alexander McDonald, a Scot who lived in Cumberland county near Croghan's Gap, and the Reverend Daniel Batwelle who resided in Huntington township, York county, and who also claimed to have contacts with "Friends in Marsh Creek."⁵⁷ The conspirators also confirmed that the sheriff of Lancaster county, John Farree, could also be counted on to raise enough men to take and destroy the depot in Lancaster. These schemers strike us today as the wildest of dreamers.

Records and correspondence that cover the next several years, however, show that the conspirators were not merely fantasizing, for by the time the prominent Rankin brothers of York county—James, a former Pennsylvania assemblyman, and William, a colonel of militia—came to guide the conspiracy, the Associated Loyalists, as they termed themselves, were boasting a membership of some 2,000 men. They were actually in communication with General William Howe and Colonel John Graves Simcoe, endeavoring to obtain British troops and supplies to bolster their counterinsurgency.

In any case, the apparently loose-tongued Shelly was soon kidnapped, or arrested—it depends altogether on one's point of view—he was seized by the ever-vigilant patriots of Cumberland county. He was then imprisoned in the same Carlisle jail that also had held John Wilson and there “persuaded” to divulge names.

Superficially, we should not be surprised that the Rev. Batwelle of Huntington township was involved. Generally, the rural clergy of Pennsylvania, as opposed to those in Philadelphia, were Loyalists, as were their congregations. As its official name suggests, the Church of England enjoyed close ties with the British cause. And although the Church of England was not an officially established and government-supported church in Pennsylvania, as it was in Great Britain and the southern colonies (Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas), the rural clergy did rely for financial support on their missionary society which was based in England, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (the SPG).⁵⁸ In addition, Batwelle, alone among the Pennsylvania Church of England clergy, was English-born, Oxford educated, and had served successfully as a minister in England before coming here in 1774.

Surprisingly, if we look at Batwelle's first years in this area, we see that he was generally sympathetic to the American situation more than most of his other rural colleagues. His early letters speak of the good impression he initially made during the troubled times when he began his incumbency. And we have as well supporting testimony from others concerning his sympathy. Lawyer and Penn representative in York county, Samuel Johnston of York,⁵⁹ for example, described in November of 1776 Batwelle's early relations with his congregations and the local Dissenting Protestants:

When the Rev^d M^r Batwell was sent here [in 1774] Protestants of all Denominations seemed very pleased with him. The Dissenters took Seats in the Church, & afforded the pleasing Prospect that, at least their Children would, at a future Day become [?] no small addition to

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT YORK-TOWN,
Before CAPTAIN MORGAN'S and CAPTAIN
PRICE'S Companies of RIFLE-MEN,

ON THURSDAY, JULY 20, 1775.

BEING THE DAY RECOMMENDED BY THE
HONORABLE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS
FOR
A GENERAL FAST
THROUGHOUT THE
TWELVE UNITED COLONIES
OF NORTH-AMERICA.

BY DANIEL BATWELL, M. A.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

P H I L A D E L P H I A :
PRINTED BY JOHN DUNLAP, IN MARKET-STR.

M, DCC, LXXV.



Title page of the 20 July 1775 fast-day sermon preached by Daniel Batwelle in York.

our Congregation. On our sides we made no Distinction between them and ourselves, except in the Church Officers & management of the Church, which was always Confined to the Church People only.⁶⁰

This agreeable state of affairs was not to endure. The first assault on the Church of England's freedom of worship came when the continental and provincial legislatures began to interfere in the way Anglicans worshipped. This coercion initially targeted two principal issues.

During 1775 and 1776, decrees were passed ordering that churches be open on stipulated days for fasting and prayer on behalf of the American cause. Some Loyalist clergy refused to observe the mandated fast days—several, in fact, foreseeing what was coming, resigned, packed their bags, and sailed back to Great Britain. If Batwelle experienced a deep conflict of conscience, we have no record of it—a great many letters and documents from those years have been lost, even destroyed. Destruction was certainly the eventual fate after Batwelle's papers were seized by the state authorities.⁶¹ Surviving from Batwelle's hand, however, is a sermon he delivered and published in 1775 to honor one of the fast days authorized by Congress.

Remarkably, the sermon is free from double-talk, sneering irony, or any sign other than that Batwelle, within specified parameters, endorsed those who advocated sweeping reform. A few passages should conveniently illustrate Batwelle's accord with at least some of the patriots' convictions:

With respect to the present unnatural disputes, it would ill become my place and station to say any thing with the tone of decisive authority: My master's kingdom is not of this world, nor am I appointed a Ruler, a Judge, or a Divider: But if nothing more is designed, than what is professed; if to preserve our rights and privileges be the sole aim of the Continental Congress, and of those who assemble at their biddings; if no sparks of disloyalty, no desire of change, no intentions of removing the ancient land marks, lie concealed beneath the fair outside of public good; . . . then we have a good cause, and may expect the blessing of Heaven upon our endeavours.⁶²

Here as throughout his sermon, Batwelle pointedly rebukes only those who would deny the very freedoms they piously purported to advocate. His address gradually rises to a stirring exhortation that only the most radical and tyrannical could have objected to:

[the] many defenders of this land . . . now before me. . . I will exhort to go on to their appointed destination, in the fear of God, in the sentiments of true honor, in the love of Liberty and of their Country. . . Go, and defend our franchises, our wives, our children, and possessions: Go, and bring us back a speedy and honourable peace.⁶³

Concluding, Batwelle offers his hope for a successful resolution to the impending conflict, praying

That virtue and true religion may revive and flourish throughout our land: That America may soon behold a gracious interposition of Heaven, for the redress of her many grievances, the restoration of her invaded rights, a reconciliation with the parent state on terms constitutional and honourable to both: And that her civil and religious Liberties may be secured to the latest posterity.⁶⁴

The second target attacked by the radical patriots involved the Church of England liturgy itself. The Anglican services of those times contained prayers for the king and his family and even for the English government. Throughout the early months of 1776 and certainly after the Declaration of Independence was signed, saying such prayers came to represent an act of high treason. Moreover, the Congress actually substituted its own prayers for the Continental Congress for those formerly honoring the royal family. This government meddling in religious practices of the Episcopal church confronted ministers like Batwelle with an especially troubling crisis, for on becoming clergymen, all Anglican clerics had to swear the Oath of Uniformity binding them to perform public worship without change to or mutilation of the liturgy of the Church of England. Thus, when the new government prohibited the old prayers and provided for new ones, the Episcopalian clergy were being required to break their solemn oaths—and we need to remember that in the eighteenth century Christian clergy believed that breaking an oath would bring upon them divine retribution. Although we do not know Batwelle's thoughts on this issue, his later actions imply that he shared the same convictions as most of his rural Pennsylvania colleagues. One of them, Philip Reading of Apoquinimink, has left us a detailed and eloquent justification for his refusal to comply with the new legislation:

my answer to such representations is—that having taken the oaths of allegiance to his present Majesty—having vowed canonical obedience at my ordination—and when I was licensed by the Bishop, having subscribed the Liturgy of the Church, I do not think myself at

liberty to dispense with these solemn obligations; but shall persevere by God's grace, in complying with them. Such is the zeal of some, who are most warm on the patriotic Side (as it is called) of the question.⁶⁵

Like other rural colleagues, Batwelle eventually boarded up his churches in York and Carlisle rather than forswear his oath by reading the mutilated liturgy. Christ Church in Huntington remained open longer because of its relative isolation from the militant Scots-Irish Presbyterian radicals based in the two towns. For a short while, Batwelle wrote, his home in Huntington was the only place in the two counties which "produced bread for his family and was perhaps the only safe place" to eat that bread.⁶⁶ He boasted—not altogether truthfully⁶⁷—he boasted of his Huntington congregation that it possessed not one "single associator" or super-patriot. Additionally, he found support of a kind among the surrounding Quakers, who were also experiencing persecution, and the Lutherans who were using his church because Bender's Church had not yet been constructed.⁶⁸ But "the jealous eye"—Batwelle's phrase⁶⁹—of the radicals in Carlisle and York soon targeted his Huntington township congregation. "They" were denounced as the "Bermudian Creek Tories"⁷⁰ and were accordingly and frequently abused and harassed by soldiers from the towns: "in March & Harvest 1776 large bodies of armed Militia treated them with great barbarity," he wrote. And thus by degrees, the Loyalists in the area were "reduced . . . to complete slavery." Inevitably, even the remote church in Huntington township had to be closed.

I am with great Respect

Sir

*Your most humble,
most obedient Servant*

York Erison

Oct. 1st 1777.

Dan^d. Batwelle.

Signature of Daniel Batwelle as it appears on his 1 October 1777 appeal to John Hancock.

All his churches finally boarded shut, he continued to baptize and serve his people as best he could despite continuing harassment. He refers to a musket being leveled at his back once and to being plunged into a river. This last event, elaborated on by Samuel Johnston, reveals something of the treatment meted out to religious leaders who refused to be coerced. Johnston wrote that in September 1776, against everybody's advice that he avoid the towns, Batwelle journeyed to York to obtain provisions for his family:

and as he was going to return a Number of the People here, all Germans, seized his Horse by the Bridle and insisted it was stole. The Man he bought the Horse from happened to be in sight, and immediately went up and informed them, it was bought from him. They then pretended, they would shew him the right owner, and to lead him to the Water, which runs through this Town, where with more than savage Cruelty, they soused him in the Water several Times. They then made him run from Town in that Condition about twelve Miles before he got dry Cloths. Happily for him and his Family, he did not get Cold by this piece of Barbarity.⁷¹

Twelve miles, presumably west, from York would have brought Batwelle to the vicinity of Abbottstown, and thus to the house of either John Abbot, prominent in the affairs of Christ Church, or John Curry who, as we saw, might also have been a member of that congregation.

After General Sir William Howe landed at the head of the Elk River, defeated Washington at the Brandywine, and occupied Philadelphia in 1777, the radical patriots redoubled their coercion. In a letter to John Hancock, Batwelle described what happened: during "the Night between the 23rd and 24th of September [thirteen days after the British victory at Brandywine] I was Siezed in my Bed in a dangerous Sickness, and being unable to Stand, or help myself, was put with my Bed into a Waggon, and conveyed to York Prison, where I have Since lain in a most languishing Condition."⁷² In the same letter, Batwelle pleaded with Hancock, then president of the Congress:

After protesting (as I do in the most solemn manner) my absolute Innocence of the Crimes laid to my Charge, I petition that the Hon^{ble} Congress would be pleased to enquire into the matter, and either discharge me out of Prison, or admit me to Bail, as my Situation is Such, that if confined longer, I must be lost for want of proper Assistance.⁷³

Several petitions and many months later, he was given the opportu-

nity to take the oath of allegiance to the new government or leave the state. His treatment by the York and Cumberland county officials evidently proved an embarrassment to people higher up on the state and national levels of command, and the regional authorities relented by giving Batwelle his chance to escape an incarceration which was killing him.

The loyalty oath proved the breaking point for many Americans who, although they might have supported the cry for England's recognition of their rights, would not take the new oath mainly because it meant breaking their older oath to the king. Many German immigrants in particular had fairly recently become naturalized citizens, and in so doing they had sworn oaths to King George. They therefore objected stridently to swearing a new oath, thus breaking their older one—if oaths could be broken and made so easily, they reasoned, what meaning do, or can, they have? Oaths are not meant to be broken—period. Thus, the new legal ratification of patriotic fervor and coercion produced new victims. Batwelle, of course, and again like his rural colleagues, refused the oath and was accordingly expelled from the state. In an ultimate ritual of desecration, his “Churches at York & Carlisle [were] converted into magazines by the rebels.”⁷⁴

The SPG summary of his report preserves for us the pathos of Batwelle's fate: on 21 February 1778, having refused to swear the new test oath, he was allowed “to get into a Waggon with his family, in which he passed [out of] the Co[unty] covered with Snow, & crossed the Susquehannah on the ice[,] being 7 Days in performing a journey of 89 miles” to Philadelphia. There Batwelle found himself “well nigh blind” and still unable to walk because of “the severity with which he has been treated” by his jailers.⁷⁵

What were the actual crimes for which Daniel Batwelle was arrested in the middle of the night and hauled off in his sick bed to prison in York? His original arrest warrant has survived in the state archives. Reading it today is instructive. Dated 30 September 1777, it charges him with

being concerned in forming a Combination Plot or conspiracy (together with Several other Persons) to destroy the public Stores and Magazines at Lancaster, York, and Carlisle, . . . and with carrying on a traitorous Correspondence with the Enemies of this State, and of the United States of America; contrary to the Form of the Acts of the General Assembly of this Commonwealth.⁷⁶

It is difficult to determine the actual truth in all of these events.

The pro-forma annual reports the missionaries were required to submit to their superiors in London, or even letters to each other, were wildly construed as traitorous correspondence with the enemy. Batwelle, on the other hand, was in some fashion indeed partner to discussions of military action against the American arsenals. He may, additionally, have exhorted his parishioners to resist forcefully—it is certainly significant that the only local men officially condemned as traitors were members of his Christ Church congregation—James Bracken, John Wilson, Jr., and probably John Curry. And yet in the extant correspondence sent by other Pennsylvania Loyalists such as James and William Rankin, Christopher Sower III, and Dr. Henry Norris of Middletown to Generals Howe and Clinton and to British spymaster Major John André, nothing explicitly establishes Batwelle's actual participation or speaks of his willingness to raise troops.

Consistently, Batwelle maintained that he was innocent of the charges. Considerable evidence, moreover, discloses that the Anglican clergy in Pennsylvania were systematically persecuted, even when, as in the case of the Rev. William Smith of Philadelphia, they complied with the mandated oath taking. Unquestionably, the radical and largely Presbyterian patriots in charge of the Pennsylvania government were waging a vendetta against the local Church of England leadership.

Two final notes on Batwelle remain. The Loyalist claim records show that he requested £1,250 Sterling from the British crown for his losses. Some aspects about his petition were apparently questionable—for one, he still seemed to hold title to 200 acres near Carlisle. For another, he was still receiving his missionary's income from the SPG. Consequently, his claim was disallowed. He received no lump-sum in compensation. More sadly, John Wilson in his letter supporting Batwelle's claim pointed out that the clergyman's wife had gone insane.⁷⁷

About the degree of Batwelle's innocence or guilt, we simply have to withhold final judgment. What is clear, however, is that even in a remote area like western York county the virulence of civil war, based as much upon ethnic and religious animosities as upon irreconcilable political differences, shook and overturned the very foundations of civil and religious life.

* * *

Several years ago, Arthur Weaner first brought the lives of John Wilson, Jr., and James Bracken to our attention. In an article in the society's *Newsletter* entitled "The 'Traitor' and 'Tory' John Wilson, Jr., of

Tyrone and Huntington Townships" (February 1991), he collected and presented the little information that was readily available. Discovery of new materials among the York county wills, British archives, and John Graves Simcoe's Revolutionary War memoirs has resulted in a clearer, more detailed picture of the lives of John Wilson, Jr., and even James Bracken. Additionally, inspired by the "secret history" Weaner had begun exhuming, this author soon uncovered documentation on other Adams county Tories who had resisted the tide of history and suffered—John Curry and the Reverend Daniel Batwelle—as well as more general evidence in the Quaker Warrington Monthly Meeting records and the 1781 tax lists that many others paid the penalty for fidelity to their consciences.

In his 1991 article, Arthur Weaner speculated on the ill feelings, the anguish, the social coercion that would have accurately described the turmoil in the close-knit communities situated in this small section of the Pennsylvania backcountry. He intimated a picture rather different from the half-romanticized, half-idealized image we tend to nurture of a society, recently unified but sure of its direction, laboring to liberate itself from the tyrannies of a decadent European world power. The new evidence aids us in perceiving that the terrible inner conflicts and persecutions we know occurred in some areas like the Delaware Valley, Chesapeake Bay, and the Carolinas were far from unknown here: the bucolic farming area watered by Bermudian and Possum Creeks experienced the convulsions of what may be thought of as our first civil war and of the smoldering hostilities and enmities of the years that followed that upheaval. As Arthur Weaner reminded us in his earlier notice, "it is certain that many on the stage of life during those uncertain years did not enjoy a 'glorious Fourth,' and accordingly took their memories silently and bitterly with them when they departed from this world."

Appendix

[John Wilson] to Sir Henry Clinton(?), c. 1781

In the Month of December 1780 I was requested by two Gentleman [sic] in the Province of Pennsylvania by some means or other to make known to the Commander in Chief,⁷⁸ that each of them had accepted of a Lieutenant Colonelcy in the Militia, that they were convinced of the good disposition of Government towards the Colonies and very sensible of their Errors and the prevailing delusion, and as they had taken an active part against their lawful Sovereign they were desirous of distinguishing themselves in His behalf, that they beg'd leave to offer their Services to His Excellency, in what ever Line he might think them of Use, and that if he thought proper and would Save [?] them harmless of any penalties denounced against Rebels, in the Manifesto of his Majesty's Commissioners, they would continue to hold their Commissions under the present usurped Authority, to prevent any unfavourable Suspicions on the part of the Rebels, and that if there [sic] offers were approved they wished to have a Watch Word as a Check upon Travellers & Impostors.⁷⁹ —All which I communicated to His Excellency through Sir William Erskine⁸⁰ and was by the latter directed to assure those Gentlemen of the General's favourable acceptance of their Offers etc. —Some Time after each of them acquainted the General of their Success and that they had a full Battallion ready to join the Indians, (if his Excellency would order them to Act in the vicinity of their Abodes.) or to act otherwise as required when called upon. Whereupon they were requested to destroy the Magazine of Carlisle in a Clandestine manner to which they answered they were rather inclined to Seize \instead\ then destroy the said Magazine as the Friends to Government knew of no other way to Arm themselves, but if the General still wished it destroyed it should instantly be set about; that people were already appointed to inlist in the Artillery of that place, and to blow it up when on duty. —The request was not renewed and the Magazine of course not hurt. —In the Month of June or July 79, a British deserter returned to this City⁸¹ with an account, that he had raised 600 Men in that Province, who had all combined themselves by Oath to take up Arms for His Majesty against the Rebels, and wished to be encouraged with a party of the British Troops in the Cheasapeak [sic] to act in Conjunction with his party. —I was hereupon requested to dispatch a person to one of those Gentlemen to enquire of the Truth of his Assertions and was answered by \one of them\ him that said Deserter had actually raised 623 Men, under pretense of being a British Officer [sic] and sent on that Business by the General; that his credulous party was much alarmed on hearing his true Character and wished him detained within these lines least he should betray them on his Return, which was accordingly done, he lodged in the Provost for some time and was since transported to Great-Britain—And also that another worthy Gentleman had likewise raised 600 Men mostly Germans who \had all\ together with those already mentioned had all put them-

selves under his Command. —That he feared much of being detected, which would oblige him and his party to fly to the Mountains and their [sic] defend themselves in best manner possible, and if they could not get any assistance from here, to go to the extreames of Fire & Sword. —However they conducted in such a manner, that the Rebels, (notwithstanding all their pains) could not make any material discovery. They have since, so as there number encreased, repeatedly informed the Commander in Chief of their Strength and Situation and prayed for a party of Troops in the Cheasapeak or Lower Counties with Some [?] Arms and Ammunition whome [?] they would join, and did not doubt they would bring Pennsylvania, Maryland and the Delaware State to a Sense of duty. They also represented to have a number of Waggon, Horses etc. ready for the Service and that many of those who profess'd to be conscienciously scrupelous [sic] of bearing Arms would assist in Seizing and Securing the principal and ringleading Rebels. —And that he much feared some warm [?] and indiscreat person would take the advantage of the forwardness of the People, take the lead out of his hands and endanger the Whole. —In his last letter of the 4th October Instant he declares his party in the three \Counties\ Provinces afore-said to consist of \three\ Seven thousand effective Men. [John Graves Simcoe Papers (1774-1824) courtesy William L. Clements Library.]

Notes

1. *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (Seattle, 1982), p. 94.

2. For an excellent attempt to recover the Native American perspective, see Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988).

3. *The Secret History of the American Revolution* (New York, 1941).

4. Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson* (Cambridge, Mass., 1974); John Bakeless, *Turncoats, Traitors, and Heroes* (Philadelphia, 1959); Wayne L. Bockleman and Owen S. Ireland, "The Internal Revolution in Pennsylvania: An Ethnic-Religious Interpretation," *Pennsylvania History* 41 (1974), 125-59 (cited hereafter as *PH*); Robert Brunhouse, *The Counter-Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1776-1790* (Harrisburg, 1971); Owen S. Ireland, "The Crux of Politics: Religion and Party in Pennsylvania, 1778-1789," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 42 (1985), 453-75 (cited hereafter as *WMQ*); Ann Ousterhout, *A State Divided: Opposition in Pennsylvania to the American Revolution* (New York, Westport, Conn., and London, 1987); and Henry J. Young, "The Treatment of Loyalists in Pennsylvania" (Ph. D. dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1955), and "Treason and Its Punishment in Revolutionary Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 90 (1966), 287-313.

5. *Reports of Cases in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*, 4 vols. (Philadelphia, 1790-1807), *Respublica vs. Chapman*, 1:58.

6. For an exception, see Arthur Weaner, "The 'Traitor' and 'Tory' John Wilson, Jr., of Tyrone and Huntington Townships," *Adams County Historical Society Newsletter*, 18 (Feb. 1991), 1-3.

7. Religious foundations of the Revolution in Pennsylvania have been explored in Bockleman and Ireland, Ireland, and Ousterhout.

8. 25 March 1778/June 1778, S.P.G. Letter Books, Series B, 21:363 (from the transcript in the York County Historical Soci-

ety).

9. Ousterhout, *passim*, and Brunhouse, pp. 18-87, provide detailed accounts of the rise to power of the radical party during these years.

10. See Ousterhout, pp. 161-2; Young; Bockleman; Ireland; Brunhouse, etc.

11. Ousterhout, p. 191.

12. Bockleman and Ireland, p. 155. Charles H. Glatfelter has noted that "York is one of the few counties, perhaps the only county, for which the lists of those who took the oath of allegiance have survived."

13. Records of the American Loyalist Claims Commission (cited hereafter as *Loyalist Claims*), 1776-1831, John Curry, AO 12, 42:86, British Public Record Office (cited hereafter as *PRO*).

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, AO 12, 42:87.

16. *Ibid.*, AO 12, 42:89. If the penalty exacted of Curry strikes one as over-scrupulous, it would be well to remember that Loyalists frequently exaggerated their evidence and testimony in order to obtain maximum compensation.

17. *Ibid.*, AO 12, 42:90.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Tax Returns, Berwick Township, Adams County Historical Society (cited hereafter as *ACHS*).

20. The original vestry book of Christ Church is in the library of St. James Episcopal Church, Lancaster, Pa., copy and transcript in *ACHS*.

21. Some of the more obvious Scots-Irish surnames are McGrew, Maxwell, Wilson, Thomson; possibly also Kennedy, Collins, and Bracken.

22. *Loyalist Claims*, AO 12, 100:146.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Today, James Bracken's place corresponds to the farmland owned by the Ryman family of Centre Mills.

25. York County Will Book, D:169 (copy in *ACHS*).

26. *Ibid.*, E:363 (copy in *ACHS*).

27. Henry M. Bracken, *William Bracken of New Castle, Co., Delaware, and His Descendants* (n. p., 1901), p. 7.

28. Supreme Executive Council, 8 May 1778, *Colonial Records*, 11:438 (cited hereafter as *CR*).

29. *Ibid.*, p. 485.

30. Beryl F. MacPherson, "Backgrounds of Adams County, No. 49," *Gettysburg Times*, 23 July 1938. Both John's will and his gravestone indicate that he apparently spelled his name with an "o"—*Brackon*. Notwithstanding this, I have normalized the spelling throughout to *Bracken* except in quotations.

31. Henry M. Bracken, 1901, p. 33.

32. There is, however, something irregular about the proceedings. One of the executors named by John, his brother-in-law Archibald McGrew, "for Divers good and sufficient Reasons and Causes me thereunto Especially moving" to renounce the administration of the will. This makes one conjecture that patriot McGrew—he was a colonel in the American army—tried to disassociate himself from his Tory in-law.

33. Loyalist Claims, AO 12, 42:367.

34. *Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War*, 3 vols. (Baltimore, 1981), 2:560.

35. John Graves Simcoe, *A History of the Operations of a Partisan Corps, Called the Queen's Rangers, Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel J. G. Simcoe, During the War of the American Revolution . . .* (New York, 1844).

36. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-8.

37. Sir Henry Clinton Papers, vol. 78, William L. Clements Library (the signature has been cut away, but Simcoe, p. 266, quotes the letter showing John Wilson as its author).

Another letter of Wilson's in the Clinton Papers reveals him ready to participate in a raid to recapture the regiment's revered colonel from the clutches of "those wretched Rebels" (2 December 1779, 78:36).

38. Various surveys under Wilson and adjoining property owners in the Huntington and Tyrone townships survey collections, ACHS.

39. American Loyalist Transcripts, 51:92-97, New York Public Library.

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

42. Survey of the Mason-Dixon line in 1763-7 resolved the dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania. Possibly, Wilson writing after the Revolutionary War had ended, refers to the Ohio territories still disputed by Virginia and Pennsylvania.

43. Loyalists Claims, AO 12, vol. 109:308.

44. See, for example, *Pennsylvania Archives*, 6th series, 13:125-6; 447-8 (cited hereafter as *PA*).

45. AO 12, vol. 42:368.

46. Lorenzo Sabine, *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1864), 2:438.

The New Yorker, Ensign Thomas Merritt, of Captain Saunders's company, also married at Georgetown, South Carolina.

47. John Wilson to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1 July 1785, the Sir Henry Clinton papers, 202:31, William Clements Library.

48. In St. James Episcopal Church, Lancaster, Pa. (copy and transcript in ACHS).

49. Chester Tax Rolls—microfilm copy (ACHS).

John Wilson is too common a name to trace in this way. For example, there are five John Wilsons in the Chester county tax rolls for the year 1740, although none is included under London Grove.

50. See, for example, surveys for the Rev. William Thompson, 24 March 1763 (warranted 22 February 1763), and for William Delap, 8 May 1771 (warranted 30 May 1751).

51. Jasper's estate papers establish that he made his last will on 23 July 1770, which was duly recorded for probate on 27 November 1770. (York County Will Book, C:7).

52. Survey for John Wilson, 5 May 1773, pursuant to his application no. 5425, 5 April 1769 (ACHS).

53. The principal documents are the Wilson family wills in the York County Will Books: Jasper, C:7 (probated 27 November

1770); Mary, H:296 (probated 27 March 1792); and Ann, H:318 (probated 4 May 1792). See also Ann Wilson's deed of trust, 25 August 1785, York County Deed Book, 2M:14.

54. An unsigned, undated letter among the Simcoe papers at the Clements Library, in John Wilson's handwriting and apparently addressed to General Sir Henry Clinton, details the plots of the Associated Loyalists to seize or destroy the arsenal in Carlisle and raise the backcountry to rebellion against the "Rebel" government. The writer, clearly Wilson, speaks of his role as a go-between for the British high command and the clandestine Loyalist militia who are endeavoring to obtain both official authorization and material support for their planned activities. I have reprinted the letter's text in a separate appendix, courtesy of the William L. Clements Library.

55. Although nearly all sources employ the spelling *Batwell*, I use throughout this essay the form favored by the clergyman every time he signed his name, *Batwelle*.

56. Details of Batwelle's involvement in the Tory opposition derive from these principal sources: Deposition of William Beckworth and Adam Laughlin, 10 September 1777, PA, 1st series, 5:624-5; Supreme Executive Council to John Creigh, 16 September 1777, *ibid.*, 628-9; John Carothers to William Henry, 25 September 1777, *ibid.*, p. 634; George Stevenson to William Henry, 25 September 1777, *ibid.*, p. 635; Deposition of Daniel Shelly, 22 September 1777, Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Government, 1775-1790, Record Group 27, microfilm, roll 12, frames 1093-4; PA, 2nd series, 3:126 and 136; and E. Elayne Alexander, "The Conspiracy on Shelly's Island," *Mennonite Family History*, 4 (1985), 64.

57. Shelly's deposition, frame 1094.

58. The Philadelphia clergy, on the other hand, were more dependent on local support and trimmed their sails accordingly. See Solon J. Buck, "The Anglican Clergy of Pennsylvania in the American Revolution,"

PMHB, 63 (1939), 401-31; and David L. Holmes, "The Episcopal Church and the American Revolution," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 47 (1978), 261-91.

59. Johnston held the posts of clerk of courts, prothonotary, recorder of deeds, and register of wills.

60. Samuel Johnston to the SPG, 25 November 1776, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:44.

61. "He writes that all his papers having been taken from him, he cannot ascertain his last [letter] to the society," 25 March/June 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:313 (transcription in the York County Historical Society, cited hereafter as YCHS).

62. *Sermon, Preached at York-Town, before Captain Morgan's and Captain Price's Companies of Rifle-Men, on Thursday, July 20, 1775. Being the Day Recommended by the Honorable Continental Congress for a General Fast throughout the Twelve United Colonies of North-America* (Philadelphia, 1775), pp. 16-17.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

65. Philip Reading to Dr. Hind, 19 September 1775, Gratz Mss., Colonial Clergymen, Box 24, Case 8, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (cited hereafter as HSP).

66. 25 March/June 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:313 (YCHS transcript).

67. Archibald McGrew, for one, variously a vestryman and churchwarden at Christ Church, became a colonel in the Pennsylvania militia.

68. 25 March/June 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:313 (YCHS transcript). Although Batwelle does not refer to the Reformed Germans, Charles H. Glatfelter feels that, insofar as Bender's was a "union church," they too might have used Christ Church at this time.

69. *Ibid.*

70. *Ibid.* The SPG summary of Batwelle's lost 25 March 1778 letter leaves unclear whether the "they" and therefore the phrase "Bermudian Creek Tories" re-

fer only to the Christ Church congregation or more inclusively to the Quakers and German Lutherans, who are also being discussed at this point: "But this conduct which secured inn [inner, spiritual assurance?] and peace, soon brought upon them annoyance from without. They were looked upon with a jealous eye both at York & Carlisle & distinguished by the name of Bermudian Creek Tories."

The minutes of the Warrington Monthly meeting from this time show that the Quakers were indeed also experiencing persecution (microfilm copy, ACHS).

71. Samuel Johnston to the SPG, 25 November 1776, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:45.

72. Batwelle to John Hancock, 1 October 1777, Gratz Collection, American Colonial Clergy, Case 8, Box 21, HSP.

73. *Ibid.*

74. 25 March/June 1778, SPG Letter Books, Series B, 21:45 (transcript YCHS).

75. *Ibid.*

76. Mittimus for Daniel Batwell [sic], 30 September 1777, Records of Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Governments, 1775-1790, Record Group 27, microfilm, roll 12, frame 1101.

77. Loyalist Claims, AO 12, 42:310.

78. Sir Henry Clinton.

79. Carl van Doren, *Secret History*, pp. 129-34, provides confirming details of this plot. He identifies Colonel William Rankin of York county and Captain Martin Weaver of Northampton county as working "in concert" and notes the involvement of another colonel of militia in Lancaster county whom he cannot identify. Christopher Sower III, scion of the famed printer family of Germantown, and Andrew Fürstner, a refugee from Lancaster, also appears to have functioned as go-betweens in the negotiations.

Van Doren adds the following interesting detail regarding the secret password: "Since the watchword was to be spoken only, not written, it does not appear [in Sower's letter, from which van Doren is citing], but for a sign the answer by Fürstner was enclosed in a Continental bill—in this case for \$6" (p. 131).

80. General Sir William Erksine was an aid to Clinton.

81. Probably New York.