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During the turbulent decades that encompassed the transition of the North American colonies into a Republic, America became the setting for a transformation in the context of political friendship. Traditionally the alliances established between elite, white, Protestant males have been most studied. These former studies provide the foundation for this work to examine the inclusion of “others” -- political relationships formed with and by women, persons of diverse ethnicities and races, and numerous religious persuasions -- in political activity. From the outset this analysis demonstrates the establishment of an uniquely American concept of political friendship theory which embraced ideologies and rationalism. Perhaps most importantly, the work presents criteria for determining early American political friendship apart from other relationships.

The central key in producing this manuscript was creating and applying the criteria for identifying political alliances. This study incorporates a cross-discipline approach, including philosophy, psychology, literature, religion, and political science with history to hone a conception of political friendship as understood by the Founding Generation. The arguments are supported by case studies drawn from a wide variety of primary documents. The result is a fresh perspective and a new approach for the study of eighteenth century American history.

POLITICAL FRIENDSHIP IN EARLY AMERICA

by

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A NOTE ON THE TRANSCRIPTION OF PRIMARY DOCUMENTS

In this manuscript quotations from primary documents have been kept in their original form and appear in *italic*. In maintaining what appears as idiosyncratic capitalization the intent is to illustrate stressed wording. Spelling is retained as written as it relays accents which enhance time, place, and often situation. Original punctuation is preserved for it often reveals diction and thought process. I have indicated any changes or additions to the original in brackets. This is done only when the original meaning might be obscured.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Scholars have, traditionally, examined the phenomenon of political friendship in early America through an elite, white, Protestant male-colleague perspective. White males, due to the privilege of their race and gender, left the largest collections of documents. Reasonably, most scholarship of political activity during the eighteenth century has focused on them. The scholarship on white males, often dismissed as elitist, at least provides an opportunity for deeper analysis on gender, class, ethnicity, race, and religion in Early America. This study complements and builds upon past research; explains the concept and foundation of political friendship; explores possible rationalizations behind political alliances; and illustrates that political activity was not the sole domain of white Protestant men.¹ For Americans, political friendship from the

¹ Ethnicity indicates shared genealogical (or ancestral) base, cultural traits, and history. An ethnic group can also claim distinction by religion and/or linguistics. Race is based on shared biological or genetic make-up. Race divides human beings on the basis of physical characteristics: skin color, bone structure, and/or hair texture. Discussions on ethnicity and race in the Atlantic World can be found in Ronald H. Bayor, *Race and Ethnicity in the Atlantic World: A Concise History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slave: The Rise of the Planter Class in the British West Indies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, *The Atlantic World: Essays on Slavery, Migration, and Imagination* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson, 2005); Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000). An alternative to traditional interpretation is Mervyn C. Alleyne, *Construction and Representation of Race and Ethnicity in the Caribbean and the World* (Kingston, Jamaica: West Indies University Press, 2002). Specific to African experience see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The*

Colonial Period, through the American Revolution, and into the New Republic was not simply alliances constructed for political, economic, or personal gain. It was a combination of ideologies, political activity, and, as will be shown a category of friendships that had distinct perimeters.

Political activity flourished in the eighteenth century Atlantic World. Inhabitants in the colonies, in large numbers, were experimenting with modern intellectual conceptions and combining ideals that stemmed from classical, republican, ethical, and moral considerations. Against this backdrop the study of political friendship provides the researcher and the reader a means for examining the conscious political decisions made by individuals who were united by objectives that served the best interests of other humans. How did friendship between political allies enable individuals to pursue their objectives and attempt to secure their political goals? What expectations of success did

Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995); Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1975); Philip Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake and Low Country* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: Norton, 1974). British identity in the Atlantic World is best examined by David Armitage, ed., *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800* (London: Variorum Press, 1998); Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America," *The Journal of American History* 86 (1999): 1093-1114; Canny, "The British Atlantic World: Working Towards a Definition," *Historical Journal* XXXIII (1990): 479-97; Canny, "The Anglo-American Colonial Experience," *Historical Journal* XXIV (1981): 485-503; Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: from Ireland to America," *William & Mary Quarterly* XXX (1973): 575-98; Stanley N. Katz and John M. Murrin, eds., *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development* (New York: Knopf, 1983).

they harbor? How did their activities fit into historical context? That their actions reflect concerns both within the confines of gender, class, ethnicity, race, and religion, but also across the constraints of socially and culturally constructed boundaries adds significantly to the richness and texture of American political history.

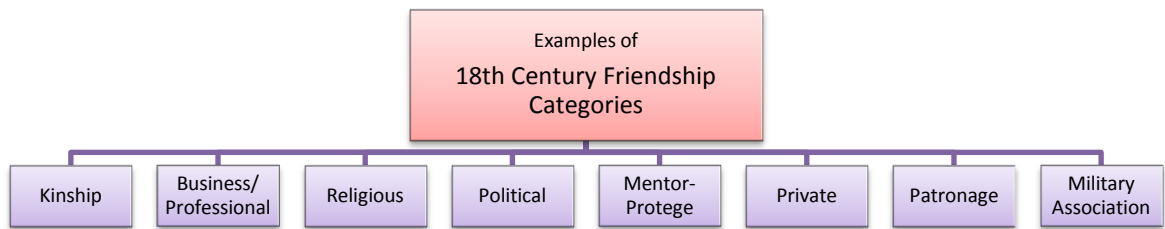
Identifying Political Friendship in Early America

Three criteria were consistent in early American political friendship. First, the partners shared a specific goal. The objectives were not restricted to national aims but could be founded upon regional, state, local, community, ethnic, or cultural concerns. Secondly, the recognition that self-interest was secondary to the common interest (public good) was central. One's country (region, state, colony, or community) was understood to be the priority. Therefore, civic duties were primary to individual rights. Thirdly, there existed an expectation of personal character based on a set of ideals. Central among the ideals were honor, passionate interest in one's country, and virtue. Political friendship was public, it was private, and it was personal.

Individuals of the eighteenth century appreciated the complexities of the concept of friendship. Letters, in particular, demonstrate the use of the term to represent numerous categories of relationships: kinship, a family member closely or distantly related; religious affiliation; business partnerships; financial alliances; mentor-protégé relationships; comradeship between men who had served in military capacity; relationships of genuinely shared personal fondness; patronage; and friendship as political alliance. A relationship could be based on one category of friendship or several

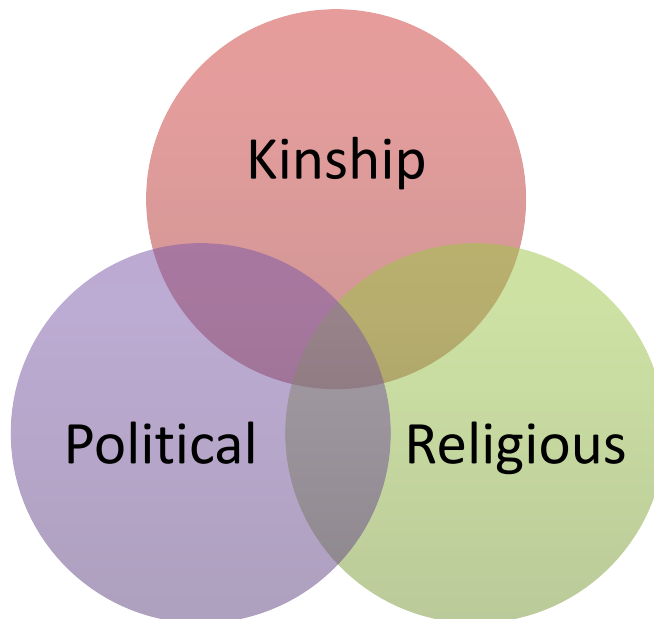
overlapping forms. Individuals were often involved in several forms of friendship simultaneously.

Table 1. Possible Categories of Eighteenth Century American Friendships



Political friendship was a category of friendship in and of itself. An alliance between individuals could exist solely for an objective of greater good, or be part of a complex relationship overlapped with family and religious ties (also referred to in eighteenth century vernacular as "friendships").

Table 2. Cross-Category Character of Political Friendship



This is not to say that people of the era intentionally categorized themselves; for the most part, research for this study indicated that they did not. They did, however, have specific cultural, social, and ethnic groupings, i.e., family unit, church, or religion. How, one might question, could family members also be political friends? Because political friendship was a form of friendship in itself: it was a relationship that existed for political objectives, based on the common good, and love of country. Brothers remained family even in political opposition, but a political friendship did not exist without its three central criteria.

This study illustrates that revolutionary era generations understood friendship as an arena where ideology, as well as rationalism and tradition, reigned.² History, religion, philosophy, and politics honed American conceptions. Arguments and essays, concepts and commentary, crossed the Atlantic and thrived in an atmosphere that promoted self-

² Resources that address the influence of enlightened rationalism, natural law, history, and philosophy on the Americans and their formation of ideology and politics see Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Edward M. Burns, "The Philosophy of History of the Founding Fathers," *The Historian* 16 (1954): 142-61; H. Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965); Paul K. Conkin, *Self-Evident Truths* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974); Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper, 1943); Richard B. Davis, *Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia, 1790-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964); Ralph Ketchum, *From Colony to Country: The Revolution in American Thought, 1750-1820* (New York: Macmillan, 1974); Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); Forrest MacDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1985); Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic: The Origin of the American Tradition of Liberty* (New York: Harcourt, 1953); Darren Staloff, *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992); Benjamin Fletcher Wright, Jr., *American Interpretations of Natural Law: A Study in the History of Political Thought* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962).

made betterment, thought, ambition, commerce, and liberty.³ Whether formed from foundations of family, companionship, interests, utility, or necessity, friendship was reciprocal and the people involved influenced each other's opinions and broadened or supported ideas. Enlightenment theories and political practice became integral to social discourse in early America.

Despite marked regional differences, Americans had formed "a strong sense of group identity" by "the middle decades of the eighteenth century."⁴ It was based, in large part, on shared experiences, "achievements and boundless optimism about future prospects."⁵ The British had developed a keen sense of themselves as separate and

³ Resources that explore development on the importance of refinement, advancement, and commerce in the construction of American ideology include, but are not exclusive to, Joyce O. Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984); Rebecca Ann Bach, *Colonial Transformations: The Cultural Production of the New Atlantic World, 1580-1640* (New York: Palgrave, 2000); Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Random House, 1994); Robert M. Calhoon, *Dominion and Liberty: Ideology in the Anglo-America World, 1660-1801* (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1994); David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Jack P. Greene, *Imperatives, Behaviors, & Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: Norton, 1986); Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750* (New York: Norton, 1984); Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670-1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transmission, Development, and Circumstance of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).

⁴ Jack P. Greene, "Search for Identity: An Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterns of Social Response in the Eighteenth-Century" in *Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), 143; Greene, *The Intellectual Construction of America: Exceptionalism and Identity, 1492-1800* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (New York: Random House, 1958); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998).

superior from those who resided on the peripheries of power.⁶ It was a notion that increased over time and spurred white Americans to eventually think of themselves as different from their British cousins. Understandably groups such as Native Americans, African Americans, and other ethnicities often felt minimal, if any, political connection with Englishmen from across the Atlantic. Some people had always been ambivalent about being a part of the British Empire. For others being considered backwater provincials came to grate, and subsequently many felt they had something to prove. Prospering colonists were often anxious to achieve an idealized version of gentility. They embraced both culture and Enlightenment, opening their doors and minds to the Arts and Sciences, and encouraged, in the words of one colonist, “every thing which tends to exalt and embellish our Characters.”⁷ Intrinsic to the concept of “Character” were honor, virtue, interest, passion, and trust – the exact ideals expected by persons in political friendships. Although the terms could vary interpretively between genders and ethnicities, and even classes, friends recognized the essence of the attributes. In addition, loyalty to colony or community came to outweigh allegiance to the British motherland. America became home and country in private and in public. Sentiments analogous to “Let the Love of our Country be manifested by that which is the only true Manifestation

⁵Greene, “Search for Identity,” 143.

⁶Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Policies of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York: Norton, 1986); David Armitage, ed., *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800* (London: Variorum Press, 1998); Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers within the Realm : Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Nicholas Canny, “Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America,” *The Journal of American History* 86 (1999):1093–1114.

⁷ Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 22.

of it, a patriotic soul and a public Spirit”⁸ abound in patriot-penned literature. Many early Americans sought to adopt new standards of manners and aspired to patterns of thought and reasoning that came to define the good citizen. Once internalized, these enlightened and classical republic ideals, values, and standards came to constitute expected conduct.

Americans cultivated their own characters, and they became characters too, “self-fashioned performers in the theatre of life.”⁹ Many in the revolutionary generation realized that their actions were of historical importance. Those involved in creating a new nation were often keenly aware that “a man is judged by the company he keeps,” although in the newly-formed United States the ungendered expression “Patriot” would have been more accurate than “a man.”

Classical Thought and Colonial Revolutionary Philosophy in the Theory of Political Friendship

Political friendship reveals of the Founders’ intentional blending of past models with contemporary conceptions to devise a new epoch in the history of governments. As Paul Rahe has argued, the American regime was a “deliberately contrived mixture of sorts – liberal and modern, first of all, but in its insistence that to vindicate human dignity one must demonstrate man’s capacity for self-government, republican and classical as well.”¹⁰ In colonial America the “English-dominated, Puritan-inflected culture of North

⁸ William Livingston, 1776, cited in Wood, *Revolutionary Characters*, 22-23.

⁹ Wood, *Revolutionary Characters*, 23. In addition T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Random House, 1994) are particularly illustrative of the phenomenon.

America promulgated a Christian humanism in which a classical education remained an essential feature of a gentleman's profile."¹¹ Enlightened women too, or females who had received a better than average education for the era, were knowledgeable of the tenets of classical study as well.¹² Classical philosophy, medieval theology, and the Enlightenment profoundly influenced how the founding generations perceived political friendships.

Educated colonists were familiar with Aristotle's arguments, in *Nicomachean Ethics*, that self-love was connected to the human ability to form friendships, in which the welfare of one's friend was as important and valuable as one's own well-being.¹³

¹⁰ Paul A. Rahe, ed., *Machiavelli's Liberal Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), x.

¹¹ Ivy Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 64. In addition see Meyer Reinhold and Carl Richard who illustrate the impact of Greek and Roman classics upon the Founding Fathers.

¹² See Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005); Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellectual and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Linda K. Kerber, *Toward an Intellectual History of Women* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Catherine Kerrison, *Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

¹³For the influence of classical thought on the founding generation see Susan F. Wiltshire, "Aristotle in America," *Humanities* 8 (1987): 8-11; Wiltshire, *The Usefulness of Classical Learning in the Eighteenth Century* (D.C.: American Philological Association, 1975); Henry S. Commager, "The American Enlightenment and the Classical World: A Study in Paradox," *Proceedings from the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1971): 3-15; Gary L. Gregg, *Vital Remnants: America's Founding and the Western Tradition* (Wilmington, DE: ISI, 1999); Richard Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Gummere, "The Heritage of the Classics in Colonial North America," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 99 (1955): 68-78; Paul MacKendrick, "This Rich Source of Delight: The Classics and the Founding Fathers," *Classical Journal* 72 (1976): 97-106; Edwin Miles, "The Old South and the Classical World," *North Carolina Historical Review*

Additionally, this treatise displays a “remarkable appreciation of the many different sorts of relationships that go by the name of ‘friendship.’ Religious societies, familial bonds, affinities among travelers, civility among citizens, arrangements of hospitality, and tacit contractual agreements – all of these [were] woven into the Greco-Roman concept of friendship.”¹⁴ For the ancients, friendship with someone communicated genuine affection, complete trust, and shared interests, but it carried responsibilities too: solidarity and support. According to Aristotle, friendship also served to unite citizens. Many among the founding generation understood, or became familiar with, facets identified as friendship and incorporated concepts regarding community, citizenship, and politics.

Michael Pakaluk, in *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, contends that educated Americans were aware of Aristotle’s systematic theorization for friendship and for government.¹⁵ Such friendship was grounded in utility as well as pleasure, but especially in virtue, as explained by Aristotle: “friendship appears to be the bridge that can link together the individual and the various groups to which he belongs, once virtue is taken as fundamental in the moral life.”¹⁶ For the ancients political friendship was both

48 (1971): 258-75; Charles F. Mullett, “Classical Influences on the American Revolution,” *Classical Journal* 35 (1939): 92-104; Meyer Reinhold, *Classical Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984); Carl J. Richard, *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008); Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Richard, *The Battle for the American Mind: A Brief History of a Nations Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

¹⁴ Michael Pakaluk, ed., *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), xiv.

¹⁵ Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* as quoted in Michael Pakaluk, *Other Selves* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991), 41-43. Aristotle noted three types of political community: kingship, aristocracy, and property owners, also described as tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy species of political system.

private and public in domain, but for Americans the public side placed emphasis on civic duties over individual rights. It was Cicero whom many enlightened eighteenth century individuals felt set the standard of the public citizen: the highly regarded senator, orator, and friend of the Roman Republic. For Cicero the “‘finest thing of all about’ perfect friendship is its provision of a ‘model’ for the virtuous self.”¹⁷

Augustine (354-430)¹⁸ combined Aristotle’s classical concept of political friendship and Cicero’s perceptions of people into a theory for the ages. Augustine understood that the populace, or people, could stand as a rational entity, united by concern, ambition, or objectives, in a common good, for a “commonwealth.” Following Augustine’s example, medieval monks embraced the ancient philosophers’ interests in virtue and vice and the political implications of the concepts. However, whereas ancient philosophers had turned their observations on friendship into a means of “accounting for the social character of morality,” theology adopted the theory for its lessons on love as exemplified by Jesus Christ, and inevitably, the political power of the Church.¹⁹ It is this intermingling of ancient philosophy and Christian theology that would later categorize the power and political relevance of friendship as understood by the founding generation.

¹⁶Pakaluk, *Philosophers on Friendship*, xi.

¹⁷ Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship*, 79.

¹⁸ Philosopher who made significant contributions to the field with his exploration of “belief and authority, his account of knowledge and illumination, his emphasis upon the importance and centrality of the will, and his focus upon a new way of conceptualizing the phenomena of human history.” “Saint Augustine,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/augustine/>.

Also relevant, as will be demonstrated in the following pages, is Augustine’s view on friendship within marriage: “friendship begins with one’s spouse and children and from there moves on to strangers.”

¹⁹ Pakaluk, *Philosophers on Friendship*, 16.

These considerations led Carl Richard to state that the “strict dichotomy between classical republicanism and liberalism,” which he argued has dominated early American historiography “underestimates the human propensity for inconsistency, and ignores the contribution of Christianity to the founders’ thought.”²⁰

The work of Aelred of Rievaulx (1109-1166), Abbot of Rievaulx monastery in Yorkshire, England reflects the transition in the concept of friendship from the Greco-Roman philosophy to Christian theory. Aelred had been an avid admirer of, and highly influenced by, Cicero’s *De amicitia*, titling his own perceptions on the spiritual role of friendship as *De spirituali amicitia (Spiritual Friendship)*. Aelred’s teachings steered the Western world’s comprehension of the term friendship from the twelfth century onward. Three important innovations in Aelred’s work stressed that true friendship should aspire to certain Christ-inspired ideals. First, each friend would be willing to die for the other, the love between them should be mutual and unconditional, and they would be willing to share their possessions. Secondly, friendships of utility, as described by Aristotle, did not exist in Aelred’s model. He also added a category of sinful friendships in which carnal, worldly, or material pleasures were sought. Aelred’s perspective on sinful friendships is not altogether surprising, as he was a medieval priest. His third distinction was that “intimacy rather than love became the distinctive mark of friendship.”²¹ For Aelred, friendship ranked in importance with virtue. He saw them as eternal and not to be taken lightly nor casually, rather similar to vows of marriage. Furthermore, Christ had

²⁰ Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*, 5.

²¹ Pakaluk, *Philosophers on Friendship*, 129-30.

instructed his followers to love one another as they loved themselves and to exhibit kindness, goodness, and charity toward one's fellow human. Hence, it would naturally follow that Aelred would consider "spiritual friendships" to be founded upon "similarities in life, morals, and pursuits..." and in a "mutual conformity in matters human and divine united with benevolence and charity."²² He believed "friendship is that virtue that binds souls in a sweet alliance of predilection and makes of several a single one."²³ Thus, virtuous friendships created unity, political or otherwise.²⁴

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)²⁵ expanded the theological conceptions of Aelred of Rievaulx but he was equally influenced by Aristotle work; in fact, he cited *Nicomachean Ethics* as frequently as Aelred had Cicero's work. The result of the combined models shaped the idea of a "Christian 'Commonwealth.'"²⁶ In his work we can observe a true blending of ancient and medieval interpretations on the meaning and importance of friendship and devotion to community. Aquinas, like Augustine and Aelred, extended virtuous friendship to include marriage where the greatest levels of trust, companionship, ambitions and objectives, political and otherwise, could be shared. Moreover, according to Aquinas, "marriage was the greatest degree of friendship."²⁷ Aquinas also embraced the Aristotelian concept that one should love one's country more

²² Aelred of Rievaulx (Book I, 45-46), *De spirituali amicitia*.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ In Aristotelian theory, virtue ethics provided the rules for a course of action to be taken.

²⁵ For a concise biography and explanation of Thomas Aquinas see *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>.

²⁶ Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship*, 44.

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, (III.123).

than one's self, and from his medieval perspective put forth the view that the soul's salvation became entwined, to a degree, with social or civic responsibility. The link to the founders' mentalities is clear. In addition, Aquinas further enriched Augustine's arguments that God provided humans with practical reason, the psychological self-motivation of free will rooted in the qualities of intellectual and moral virtues, and stressed the idea of a moral law which came to hold such importance in medieval ethics and beyond. The Augustine and Aquinas theses connected the soul, intellect, and early stirrings regarding reason, and they would influence the future development of law and ethics that would rise during the Renaissance.²⁸

²⁸ Although Niccolo Machiavelli shaped the contours of eighteenth century political thought, his works appear to have had little direct impact on the American Founders' collection of ideals. Founders' notations rarely mention Machiavelli's work when considering ideology. True, Machiavelli had argued against theocratic primacy and he deeply admired Cicero's Roman republicans, but he distrusted Aristotle's theory of friendship based on trust and concord, and would have dispelled the notion that networks of friendship

The Enlightenment and American Political Friendship²⁹

The scope of eighteenth century political revolutions was international, the same held true for Enlightenment.³⁰ Enlightened theory was a reaction to the religious fervor that had intensified during the Middle Ages and culminated in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Traditional church hierarchy had commanded authority and demanded obedience. The Enlightenment scholars focused early on diminishing religious intolerance and superstition. Knowledge and skepticism were fundamental features but not to the exclusion of religious beliefs. Although it may appear contrary in

generate common good, amity, and truthfulness. Machiavelli's model exalted distrust and tumult, and he viewed "the common good" through an entirely different lens than classical and renaissance humanists. Machiavelli's common good, like his perspective on friendships, was based on patronage, on individual ambition and reward, in the context of commerce and socioeconomic interest, and ruthlessness. He offered no arguments to support moral virtue. Actually, the principle of justice -- a feature central to American Republicanism, firmly places the Founders at odds with Machiavelli. No, although this great renaissance thinker opened the door to modern political thought, and placed us on a path to understanding and embracing commerce as a means of national power, international friendship, authority, and as an instrument for common good, when it came to the Americans their use of Machiavelli was "circumscribed and constrained" (Paul Rahe, ed., *Machiavelli's Liberal Republican Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), xxviii). Paul Rahe provides an extended explanation on Machiavelli's indirect but influential impact on the founding generation and modern republicanism.²⁹ Early Americans tended to lean toward the optimistic when adopting concepts from classical philosophy, the Commonwealthmen, and a collection of enlightened ideals in the construction of their own theory. The result was a distinct category of friendship that existed in the Atlantic World.

²⁹ On the development of an American Enlightenment see Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); J. David Hoeveler, *Creating the American Mind: Intellect and Politics in the Colonial Colleges* (New York: Roman and Littlefield, 2007); Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (New York: Penguin, 2000); Darren Staloff, *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), 7; Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas that have Shaped Our World View* (New York: Ballantine, 1990).

³⁰ The Enlightenment was a cultural movement in the Western world, or more accurately several cultural movements covering an extended period of time over a wide range of territory, which challenged previous assumptions and championed knowledge and rational inquiry. The Renaissance laid the groundwork by giving rise to a new set of ideas regarding religion and politics. Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza presented a wide range of challenges. Newton was the shining star of scientific achievement. Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu contributed, and David Hume, Adam Smith, and John Locke earned many credits for their influence on American thought. Possibly of primary importance for American ideology was Francis Hutcheson.

nature, many participants in the cultural movement were devout in their faith. Eighteenth century philosophers built upon the concepts described by Rene Descartes and John Locke. The French philosophes, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, were widely acclaimed. The Molesworth Circle, identified by Caroline Robbins, was an example of the movement in Ireland. Philosophical theories supported rational and scientific application to societal issues, embraced freedom of conscience, and promoted moral philosophy and social responsibility, often stressing religious tolerance. Intellectuals spread the enlightened ideals throughout the European continent and beyond. Additionally, it was cultural identity which determined the principles each community embraced. Doctrines were adopted and modified as necessary to address regional problems in economics, politics, and society. Enlightened theory crossed the Atlantic and inspired colonial Americans: it also served to influence a distinctly American constitutional republic.

Colonial Americans had learned the lessons of Enlightenment well. Indeed, as Edmund Burke understood Americans, it was the extent of their embrace of enlightened theories that made the colonists so unique. In his speech on “Conciliation with the Colonies,” March 1775, Burke commented on the fierce spirit of liberty and love of freedom that were “stronger in the English colonies probably than in any other people of the earth.” This growth of American spirit was in no small part due to their education, for in “no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study.”³¹ Burke, to support his point, cited correspondence from General Thomas Gage stationed in the colonies, who

³¹ Isaac Kramnick, ed., *The Portable Edmund Burke* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1999), 279.

wrote “that all the people in this government [in the colonies] are lawyers, or smatterers in law.”³² Such study, Burke noted, rendered people “acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, [and] full of resources.”³³ Along with law and politics, colonists were interested in science, ethics, and reason. Enlightenment led Americans to establish a secular society founded upon science and rationality. They recognized the importance of education, religious tolerance, and the formation of personal character. Two hundred and thirty years after Edmund Burke’s speech, Darren Staloff recaptured in *Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding* precisely what Burke had foreseen: The United States of America was forged in the crucible of the Enlightenment; no other nation bears its imprint as deeply. Our ideals of liberty and equality, the ringing “self-evident truths” of the Declaration of Independence, and the measured tones of the Constitution and *The Federalist* all echo the language of Enlightenment and express its most profound convictions about political life and the natural rights of mankind.³⁴ Many Americans had not only embraced Enlightenment, but they had almost completely incorporated it into their society, and their concept of political friendship exemplified this phenomenon.

American character was a “new social type, with its own intellectual mores, habits, and values.”³⁵ Cities, even small ones, were the hubs of, and friendship the conduit for, American enlightened thought. Eighteenth century America was a place

³² Kramnick, *Burke*, 278.

³³ Kramnick, *Burke*, 279.

³⁴ Staloff, *Politics of Enlightenment*, 3.

³⁵ Staloff, *Politics of Enlightenment*, 16.

where discussion was prominent. Circles of friends discussed the hot topics of the day in tearooms, coffeehouses, town halls, meeting houses, market places, clubs, wool-spinning sessions, churches and taverns. Printed materials were the media of the era: articles, essays, newspapers, pamphlets, sermons, texts, even Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac* was laden with enlightened maxims. It was an environment that promoted persons of letters – both male and female.³⁶ They corresponded within their genders, classes, and ethnicities -- and beyond them. Salons, private meetings inviting both genders, furthered the discourse. As Linda Kerber has pointed out, *philosophe* is a male noun but it was obvious that many revolutionary American women were thinking, discussing, writing, and sharing their political ideas with friends and family.³⁷ American Enlightenment was not restricted to intellectuals, elites, or males. Verbal dialogue and debate were especially important in the transmission of ideas to the less learned. Both the educated and those not afforded formal education participated in the discussions. As Josiah Quincy Jr. observed “almost every American pen was at work, and even peasants and their housewives in every part of the land [had begun] to dispute on politics and positively to determine upon our liberties.”³⁸ Regardless of the gender, class, or ethnicity of the persons involved, during the revolutionary period the content of many of

³⁶Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, *Men Of Letters in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Gilman M. Ostrander, *Republic of Letters: The American Intellectual Community, 1775-1865* (New York: Madison Press, 1999); Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

³⁷ Kerber, *Toward an Intellectual History of Women*, 26.

³⁸ As quoted by Gordon S. Wood in *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 4-7.

these conversations would have been considered treasonous.

Ideal Typology in Political Friendship

In the decades surrounding the Revolution Americans often sought to lead by example, with certain qualities or ideals that participants felt set them apart from former social or governmental structures. Traditionally friendships were held for a “coordination of the interests of two or more persons, within a kind of objective relationship which serves as a good common to the friends.”³⁹ Political friendships, whether formed in the turmoil preceding and during the American Revolution or in the chaos that followed, held a set of expectations of personal qualities. The reputation of one’s friend was considered a representation of self.⁴⁰ Those who supported American rebellion were, in the view of British authorities, traitors for whom death was warranted. Loyalists, supporters of the Crown, were under threat of harsh retribution as well. In the unstable political world in which the revolutionary generation found themselves, bonds of unquestionable mutual confidence were essential for self-preservation. Later, in the early National period, politics were structured around networks of such friends – personal and voluntary alliances of trust and loyalty. Remaining true to one’s word was paramount: disloyalty and betrayal led to loss of reputation and likely ruin.⁴¹ Disreputable acts damaged not

³⁹ Pakaluk, *Philosophers on Friendship*, xiii.

⁴⁰ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁴¹ Aaron Burr is an excellent example. See Thomas Fleming, *Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Future of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) and Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York: Viking, 2007).

only the culprit but also the reputations of one's associates as well. Success depended upon the solidarity of trusted alliances. Political leaders and their networks of friends were expected to set an example to be followed, their leadership sought to inspire social order and a sense of stability, and they set the stage for national cohesion. The qualities they valued in each other established a standard that would be incorporated into American culture. Honor and virtue were prominent ideals but community interest and passion ranked highly as well. These components of character adopted, or reconstructed, by early Americans became instrumental in the formation of identity.

Honor, a trait sometimes impugned by political foes but assumed between friends, was a fundamental quality. The context of the term evolved over time. In the ancient world, honor was a form of civic virtue connected to serving the common good as well as obligations to family and friends. Conceptions of honor, influenced by Christian belief during the middle ages became tied to spiritual love and an aristocratic code of ennobled qualities of heroism and loyalty, but also incorporated a sense of camaraderie. Civic consciousness was again brought to the forefront with the Enlightenment. Americans' application of the term incorporated citizenship and adopted obligation, noble character, and social conscience. In *Affairs of Honor*, Joanne Freeman argued that honor was as important as ideology in the developing American political system. Her views are supported by the essays in the *Federalist Papers* that express the ideological concepts of the era and fervently, consistently, reiterate expected ideals. John Jay described, in Federalist essay No. 64, the expectations of honorable behavior: "Every consideration that can influence the human mind, such as honor, oaths, reputations, conscience, the love

of country, and family affections and attachments...they shall be men of integrity...”⁴²

Citizens of the newly formed United States desired leaders who exemplified honor and respectability. They were, after all, representative of all Americans.

Americans reinvigorated the concept of *virtue*. The early American interpretation combined of personal and civic. Virtue, in the ancient context, had been identified with human excellence, civic concord, the passion for instilling the greatest good for the public, and represented the highest form of friendship recognized by the Greco-Roman world. Whereas the concept of “classical virtue flowed from the citizens’ participation in politics” by comparison “modern virtue flowed from citizens’ participation in society.”⁴³ Virtue in American vernacular was a consciousness of self and personal integrity displayed through behavior – qualities integral to political friendship. Virtue meant that private interests were expected to be secondary to the common good. John Jay, who became the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, addressed the issue of public over private interests and the virtuous avoidance of conflicts of interest. In addition, Jay foresaw the elected leadership to be “composed of the most enlightened and respectable citizens ... distinguished by their abilities and virtue, and in whom the people perceive just grounds for confidence.”⁴⁴ Likewise, James Madison contended that the:

aim of every political constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers [leaders] men who possess most wisdom to discern, and most virtue to pursue, the common good of the society; and in the next place, to take

⁴² Gary Wills, ed., *The Federalist Papers: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay* (New York: Random House, 2003).

⁴³ Wood, *Radicalism*, 217.

⁴⁴ John Jay, *Federalist No. 64*, 1788.

the most effectual precautions for keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust.⁴⁵

The founding leaders had been united in various political friendships during the revolutionary decades and, as noted by John Jay, remained so in the construction and debates over the United States Constitution:

This convention composed of men who possessed the confidence of the people, and many of whom had become highly distinguished by their patriotism, virtue and wisdom, in times which tried the minds and hearts of men, undertook the arduous task ... without having been awed by power, or influenced by any passions except love for their country, they presented and recommended to the people the plan produced by their joint and very unanimous councils.⁴⁶

According to Gordon Wood, American virtue was a social value. It was progressive, even radical, and it laid the foundation for modern liberal thinking and the reform movements of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷

In early America *interest* had a complex application. Terminology applied to commerce, ambition, and concern for the common good of the nation and its people.⁴⁸ An ethical duty was also implied. Interpretation of eighteenth century American conceptions of interest developed during the Renaissance and later linked to capitalism and became recognized as the mainstream of human behavior, namely self-interest,

⁴⁵ James Madison, *Federalist No. 57*, 1788.

⁴⁶ Jay, *Federalist No. 2*, 1787.

⁴⁷ Wood, *Radicalism*, 106-7.

⁴⁸ The work of Francis Hutcheson, and his protégé Adam Smith, on commerce and early capitalist concepts are cited by numerous political leaders of the era, perhaps most notably for their contributions to American political thought, James Madison, John Jay, and Thomas Jefferson.

which accepted ambition and included the pursuit of commerce. Even the Puritans, in part, adopted the philosophy. In a sermon John Winthrop called for “*reciprocal, equal, sweet commerce*.”⁴⁹ The influence of enlightened thought expanded the term’s usage beyond the “ego’s pursuit of satisfaction and self-esteem” to include the natural affinity between humans that was capable of holding society together.⁵⁰ Affinity meant more than fondness, it was a shared proclivity for issues. It was a feature for building a strong society guarded by a government which held the interest of the people as its primary objective and which promoted and protected commercial interests to ensure a strong and wealthy society. Private interest in commerce prompted attainment for the greater goal of public interest. In essence, it was a circle of economic activity of capitalism and commerce driven by personal ambition *and* benefit of country. Interest was a combination of self and country. One was able to pursue ambition and benefits due to the liberty and freedom provided by the nation. Therefore, an individual’s first responsibility was to country. These aspects contributed toward American perceptions regarding the dignity of labor. In the States it was considered virtuous and honorable to work. However, there was an additional feature applied to the term. James Madison identified a particular form of interest that could corrupt government, buy votes, or find means to apply undue influence on elected officials and members of government. He referred to them as special interest(s). Modern Americans know them as lobbyists.

⁴⁹ See Perry Miller, *Errand in the Wilderness* (New York: Belknap Publishing, 1956).

⁵⁰ J.G.A. Pocock, *Machiavelli Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 487; Also Staloff, *Politics of Enlightenment*; Rahe, *Republican Legacy*.

Enlightened theory placed *passion* as a natural and essential means to promote human motivation and action, especially in politics where passions of ambition and interest could prevail in good government. Passion for public good could be channeled, indeed could need control, by intelligent and virtuous legislatures. This interpretation of the term was far from its medieval Christian doctrine which held passion as one of humanity's sinful dispositions that needed to be resisted. Irish and Scottish philosophers considered "calm" passions, those based on good intentions and affection, to be morally and ethically virtuous, for example benevolence. Thomas Paine believed that passion and friendships could establish a political culture through the vicarious experiences of shared losses and suffering, successes, and communal welfare -- but passion had to be kept in balance with reason. In the eyes of a foreign observer passion was a quizzical feature of American identity:

The American has need of daily support from energetic passion; this passion can only be the love of wealth; the passion for wealth is, then, not stigmatized in America ... men hold it in honor.

Alexis de Tocqueville⁵¹

Tocqueville was missing a crucial point regarding a culture he could not have completely understood. Americans perceived that work, labor, and enterprise led to a strong society secured by a government expected to protect their rights and liberties and promoted the greatest good for its citizens. Private passions (i.e., ambition) churned public good. Passion evolved from an important feature expected in political friendship to a characteristic of the American persona. The founding generation had united in their

⁵¹ As cited in Paul Rahe, *Republican Legacy*, 103-4.

passion for their country. Honor, virtue, interest, and passion were the fundamental concepts in political friendships. They were the threads that wove American identity and character.

Historiography Relevant to Political Friendship Theory

This dissertation fits well into the framework the “New New Political History” or “Newest Political History” being produced, particularly in its integration of gender, class, and race into the scope of political history.⁵² David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*, whose position on American ideology corresponds to that incorporated in this work, notes that non elite men and women had “a national perspective” as did African Americans.⁵³ Using the public display of parades, an approach first incorporated by social historians, festivities and celebrations of national holidays, even lyrics, were means of demonstrating political culture.⁵⁴ Likewise the collection of essays in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to Political History of the Early American Republic*, edited by Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, is representative of the scope and approach of this manuscript. These essays explore political intent and activities by white males of

⁵² William G. Shade, “Déjà vu All Over Again: Is There a New New Political History?,” in Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to Political History of the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

⁵³ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁵⁴ Waldstreicher, *Fetes*, 9.

different classes; “gender, race, and other identities;” transatlantic connections; and probe the “political actions of Indians and slaves and free blacks.”⁵⁵

Secondary sources that specifically established the groundwork for political friendship include Gordon Wood’s *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, which recognized categories of friendship in the numerous configurations of patronage and kinship networking. Wood found that prerevolutionary friendships as “personal relationships of dependence, usually taking the form of those between patrons and clients, constituted the ligaments that held this society together and made it work.”⁵⁶ Friendship was dictated by one’s social rank and his or her associations formed accordingly – of or above his or her station and able to offer an opportunity or position in return for political favors, or the parties were bound by kinship connections. Such dependencies resulted in patronage politics, what contemporaries of the era knew as a form of friendship. In the small “face-to-face” societies of the colonies, Wood wrote, “personal and official affairs could scarcely be separated.”⁵⁷ Wood argued that political factions existed but that they were simply collections of the leading families acting in their own best interest. Joanne B. Freeman, in *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*, concurs with Wood’s argument that society’s elites held political authority in early America but, in addition, she presents convincing arguments that those movers and shakers of the New Republic were deeply concerned with public good, not solely self-interest. In fact, she

⁵⁵ Pasley, et al., *Beyond the Founders*, 13, 15.

⁵⁶ Wood, *Radicalism*, 63.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

argued, self-interest came to be recognized as unrepugnant and could be the cause of personal, professional, and political ruin, as evidenced by Aaron Burr's downfall. Political alliances were "organized around networks of friends" and later political parties.⁵⁸ In the years following the American Revolution, forms of patronage still existed but were expected to contribute to the greater good of the populace. Alexander Hamilton's circles of patronage were widespread and served to benefit hundreds, if not thousands, of people. However, Hamilton is an example of a person who also retained traditional patronage as a means to family benefit. His promotions of the financial interests of his father-in-law are not examples of incentives for common benefit.⁵⁹ By the end of the eighteenth century the term friendship still had broad usage in American politics.

Society remained "small and face-to-face," but as Freeman argued, honor or disgrace, even by mere association, was paramount in the manner by which politics was played. By the early nineteenth century "party bonds were personal above all else; they were voluntary ties of trust and commitment – friendship in every sense of the word."⁶⁰ Furthermore, Freeman explained:

In a political world structured by personal friendships, disloyalty to one's party was a betrayal of one's friends ... To national politicians, parties was about friendship, not party; it involved honor as much as ideology; it

⁵⁸ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ These points are elaborated upon in Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York: Viking, 2007); and Thomas Fleming, *Duel: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Future of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999).

⁶⁰ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 259.

relied on bonds of personal loyalty, not partisanship; and it was fueled by a concern for the public good, not party spirit.⁶¹

Early national politics was structured upon political friendships, was highly personal, and conformed to revolutionary era concepts of character.

Stuart Leibiger's *Founding Friendship: George Washington, James Madison, and the Creation of the American Republic* is of particular importance to understanding the intricacies of political friendships and their influence on America. He found that political relationships were not always obvious to contemporary observers – especially since correspondence was the primary source of contact. Careful examination of Washington's and Madison's correspondence to each other provide clues that proved the effective levels of friendships – especially when the “kinship universes” or family histories, Connections and contacts were analyzed. As evidenced by Leibiger, the connection between Washington and Madison began as a collaboration for regional and local improvements then grew to a companionship that influenced the many political and national objectives they shared. In addition, Leibiger's study stands as an example of the manner in which political friendship could last a lifetime or be temporary in nature: continuing or ceasing after objectives.

In *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature*, Ivy Schweitzer argued that through the study of friendship theory we can better understand the American democratic project. Schweitzer's work moves the historian from the realm of elite white male political friendships and broadens the scope to include

⁶¹ Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 261.

“transgressive friendships” – those that crossed the boundaries of gender, race, ethnicity, class, even sexuality in the considerations of political affiliation.⁶² She found that early American friendships were exploring, negotiating, and mediating aspects of liberty and equality. Topics regarding freedom and rights were discussed in transgressive friendships and such alliances played a role in the “forms of national identity” that emerged in the Early Republic.⁶³ By combining the study of friendship theory with colonial diversity Schweitzer demonstrated the ability of early Americans, especially minorities and women, to adopt the Aristotelian ideal of moral equality. This did not mean immediate political inclusion but it was a foot in the door.

The works of Carl J. Richard are fundamental to understanding the impact that classical studies, Greek and Roman in particular, had on the ideas and ideals adopted and incorporated by the founding generation. *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome and the American Enlightenment* (1994); *The Battle for the American Mind: A Brief History of the Nation’s Thought* (2004); *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts: How the Ancients Inspired the Founding Fathers* (2008) are central to appreciating the influence of the ancients on the formation of American political friendship as a category of relationship.⁶⁴ The classics were so prevalent in seventeenth- and eighteenth- century American scholastic training that many came to conclude that the superlative examples

⁶² Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship*, 23.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Richard, *Greeks and Romans Bearing Gifts*; Richard, *The Battle for the American Mind*; Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*.

could be applied to everyday life. The principles that Richard described established many of the criteria found in political friendship.

The preceding scholarship, and a cross-discipline approach, created the foundation that enables this study on the distinctive role that political friendship, as a driving force in itself, played in the construction of the nation. Each of the aforementioned texts are fundamental, they elucidate prerequisites that coalesced friendship and politics. Each philosopher and historian has contributed a major component. My goal is to present a broader landscape of how human relationships incorporated politics to create a better society.

Methodology

Political friendships were shared between nonelites as well as members of the elite, between women, and between men and women. They extended across race, ethnicities and class structure; and beyond religious precepts, to secure autonomy or some level of inclusion in the governing processes. The archival research for this work on evaluating personal relationships between politically active individuals was broad in scope. It included their letters, journals, commonplace books, copybooks, memoirs and family records, church records, newspapers, pamphlets, poems, sermons, and observations recorded in published and unpublished form. I needed to answer questions regarding the basis on which their political opinions had formed. How did these people become agents for change? How much causation developed from personal experiences and education?

What they, the individuals included in this study, read proved almost as important as what they wrote. As well as interpreting their correspondence, I had to read the works they cited, requested and/or recommended to others; and review what they saved in commonplace books and journals. If they made the effort to painstakingly copy material, then it had to be of importance or particular interest to them. I looked for patterns exhibited in what they wrote, in language, vocabulary, in ideas and ideals – the indicators of avenues sought for participation in political activities and how they worked around the policies of exclusion.

Reading primary sources for early America requires particular attention to nuances as well as the composition.⁶⁵ What early Americans wrote, how they wrote it, where emphasis was placed, when it was written and from where, and especially by who and to whom, are as closely as possible, interpreting their words. One must learn to read beyond the formal structure of the contents and consider the syntax, diction, and means of

⁶⁵ Sarah M.S. Pearsall addresses the intricacies of reading Early American correspondence in *Atlantic Families: Lives and Letters in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) particularly the prologue and introduction, pages 1-20. Pearsall notes the conventions and subtleties in eighteenth century epistles. She examines the shifts in relationships caused by dislocation, economic circumstances, and politics by families divided across the “Anglophone Atlantic.” John Howe, *Language and Political Meaning in Revolutionary America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004) is important for extending and challenging the “scholarly conversation concerning the inherent qualities, rhetorical uses, and historical significance of political language at the nation’s founding” (6), as well as English usage, grammar, syntax, by political writers. Konstantin Dierks’ work on Early American epistolary and communications is central to understanding the language and texts during the decades surrounding the War of Independence. In particular see *In My Power: Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Also important on the topic are Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1986); Rebecca Earle, *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (London: Ashgate Press, 1999); Rhys Isaac, “Communication and Control: Authority Metaphors and Power Contests on Colonel Landon Carter’s Virginia Plantation, 1752-1778” in Sean Wilentz, ed., *Rites of Power, Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

emphasis.⁶⁶ Salutations, and modifications of such, are very important indicators of relationship and rank. Interpretively it is necessary to become sensitive to the tone communicated through the words and sentences. It can reflect positions, personality, and perspectives. Tone can indicate whether the writer was a colleague and confidant or if the friendship was shared through another category. In addition, definitions and implications of vocabulary change over time. Continually consulting period appropriate dictionaries is absolutely necessary for achieving accurate context.⁶⁷ You have to learn to read between the lines. It is a process of development – achieved from slow, careful, and time-consuming reading, and rereading, of the early Americans’ words. It is necessary to be “sensitive to the fluid, transforming nature of political language”⁶⁸

A Note on the Application of Psychology

Many historians note what Bernard Bailyn has called “behavioral analysis.” What made these people tick? Historical context combined with psychology allows fuller comprehension of eighteenth century human behavior, connections, perceptions, and actions within the context of their experience. As Gordon Wood wrote “the American Revolution is best understood as a psychological phenomenon.”⁶⁹ My application is,

⁶⁶ An example is the capitalization of words.

⁶⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary and Samuel Johnson *A Dictionary of the English Language*, two volumes, (London, 1755).

⁶⁸ John Howe, *Language and Political Meaning in Revolutionary America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 3-7.

⁶⁹ Gordon Wood “Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (1982), 404-5.

primarily, that of social psychology.⁷⁰ I incorporate a psychological approach in the study of relationships -- how people were thinking and relating to others, as much as is possible from a difference of 200-plus years -- to discern how an individual's perceptions, identity, belief system, morality, connections and actions were products of the society in which they lived. Class, gender, race, and religion are all important in one's psychological construct. Our modern society is too far removed from eighteenth century reality for us to precisely comprehend their reasoning. We can, however, identify patterns and motivation.

Chapter Descriptions

In the first chapter we observe how political friendship could cross gender and racial boundaries. Native American women had held powerful positions within their tribes, they were not as restricted as white women by imposed codes of exclusion. Molly Brant (whose Mohawk name was Degonwadonti) was a woman who held political influence among her tribe from an early age. Her intimate and long-term relationship with Sir William Johnson, Superintendent for Indian Affairs, strengthened her position among her people. Although she and Johnson collaborated for the benefit of both their peoples perhaps their most important political project was in the person of Molly's younger brother and Johnson's protégé, Joseph. Joseph Brant was intentionally trained to

⁷⁰ Ronald Brown and R. J. Herrnstein, *Psychology* (New York: Little & Brown, 1977); Brown, *Social Psychology* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003); Peter S. Smith, Michael Harris Bond, Cigdem Kagitcibasi, *Understanding Social Psychology Across Cultures* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2006).

maneuver cross-culturally, and his relationship with his sister, Molly, is evidence that political friendship was not the sole domain of patriots. Loyalists of the period also formed, retained, or lost friendships during the turbulent period.⁷¹ Molly and Joseph had remained Loyalists in a gamble to secure the best interests for their people. Redcoats and Rebels courted the native tribes to embrace their cause. As Colin Calloway points out, the Native Americans' "War of Independence" started long before 1775 and lasted long after 1783.⁷²

The alliances shared by intellectuals of color are the basis of the second chapter. Not all people in British North America desired to be aligned with either the American or British government. Some, like Native Americans Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson made autonomy their objective. Occom's friendship with African American slave and renowned poet Phyllis Wheatley is an example of political friendship crossing races in the promotion of civil rights. Wheatley and Occom were among the earliest outspoken abolitionists in the new nation.

Ideas, as well as prejudices, were transported across the Atlantic. The transatlantic connection is the central focus of chapter three. Not all rich, white males were entitled to political participation. Prior to revolutionary discourse, Catholics in early America were denied political rights regardless of class. Early emigrants from Ireland carried memories of the repression of Catholics and Dissidents. Resentment bred for generations and was

⁷¹ Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Invention of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2005); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderlands of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

⁷² Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, Introduction.

ripe by the time of rebellion. The founding generation was not the first to thrive on revolutionary, republican, or radical rhetoric. Although elements of American revolutionary friendships make them distinctive in their time, they followed a pattern of sharing knowledge and of questioning the status quo that had been carried to the colonies through long established lines of communications.

Men and women had inherited ideas and ideals that Americans ultimately advanced into the principles of a new nation. The connections between women during the Revolutionary War are examined in chapter four. The modern forces of change were at hand for American women's self-perception, self-confidence, and self-esteem and they were capable of uniting in friendship with public intentions. Women became more engaged in political discourse as war approached and progressed. Some women, certainly not all, began moving away from the prevailing opinion that politics was not their province, and they insisted that they should, at least, be granted the right to offer political opinions.⁷³

Women did, for the most part, remain restricted in their political activities, but behind the scenes and in their private spheres they could and did work with males towards shared political objectives. As Linda Kerber has commented, the "great questions of political liberty and civic freedom, of the relationship between law and liberty, the subjects of so many ideological struggles in the eighteenth century, are questions which have no gender." There are cases where marriage created the ultimate

⁷³ Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 170.

political coalition. Women's journals and correspondence held terms indicative of republican language: country first, virtue, honor, and integrity. They used these terms not in connection with modesty but in regard to character in the same manner as it applied to men. The fifth chapter focuses on Republican Marriage illustrating that political partnerships between men and women, within marriage, shared political objectives. Mutual respect was capable of influencing, balancing, or swaying opinions. Women became responsible for politically motivating their husbands, sons, and brothers.

Women were not established as "citizens and voters"⁷⁴ The Revolution "neither enhanced their civic status nor expanded their legal rights."⁷⁵ Yet, some men of the era did recognize women as capable of political thoughts and discussion, as confidants and activists, and as allies and adversaries. When political historian Joseph Ellis refers to "the Adams team," he means John and Abigail. Likewise Dolley and James Madison were an extraordinary example of political partnership. The Adamses and Madisons comprise chapter six. Only one example of a specific objective for each couple is offered and analyzed, for examples abound for each team.

Each chapter demonstrates individuals united in political friendship, alliances based on specific goals, whether community, colony, state or nation in scope. The central interests of their objectives were public good. They had expectations of each other, and of

⁷⁴ Kerber, *Toward an Intellectual History*, 55; Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 21-25; Cynthia Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 2.

⁷⁵ Kierner, *Beyond the Household*, 1; Kerber, *Toward an Intellectual History* 55; Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 21-25.

the outcomes of their endeavors; as a result, some relationships collapsed while other remained intact and surpassed hopes. The unions that endured demonstrate that political ideas in the era of revolution were capable of being greater than the considerations of gender, class, ethnicity, race, or religion.

CHAPTER II

AN IMPERIAL PROJECT GONE WRONG?

Political Friendship Crossing Gender and Race: Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant

Enlightenment and personal experience enabled William Johnson (1715-1774) to forge political friendships across ethnicities and genders, independent of religion, and eventually for a far greater good than his own personal interests. In the Atlantic World, power and position were largely procured from family, networking, and patronage. For enterprising men, with the right connections, the American colonies could create fortunes. Additionally, the British government consistently needed such men to serve as administrators and officials for policy enforcement in the colonies. Beginning in the 1960s, historians have defined the Imperial Project as the bureaucratic impulse, from 1748 through the planning of the Southern Campaign in 1778, to revitalize and aggressively expand British imperial authority in North America. In the framework of Britain's Imperial Project, colonies primarily existed for utility and profit of the government: economically and militarily, for trade, employment, natural resources and as outposts against foreign aggression and competition.⁷⁶ The fact that native people

⁷⁶ Formation of the Lords of Trade, in 1675, was such a measure to strengthen administrative ties between the Crown and colonial governments. The Imperial Project was an intensification of bureaucratic control over the North American colonies especially from 1748 (the beginning of the Earl of Halifax's Presidency of the Board of Trade) through the political planning of the southern offensive under William Knox in the Colonial Office, in 1778). The post-modern tone of this term is analogous to "The Enlightenment Project" as a deconstruction of eighteenth century rationalism. Johnson and the Brants, and their overseers in Whitehall, deliberately sought to undermine the Whig notion of the Empire as implicitly and imperfectly embodying what Adam Smith called "extensive self-governing authority." "By no means,"

inhabited desired territory was basically irrelevant. Native American land could be purchased or appropriated. Native Americans themselves could voluntarily evacuate, be physically expelled, or exterminated. In most aspects William Johnson acted in accordance to the patterns of traditional patronage, but in his relationships with Native Americans his approach was influenced by enlightened theory and personal experience. Johnson was an empathetic exception to the British norm. In his political alliances he sought measures for preservation of Native American culture and society instead of their destruction.

William Johnson's psychological perspective was shaped by being raised in a country ravaged by overt religious and ethnic prejudice. Born to a Catholic family in eighteenth century Ireland, the experiences of Johnson's youth created a man uniquely able to understand and appreciate the tribal kinship and political networks of Native North Americans. The Ireland of his youth, still steeped in mystical Celtic ritual had managed to become strangely congruent with the inhabitants' Catholicism. Clan connections remained strong, although technically the clan systems of Ireland and Scotland had been outlawed.⁷⁷ Clans were communities of people connected by a

historian Jack P. Greene writes, "were all metropolitan Britons comfortable with this conception." In this sense, Native American Indian Agents and their indigenous clients, were metropolitan Britons as well as being freelance frontier imperial operatives. Jack P. Greene, "Introduction: Empire and Liberty," in *Exclusionary Empire: English Liberty Overseas, 1600-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 11, and Jack P. Greene, *Metropolis and Colonies: Changing Patterns in Constitutional Conflict in Early Modern British Empire, 1607-1763* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 43-77.

⁷⁷ S. J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). For insight into ancient and medieval history of Ireland see Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization: The Untold Story of Ireland's Heroic Role from the Fall of Rome to the Rise of Medieval Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) and Geoffrey Moorhouse, *Sun Dancing: A Vision of Medieval Ireland* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1997). Comprehensive histories include Mike Cronin, *A History of Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2005) and Christine Kinealy, *A New History of Ireland* (London:

common ancestry that shared mutual aims or interests for the security and welfare of its members. Their Chiefs, or Chieftains, considered leaders among equals originally appointed by clan members before becoming hereditary, were primarily responsible for protecting territorial integrity. Unfortunately, habitual antipathy between clans created political instability and disunity that left the population vulnerable when invaded by the English. By the eighteenth century, people in Ireland, under English control, had witnessed a collection of discriminatory enactments collectively known as Penal Laws or Penal Codes.⁷⁸

These repressive laws were actually a compilation of statutes, produced over generations, directed toward the Roman Catholic majority and, to a lesser degree, at Protestant Dissenters.⁷⁹ Catholics were restricted from secondary education and forbidden to teach or operate facilities of higher learning within Ireland. Catholic Bishops had been banished, parishes were limited to a single clergy member, and members of the priesthood were forbidden to travel in Ireland. Such laws restricting religious consciousness were notoriously hard to enforce – especially on an entire country. Catholicism remained the religion of the majority in Ireland. More easily

Sutton Publishing, 2004). On the Protestant movement in Ireland see S. J. Conolly, *Religion, Law, and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland, 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). For material regarding the Irish in Colonial North America see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Timothy J. Meager, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Kerby Miller, et al., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) are excellent sources.

⁷⁸ Penal laws were also referred to as penal codes, or more recently as popery laws. The terms are, in most cases, interchangeable.

⁷⁹ Connolly, *Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 438.

enforceable, however, were restrictions on civil, economic, and military participation. Catholics were prohibited from owning, manufacturing, or selling weapons, books, or newspapers. They could not own a horse worth more than five pounds, purchase land, rent land worth more than thirty shillings or for longer than thirty-one years. They could not vote, hold public office, sit in Parliament, practice law, or hold military posts. Catholic estates had to be divided between all the sons of the deceased, not entailed (bequeathed to the eldest), in an effort to shrink family acreage below that needed to sustain a family, thus removing Native Irish from land ownership. Loss of property combined with the lack of education and barring from the avenues of power reduced a large portion of Ireland's Catholic population to abject poverty and into cheap labor. Orphans of Irish Catholics were supposed to be raised in Protestant households thereby being acquiesced to the faith of the latter. The last existing popery codes were not fully repealed until Catholic Emancipation in 1829,⁸⁰ fifty-five years after William Johnson's death. Measures taken against Native Irish paralleled those Johnson witnessed being imposed against Native Americans. Inevitably, a man of Johnson's intelligence and experience would have recognized the repetitive pattern of repression through policy.

Encouraged by his uncle, and patron, Sir Peter Warren, Johnson acceded to the religion of England's power holders. His mother's brother had risen to the rank of Admiral in the Royal Navy, amassed a fortune, and accumulated vast tracts of property in America. Although most of Sir William Johnson's biographers argue that he was

⁸⁰ Connolly, *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 438.

religiously ambiguous, it does not correlate into conversion as an easy decision.⁸¹ He was raised in a large family headed by Catholic parents, and at least two of his uncles

⁸¹ Many historians perceive Sir William as having been a devout convert to Anglicanism, others deduce him as indifferent to religion, most agree his religious conversion was an expedient means to success – for himself personally and, later, for the Native Nations. Alan Taylor, who has exhibited his prodigious knowledge of Sir William Johnson’s papers, is one scholar who found Johnson “Devoted to the official Church of England, ...” (Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 51), whereas Fintan O’Toole, proponent of Johnson’s Anglican faith as a “means to an end,” stressed that Johnson never really shed his Catholic sensitivities (*White Savage*, 26-7). Even a man with Johnson’s great abilities would have been stymied by the religious repression that suppressed personal business, military, and statecraft ambitions. As Colin Calloway noted “English antipathy toward Roman Catholicism was notorious” in Colin G. Calloway, *Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, 152). In addition, William Johnson certainly espoused enlightened ideals at a time when the Catholic Church, with the exception of the Society of Jesus -- Jesuit -- educators, was still adjusting to Enlightenment theory fearing greater loss of political power. Regardless, I did not discover Johnson to be a man particularly attached to Protestantism. For the most part, Johnson’s own words depict a lack of personal denomination preference “... I think it the duty of every good Man to contribute all in his power to promote the Interests of a Church ...” – “a” church, not “the” church is an important distinction for the era (Sir William Johnson Papers, Volume VIII, 188). Instead, I think he was often deliberately misleading. Johnson walked a fine rope: a religiously tolerant man before the concept was socially embraced. His papers clearly indicate his religious tolerance: people he had settled on his lands stemmed from a wide range of religious faiths, built churches and were free to worship as they wished – including Catholics although Penal Codes had not yet been rescinded; Johnson recorded pleasant dinner conversations with priests in his journals; he named the Masonic Lodge he founded in 1766, the first in the Americas, St. Patrick’s; and the formation of a Hibernian Concert was mentioned in correspondence. Furthermore, Johnson stated “I have always considered the conduct of the Jesuits ... to be worthy of our imitation ...”(SWJP, V, 528-30). Johnson was a complicated man in troubled times. Just as Johnson’s ethnicity has often been erroneously stated as British instead of Irish, so too have his religious sentiments been misread. His journal often reveals sentiments that are contradictory to those recorded in his correspondence, or even between different recipients. Johnson promoted religion among the Native Americans as a means of survival, to retain their natural skills (i.e. Hunting) and territory while making a slow transition to assimilation or forming a “regular society”, for as the behavior of some Northern tribes had proven it was compatible for an “Indian Hunter” to also be a “Civilized Member of Society” (SWJP, V, 530). In 1767, Johnson “I am no enemy to the member of any religious persuasion ...” although, and here I paraphrase from the same letter, “some denominations” – he implies evangelical Dissenters -- had ulterior motives (SWJP, V, 528-30). Sir William insisted that it was better for the Native Americans to be Christianized by Anglicans instead of Evangelicals. Johnson felt, as he pointed out in a 1763 correspondence, that there were only two denominations in the region to choose from: the Church of England or Dissenting Presbyterian ministers whose “zealous Belchings of the Spirit, resembling the most bigotted [sic] Puritans ...” which caused the Indians to be so caught up in “Singing Psalms” that they neglected their hunting and “Worldly affairs” becoming “very Worthless members of Society” (SWJP, IV, 72) which completely contradicted the objective of religion as a means of Native American civilized assimilation for acceptance by the white world. Johnson also supported and promoted education of Native Americans and whites. Sir William opened the first free non-sectarian school in New York province in 1763. The first teacher to the school in Johnstown was an Irishman, Edward Wall, who concentrated on the “three R’s” and a heavy emphasis on manners. Johnson believed that education granted understanding and tolerance for others which made better citizens for society. The education of Native Americans, as well as their embrace of religion, would allow them faster integration into white acceptance and the avenues of power.

were priests. He was a descendant of ancient Irish clans and noble Norman Catholic invaders that arrived with William the Conqueror. His correspondence, and Last Will and Testament, indicate that he was fondly connected and financially generous to the Catholic family he left in Ireland. Choosing to convert in order to seek fortune, Johnson accepted Warren's offer in 1738 to manage property along the Mohawk River in New York, approximately forty-miles from modern day Albany. While administering his uncle's estates, Johnson bought tracts of land for himself and eventually left his uncle's employ. He opened trading posts that exchanged with white settlers and Native Americans alike, and accumulated wealth from fur trading. Before his death in 1774, Johnson was estimated to be one of the richest men in the colonies. He was a land speculator, as well as a trader, merchant, soldier, and agent for the British government. A man of great energy, perhaps an overachiever, it is probable that Johnson had a psychological need to redeem his family's social prestige.

Johnson has been described as both "exploiter and friend" to the Mohawks.⁸² It was to Johnson's great advantage that he had been adopted into Iroquois tribal society. Documentation, albeit Caucasian comment, indicates that Johnson was well respected by the tribe. The translation of his Indian name, *Warraghiyagey*, means "a man who

⁸² "Exploiter and friend" Calloway, *American Revolution*, 69; Robert Rogers, *Ponteach, or the Savages of America: A Tragedy* (London, 1766, reprinted with an introduction by Allan Nevins, Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1914), 180. Calloway discusses Johnson's possible preferable treatment to the Mohawks in Calloway, *Scratch*, 64.

The Mohawk Tribe was a member of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederation which refers to the social and political alliance of Mohawk, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, Seneca, and later, the Tuscarora tribes of North America.

undertakes great things.”⁸³ He continued to expand his vast land holdings and built a mansion, Johnson Hall, which served as a gathering point for Native American councils. Mohawk status was elevated within the Six Nation Confederacy and the tribe profited from increased business when Johnson moved the management of Indian Affairs and Indian trade in 1762 from Albany to Johnson Hall.⁸⁴ Fifty rugged miles separated the locations, limiting Albany government interference. Considering his background it is not surprising that Johnson identified with Native American peoples, was comfortable in their culture, and committed to their survival.⁸⁵ Initially Johnson’s transcultural skills served his personal interests but subsequently his esteem for Native culture altered his perspective from personal to communal.

Johnson’s success and economic prosperity rested on his ability to be an ethnic and religious chameleon. The British had need for a man with Johnson’s talents, especially when the Seven Years’ War (1755-1763) stretched British manpower to its

⁸³ Judith Gross, “Molly Brant: Textual Representations of Cultural Midwifery,” *American Studies*, 40:1 (1999), 27.

⁸⁴ Present day Johnstown, New York.

⁸⁵ O’Toole argued that similarities between Irish and Native American tribal cultures were similar enough to enable Johnson to easily move between the two. Some parallels can be drawn between the kinship cultures of the tribal societies but I contend that Johnson’s primary identification stemmed from political experiences.



Figure 1. Map of New England, New York, and parts of Canada and Pennsylvania.

One plate from “A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America with the Roads, Distances, Limits, and Extent of the Settlements Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honourable The Earl of Halifax and the Other Right Honourable The Lords Commissioners For Trade and Plantations by their Lordships Most Obligated and very Humble Servant Jn. Mitchell.” Engraving by Thomas Kitchin. Published in London by John Mitchell, 1755.

Massachusetts Historical Society mhs.org

limits. Government officials relied heavily on Johnson's ability to recruit the Native Americans to the British cause against the French.⁸⁶ With the assistance of his Native American allies Colonel Johnson's troops were victorious at the Battle of Lake George (1755). In reward Johnson was elevated to the rank of general and received a baronetcy. He accepted the position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs for all the northern colonies the same year (1756). Sir William's papers reveal, and comments recorded by his contemporaries support, genuine respect and affection between Johnson and members of the Iroquois Nation.⁸⁷ Interestingly, he observed the same qualities in many Native Americans that the Founding Generation felt essential in political friendships: virtue, integrity, honesty, and interest in the common good of their community. Johnson's actions indicate, as addressed later in this chapter, that he consistently advocated Native American rights. In fact, his objections regarding the maltreatment received by Indians increased over time. This was especially evident upon his marriage to Mohawk Molly Brant in 1759 and after the cessation of the Seven Years' War in 1763.

The marriage of Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant was political genius.⁸⁸

Their relationship, aside from being a union of love, aligned their two clans socially,

⁸⁶ Johnson served as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs principle agent for New York Colony (1744). His diplomatic skills became evident during King George's War (1744-48) when he was able to recruit Iroquois warriors and white volunteers to fight on behalf of the British. He was commissioned the rank of colonel.

⁸⁷ In particular the papers of Sir William's sons-in-law, Guy Johnson and Daniel Claus, and ministers Samuel Kirkland and Samson Occom.

⁸⁸ There is no record of Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant being married in a Christian ceremony, however, Mohawks perceived them as a formally united couple. Since human perception of one's self is an important component in this dissertation, that Sir William was comfortable with and acceptable to Mohawk tradition and that they considered themselves partners in a form of marriage is, I believe, the only condition that need be considered. Their children, the eight of nine who lived to adulthood, carried the surname

militarily, and politically. They both understood the workings of statecraft and traditional kinship networks. Both individuals utilized their diplomatic abilities cross-culturally: Molly addressed *sachems* at councils and William corresponded and met with British officials. As it became apparent that the Mohawks would diminish in value to the British following the French and Indian War, William's and Molly's goals concentrated on strengthening community. Their principal political objectives turned to the long-term preservation and autonomy of the Mohawks. Their context of nation had already begun to evolve, seeking political autonomy, cross-cultural equality, and maintaining political

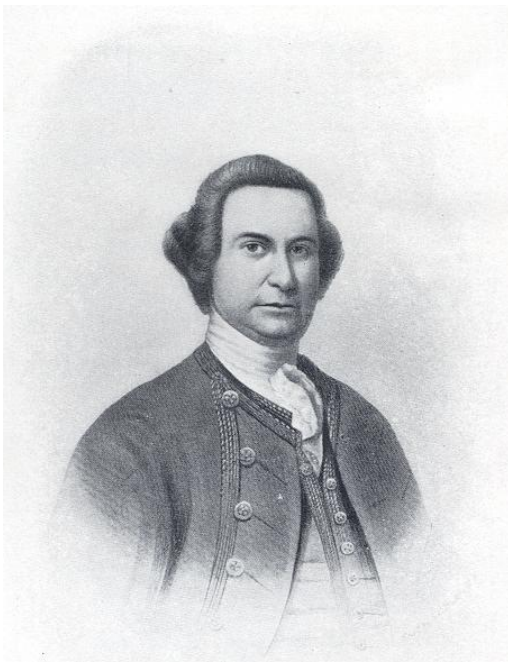


Figure 2. Sir William Johnson.
uppercanadahistory.org



Figure 3. Artistic Rendition of Molly Brant.
No portrait of Molly Brant exists. The Canadian Government commissioned the above rendering drawn from written descriptions and portraits of related family members. uppercanadahistory.org

Johnson. Those who married made socially and/or politically advantageous marriages which, at the time, would have been virtually impossible for offspring considered illegitimate. Molly retained her adopted father's surname of Brant possibly as a means of retaining familial positions of power and prestige.



Figure 4. Gravesite of Sir William Johnson at St. John's Episcopal Church, Johnstown, New York.

Image courtesy of roots.com.

Notably, Molly Brant's grave in St. John's Episcopal Church cemetery is unmarked, the exact location in question.

precepts of matrilineal society. An extensive study could consider if the Johnson-Brant alliance would have been powerful enough to have established a political dynasty that was cross-cultural and cross-gendered had the British suppressed the American rebels after 1776.

Mary "Molly" Brant (c. 1736-1796), or *Tekonwatonti*,⁸⁹ was a politically active Native American woman but her marriage to a powerful white man, and sister to a renowned warrior and leader, long placed her story on the historical sidelines. Molly and William were partners in life and politics, partaking in friendship that illustrated "a

⁸⁹ *Tekonwatonti* is the spelling incorporated by Maurice Kenny who is a member of the Mohawk tribe, and poet biographer of Molly Brant. *Degonwadonti* is also used. It translates as "She Who Is Outnumbered" or "Several Against One." Maurice Kenny, *Tekonwatonti/Molly Brant (1735-1795): Poems of War* (New York: White Pine Press, 1992).

consciousness of shared aims.”⁹⁰ Their political agenda included the preservation of Native American territory, the protection of her people, and preparation of Joseph Brant as a Mohawk chief with the ability to understand cross-cultural relations and the diplomatic skills necessary for effective political leadership. Primary documentation of Molly’s life is exceptionally limited. Fire destroyed many documents during the American Revolution, more were lost in the diaspora of her people that followed.⁹¹ In addition there is a language difficulty for those unfamiliar with the Mohawk vernacular. Molly could speak, read, and write in the English language but chose to use her native language.⁹² She was born into the Wolf Clan of the Mohawk tribe, a matrilineal community in which lineage was established by the mother, women participated in village political life, and were seen as co-providers in the community. The children traditionally carried their mother’s name. It was from Molly’s stepfather, Nickus Brant (also known as Brant Canagaraduncka), that she adopted her surname and retained such following marriage. Brant was an important member of the Turtle Clan whose matrons selected the esteemed *Tekarihoga* -- essentially the principal diplomatic chief. As the daughter (the notion of “stepchildren” was not part of their culture) of *sachem* Chief Brant (diplomatic rather than war chief) she inherited political clout from both parents’

⁹⁰ Judith Gross, “Molly Brant,” 35.

⁹¹ Nancy L. Rhoden and Ian K. Steele, eds., *The Human Tradition in the American Revolution*, Katherine M. J. McKenna, “Molly Brant ‘Miss Molly,’ Feminist Role Model or Mohawk Princess?” (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000), 183. McKenna specified that Molly “...had been educated in English schools ...” It may have been a Church of England mission school (189); regardless, Molly’s English is reported to have been “impeccable” (189).

⁹² Maurice Kenny, *Tekonwatonti/Molly Brant (1735-1795): Poems of War* (New York: White Pine Press, 1992), 8; Barbara Graymont, *The Iroquois in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 416.

clans. The influence of European patrimonial influence may have also factored in Molly's adoption of her surname. Living in Brant's household, Molly witnessed, firsthand, diplomacy at work. Her self-confidence appears to have been well developed, perhaps a by-product of living in a wealthy household and having contact with individuals from different cultures who conducted business with Brant. This experience enabled her to develop into an educated, competent woman, respected for her intelligence, good sense, and the quality of her character. Interestingly, the insights into her persona are most often revealed from notations in letters and journals by white male contemporaries. Molly's kinship connections made her a clan matron, a position of significant political power within the Iroquois Confederacy, and later head matron of the Six Nations. "She was a diplomat, a proactive force in Johnson's house, and a powerful advocate for their causes on the frontier and at the council fires of her people ..."⁹³ and an important partner in a political friendship that crossed the perimeters of gender, power, and culture.

Having spent his youth in Ireland, Johnson understood firsthand the destruction that could be wrought onto a society by economically opportunistic invading forces. Psychologically it must have been a motivating factor in his desire to protect Six Nations peoples and act as a moderator for empathy. Sir William and Molly were earnestly active in the protection of Mohawk territory before the Seven Years' War ended. As early as 1762, Johnson had written his military superiors stressing the Iroquois' right to their

⁹³ Gross, "Molly Brant," 30. As a close personal friend of Molly's stepfather, Johnson had known her long before she was of marital age; he was seventeen years her senior.

lands. In correspondence to General Sir Jeffery Amherst, Commander in Chief of British North America, dated July 1762, Sir William warned that the maltreatment experienced by Native Americans and the theft of their lands would “provoke a great deal of trouble... [and disrupt] ... political measures, which have been so successfully pursued for some time with the many Nations.”⁹⁴ In a report to the Lords of Trade Sir William wrote that the Indians “were amused” by stories that the British had “upright intentions and that they had made war against the French for the protection of the Indians rights.”⁹⁵ As conflict lessened between British and French forces, Johnson reported the Six Nations “plainly found, it [the war] was carried on, to see who would become master of what was the property of neither the one or the other.”⁹⁶ In 1763, Johnson contacted John Tabor Kempe, royal attorney general for New York, to convince him of the Indians’ “real inclinations to keep their Lands.”⁹⁷ Johnson had warned Amherst that many of the Indian Nations contended that they had experienced increased threat to the security of their lands, their autonomy, and their personal welfare since the British victory over the French. Amherst who was “arrogant and ignorant of Indian ways” viewed “an empire as something to be governed, not negotiated and cultivated ...”⁹⁸ Amherst’s was an attitude William had seen before -- the subjugation of a culture.

⁹⁴ *SWJP*, II, 10-11.

⁹⁵ “Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York,” 7:523-575, see specific quote 575, last accessed October 2010, <http://www.archive.org/details/documentsrelativ15newyuoft>. Hereafter referred to as *NYCD*.

⁹⁶ *NYCD*, 7:523-575, see November 1763 and specific quote on 575.

⁹⁷ *SWJP*, IV, 117-18.

⁹⁸ Calloway, *Scratch*, 69.

To Native Americans, friendship was an alliance based upon mutual trust, generosity and reciprocity -- it certainly did not identify with General Amherst's policy of retrenchment. In Iroquois society diplomatic relations involved language laden with representations of friendship and kinship, familial metaphors, and integrity between the parties was a foregone conclusion (of course, not all individuals subscribe to the modes of the majority). Alliances, in Native American culture, most often referred to "friendships" as between "brothers" and equals, whereas English diplomatic language featured paternalistic representation between "father" and "son," suggesting one party's superiority over the other.⁹⁹ Sentiments of superiority breed prejudice and intolerance.

Cultivating Native American favor was expensive, thus resented.¹⁰⁰ Participation in the Seven Years' War had disrupted Native Americans' self-reliant systems of production and traditional economic patterns. In return for their war involvement, Indian communities relied on allies to provide them with food, clothing, and gunpowder, but the English suddenly cut back on supplies when their Indian allies were no longer needed.¹⁰¹ In 1763, when Indians expected to receive British goods and gifts, cost-conscious officials and profit-minded British traders were not in a generous mood."¹⁰² When Amherst, as commander, stated "I Cannot See any Reason for Supplying the Indians with

⁹⁹ Calloway, *Scratch*, 49.

¹⁰⁰ Calloway, *Scratch*, 63-65.

¹⁰¹ Calloway, *Scratch*, 48.

¹⁰² Calloway, *Scratch*, 48; Calloway, *American Revolution*, 69; Taylor, *The Divided Ground*, 23-27.

Provisions...”¹⁰³ it meant that, as long as he was in control, no assistance would be forthcoming, regardless of the consequences suffered by Native Americans. Amherst also forbade the sale of guns and ammunition to Native Americans, which made accustomed hunting nearly impossible, and arguably amounted to a death sentence. It also meant that there would be no deerskins to trade – a primary commodity in Indian society. Amherst’s actions “seemed not just mean-spirited but an act of aggression.”¹⁰⁴ Tensions increased as the British pressured Indians to adopt codified English laws, including execution for certain crimes. Government -- or State -- ordered execution of an individual was a totally alien concept to Native Americans. Quite simply, they were appalled, very resistant, and more determined to remain autonomous. In his colossal egotism Amherst thought he could bring the Indians to heel. The result was Pontiac’s Rebellion (1763-1765), a bloody revolt that damaged or destroyed most of the settlements and British Forts in Indian territory and along Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers.¹⁰⁵ Sir William had forewarned the Lords of Trade in London, in 1763, that Amherst’s ignorance and contempt would have dire consequences.¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately, “if generosity and reciprocity defined alliance, none existed with the continent’s new overlords.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *SWJP*, III, 185-6; 345; 530-31; 733.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 192.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 32.

¹⁰⁶ *NYCD*, VII, 525.

¹⁰⁷ Richter, *Facing East*, 192.

Amherst's form of statecraft "brought a rain of death down on British garrisons in the North American interior" and upon traders and squatters by Native retribution and rebellion.¹⁰⁸ George III, in an attempt to repair damage to British-Native American relations, offered his Royal Proclamation of 1763, toward creating "long-range enlightened Indian policy."¹⁰⁹ As well as declaring boundaries and policy regarding Quebec, Florida, certain Virgin Islands, the annexation of additional lands into "our" province of Georgia – basically asserting territories claimed in the Peace of Paris treaty (which officially ended the Seven Years' War) – King George affirmed that it was "essential to our interest" and the security of the American colonies:

that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds ... And We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, ...¹¹⁰

The statement was *given at our Court at St. James's the 7th Day of October 1763, in the Third Year of our Reign*. "Our," in the above context, meant the person of His Majesty, the King.

¹⁰⁸ Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 66-72.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 71.

¹¹⁰ "Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy," The Avalon Project at Yale University, accessed October 7, 2010, <http://avalon.law.yale.edu>.

His Majesty's intentions and threats appear to have been easily disregarded by many of his subjects who were three thousand miles away. Squatters and migrants on the frontier basically accorded to their own desires. Johnson informed Henry Moore, Governor-in-Chief of the colony of New York, in detail that the Mohawks were "greatly alarmed" by the continuous pilfering of their land and "earnestly requested" from the King's government a method for securing "their village and planting grounds to them & their posterity."¹¹¹ Yet, in 1768, Mohawks were forced to produce an original deed for Kayaderosseras, territory threatened by white usurpation, although it had been held by the Iroquois for generations. In spite of having fought with the British during the Seven Years' War, Native Americans of Iroquoia found their territory continually shrinking in size, unable to stem the flood of speculators, settlers, swindlers, squatters, and soldiers onto their lands.¹¹² In 1774, when government officials complained to Johnson that the Indians had committed offences against white men, he reminded Major General Haldimand that "outrageous and licentious" acts had been committed by British soldiers against Native Americans; that trespassers, particularly from Virginia, were still forcing entry onto Indian lands; and, Johnson, warned that the Indians, "particularly the Warriors [would] not sit contented, & see themselves deprived of their Hunting, their Country, & their Lives. The few Acts they have committed compared with what they suffer are nothing," he contested.¹¹³ Johnson continued, with comments laden with harsh criticism

¹¹¹ *SWJP*, VI, 309-11; see August 1768.

¹¹² Calloway, *Scratch*, 49-65.

¹¹³ *SWJP*, VIII, 1, see June 1774.

of British hypocrisy and reiterating insults previously directed at Native peoples “especially when we consider that they are a People without Laws or Authority, & that we pretend to both, tho as they say we Manifest neither.”¹¹⁴ Johnson’s condemnation erupted from one who had experienced ethnic repression and was witnessing it against others. Accustomed to success in their diplomatic endeavors, William and Molly met with significant frustration trying to preserve Mohawk territory.

Statecraft holds little hope when the desired outcome is genocide. William and Molly quickly realized that the Iroquois’ literal survival, their lives, were under as much threat as their land. While Johnson endeavored to preserve Mohawk land in 1763, his commander in chief, General Sir Jeffery Amherst, was giving orders to exterminate Indians. Ethnic hatred toward Native Americans was rampant among British authorities in the American colonies. Like many others, Amherst’s animosity was intense and he had no qualms over killing Indian women and children, as well as men. As early as summer 1761, Amherst had provided Johnson with an example he considered worthy of imitation against “those You are to Treat”¹¹⁵ -- meaning the Six Nations. In the southern colonies five thousand Cherokee men, women, and children had managed to escape into the woods after fifteen of their towns were demolished, but Lt. Colonel James Grant had taken the precaution of destroying 1400 acres of corn, peas, and beans, so if the Cherokee

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ *SWJP*, III, 517, June 1761.

failed to “make proper Submission, they cannot fail of starving in the Winter.”¹¹⁶ What Amherst advised, in a word, was annihilation, not alliance.

Smallpox was more expedient than starvation. Amherst’s association with the deliberate spread of the disease to Native Americans was less an aberration than one might hope or expect. The use of smallpox as a biological weapon against Indians was actually sanctioned by “an impressive array of British officers.”¹¹⁷ The smallpox virus was like a plague. It was highly contagious and greatly feared. The initial symptoms replicated a nasty bout of flu accompanied by agonizing head and backaches. The first sores appeared in the mouth, throat, and nasal passages. The blisters in the orifices spread the internal infection in two ways. An inward turn caused profuse bleeding from the eyes, nose, and mouth tissues commonly followed by a quick death. An outward spread of the virus formed a rash that could cover the entire skin and orifices producing painful pustules that enlarged daily and eventually seeped rank smelling discharge before blinding, choking, scabbing and scarring, or causing death. The process took about thirty-two days and, depending on the case severity, caused a long painful death or could leave the skin horribly scarred and disfigured.¹¹⁸ Inoculation that the required the application of the pus-like seepage from an infected individual be smeared into a slit incised on the skin of the healthy person. One hoped for a light case of smallpox, which

¹¹⁶ *SWJP*, III, 517, June 1761.

¹¹⁷ Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 88-9.

¹¹⁸ This summarization on the progression of the smallpox virus on the human body is composed, but condensed, entirely from Fenn, *Pox Americana*, 14-20.

would grant them lifetime immunity. It was, however, a gamble as the most extreme scenarios could also result from inoculation. Therefore, it is remarkable that Sir William and Molly convinced large numbers of Mohawks to be inoculated against smallpox.¹¹⁹ It is doubtful that Johnson could have convinced them to undergo the dangerous procedure without the involvement of his influential Mohawk wife.

Correlation of correspondence dates indicate that Amherst thought the annihilation of Indians was at hand in July and August 1763. In his letter dated July 7, 1763 to Colonel Henry Bouquet at Ft. Pitt where smallpox had recently erupted, Amherst asked, "Could it not be contrived to send the Small Pox among those Disaffected Tribes or Indians?"¹²⁰ He advised that "We must on this occasion, Use Every Strategem in our power to Reduce them."¹²¹ Amherst had written to Johnson on July 9, 1763, indicating the desire that "measures to be taken as would Bring about the Total Extirpation of those Indian Nations."¹²² Bouquet's July 13th response stated he would attempt to spread the disease among the Indian tribes "with Some Blankets" and expressed his wish to hunt the Indians with "English Dogs, supported by Rangers..."¹²³ Amherst's orders to Bouquet

¹¹⁹ The Amherst order was not an isolated incident in biological warfare against Native Americans, however, it is a case focused on in this study as Sir William Johnson was personally aware of Amherst's enthusiasm for genocide.

¹²⁰ "Original Documents" *General Lord Jeffery Amherst and Colonel Henry Bouquet on using Smallpox as a Weapon. Bouquet to Amherst, 23 June 1763*, accessed October 6, 2010, <http://explorepahistory.com/>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² "British Manuscript Project," University of California at Los Angeles, accessed October 6, 2010, <http://www.college.ucla.edu/webproject/micro12/webpages/indianssmallpox.html>.

¹²³ "Original Documents" Jeffery Amherst and Henry Bouquet on using Smallpox as a Weapon Bouquet to Amherst, 23 June 1763, accessed October 6, 2010, <http://explorepahistory.com/>.

on July 16th was to use the blankets, as well as to “Try Every other Method, that can Serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race.”¹²⁴ Amherst raged in a note, dated August 7th, to Sir William’s deputy superintendent, George Croghan, that “...their [Native Americans’] Total Extirpation is scarce sufficient Attonement...”¹²⁵ for the loss of white lives and British property. His correspondence to Johnson, dated August 27, 1763, is chilling in its ascertainment. His wish, underlined for added emphasis, to “put a most Effectual Stop to their very Being” is quite sobering.¹²⁶

If his dispatches are any indication, Amherst must surely have ranted about the extermination of the Native race face-to-face with Johnson’s close contacts and kinsmen. Along with the correspondence, records reveal that both Guy Johnson (Sir William’s personal secretary) and George Croghan had been in Amherst’s physical presence in 1763. His statements would have been swiftly carried to Johnson’s ears because Croghan, a fellow Irishman, was extremely loyal to Sir William and married to a Native American woman, and Guy Johnson was Sir William’s son-in-law as well as his nephew. Molly and Sir William had recognized the profound threat to Native peoples and coordinated their diplomatic skills to convince thousands of Mohawks to be inoculated in

Sir William Johnson had complained of Colonel Bouquet’s despicable behavior towards Indians years in advance of the smallpox case. To my knowledge no definitive evidence has conclusively revealed whether Bouquet actually incorporated the scheme. However, Daniel K. Richter in *Facing East* states that the tactic was actually implemented by Fort Pitt’s commander in June 1763, (201).

¹²⁴ “Original Documents” Jeffery Amherst and Henry Bouquet on using Smallpox as a Weapon Bouquet to Amherst, 23 June 1763, accessed October 6, 2010, <http://explorepahistory.com/>.

¹²⁵ “British Manuscript Project,” University of California at Los Angeles, accessed October 6, 2010, <http://www.college.ucla.edu/webproject/micro12/webpages/indianssmallpox.html>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

the ensuing years.¹²⁷ Years after Sir William's death, Guy Johnson was consulted by His Majesty's historiographer Dr. Robertson for information regarding "American Indians" and disease. Guy reported the devastating effect smallpox had on the native population. He noted that "Sir William Johnson caused most of the Mohawks to be inoculated, which was attended with so much success that they [the Mohawks] much approved of it [inoculation]."¹²⁸

Concurrent with the mass inoculations Sir William directly communicated his concerns to the Lords of Trade. In circumventing standard hierarchical channels of military protocol he jeopardized his position in order to protect Native Americans. In his July 1763 communiqué to the Lords, Johnson argued that he had gained the confidence of Indians in North America, had assured the Nations that English plans for "their [Indians] entire Extirpation"¹²⁹ were totally false. If friendship, and trade, was to be maintained between the two cultures, he contended, promises made by the English had to be enforced. Johnson not only questioned Amherst's actions, he clearly insinuated that British prestige among Native Americans might have been irreparably damaged. Sir William sent his deputy George Croghan to England, carrying his missives and verbal messages. Shortly thereafter Amherst was recalled to England where he was reprimanded

¹²⁷ For Mohawk demographics and population estimates see David G. Hackett, ed., *Religion and American Culture* (New York: Rutledge, 2003) especially the chapter and footnotes by Daniel K. Richter "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience." Perhaps Colonel Bouquet's manuscripts in the collections of the British Museum might, someday, be more deeply explored.

¹²⁸ Milton W. Hamilton, ed., "Guy Johnson's Opinions on the American Indian," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 77 (1953), 326.

¹²⁹ *SWJP*, IV, 234.

by Lord William Darlington for “the present posture of Indian affairs.”¹³⁰ Amherst was replaced by Lt. General Thomas Gage. It was a political coup for Sir William and Molly.

In failing health Johnson contacted General Gage in April 1774 and requested that the next Superintendent be someone “who possessed the Affections of the Indians.”¹³¹ He stressed that one must live among Native Americans to understand “their Politics and Customs ... Disposition and Usages, join’d to a Knowledge of the Manner in which Business has been conducted with them.”¹³² Sir William was advising that his replacement be a person who could understand, appreciate, maintain respect, and move between cultures. In addition, he reflected that his “Principle Motive” had been to “serve the Public.”¹³³ Johnson’s actions indicate that he viewed Native Americans as members of the public, not impediments to British imperialism.

William’s and Molly’s aspirations for Mohawk lives and lands were attained only for a short time, but their mentoring of Joseph Brant continued to reap rewards for generations. In Sir William’s and Molly’s estimation, Joseph could become a cultural hybrid, a leader trained to maneuver between the two cultures.¹³⁴ Joseph was Molly’s younger brother, a smart, proud, rambunctious favorite of Sir William. Surviving correspondence between Molly and Joseph is extremely limited but the contents verify that the two were close confidants. The next generation of Mohawks would need a person

¹³⁰ *SWJP*, IV, 234, specifically note November 1763.

¹³¹ *SWJP*, VIII, 1128-1130.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

who was a skilled warrior and talented diplomat. In boyhood Brant displayed qualities of intelligence, studiousness, and regard for duty. Like his sister, he had been exposed to European customs, manners, language, style, business dealings, and had been sent to school. Under Johnson's active guidance Joseph attended Eleazar Wheelock's Indian School, also referred to as Moor's Charity School (1754-1767), in Lebanon (now Columbia), Connecticut with several young Mohawks Johnson had chosen.¹³⁵ Joseph exhibited great enthusiasm for Christian religion and Wheelock hoped to have him prepared for the ministry. Johnson, however, was not placing his protégé's higher education in the hands of evangelicals, nor for the ministry. "Without informing Wheelock, Johnson prepared to place Brant at King's College [now Columbia University], an Anglican institution in New York City."¹³⁶ The outbreak of Pontiac's Rebellion halted Joseph's higher learning; however, even though his opportunity for college passed, he remained a lifelong scholar. As a teenager, Joseph had gone into battle during the Seven Years' War at William Johnson's side and had proven himself a

¹³⁵ Reverend Eleazar Wheelock, 1711-1779, was a Congregational minister born in Connecticut and graduate of Yale. In seeking to expand his school into a college, Wheelock relocated his educational enterprise to Hanover in the Royal Province of New Hampshire. The move from Connecticut followed a lengthy and sometimes frustrating effort to find resources and secure a charter. Samson Occom, a Mohegan Indian and one of Wheelock's first students, was instrumental in raising substantial funds for the College with the understanding that the institute would train Native Americans to minister the Christian faith among the tribes. The result was far from what Occom had been led to believe and he subsequently severed the relationship with his mentor. The Royal Governor of New Hampshire, John Wentworth, provided the land upon which Dartmouth would be built and on December 13, 1769, conveyed the charter from King George III establishing the College. That charter created a college 'for the education and instruction of Youth of the Indian Tribes in this Land ... and also of English Youth and any others.' Named for William Legge — an important supporter of Eleazar Wheelock's efforts -- Dartmouth is the nation's ninth oldest college and the last institution of higher learning established under Colonial rule.

¹³⁶ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 51.

Mohawk warrior. In 1763 he went to war again, and in 1777 he became a war chief fighting against the American rebels.



Figure 5. Joseph Brant by George Romney, 1776.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



Figure 6. Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), c. 1780.

Chief of the Six Nations
Archives of Canada Print,
Reference Code: S2076

The print on the right appears to be a reproduction of the painting, but is noticeably more ethnic. As noted above, the print was produced in Canada, which may indicate a racial influence. The skin tones in the Romney work are considerably lighter, not a condition of reprinting.

The American War for Independence wreaked terrible havoc in upper New York and Iroquoia. The Six Nations were divided over neutrality, Patriot or Loyalist positions. Molly and Joseph served the Loyalists during the American Revolution. Molly was a spy and Joseph became recognized as a formidable warrior chief. Their Loyalist support was, naturally, an attempt to choose the winning side, and gain any advantage possible for

their tribe. It was vested not in deep belief in the British cause but as a means to seek the best outcome for their people. Molly believed that supporting the Loyalist cause offered the most security to the Native tribes and her family's position. They considered the Americans to be land-hungry. That the United States was maintaining African slavery was unsettling to many Native Americans who feared Indian slavery would follow a Patriot victory. Operating a trading store made Molly privy to military operations planned by both sides. She passed along vital information to her brother Joseph, while providing food and ammunition to Loyalist groups. Molly's intelligence enabled a Loyalist ambush on American Patriots at Oriskany. In retribution Patriots burned Molly's home in Canajoharie, forcing her first to Cayuga and then Niagara. Colonel John Butler desired Molly's assistance at Niagara where throngs of refugee Indians sought protection. Molly's son-in-law Daniel Claus informed her stepson, Sir John Johnson, that "Mary Brant will outdo fifty Butlers in managing and keeping [the Indians] firm [in the Loyalist cause]."¹³⁷ Molly also spoke before the war council on behalf of the Loyalists. Following the 1777 British defeat at Saratoga, Chief Cayengwaraghton of the Cayuga denounced the English and urged the Confederacy to declare neutrality. Molly Brant rose to her feet before the council and directly challenged Cayengwaraghton's words. In that instant she transcended traditional matron powers and spoke as a war chief. Invoking memories of her husband's deeds on behalf of the Six Nations, she convinced those already associated with the Loyalists to continue their support. Through the strength of

¹³⁷ Clause Papers, II, 130-131, Library and Archives Canada, accessed March 2009, collectionscanada.gc.ca.

their connection with Sir William, Molly and Joseph had achieved extraordinary political influence.

Molly's and Sir William's strategy to cultivate Joseph into a Caucasian-respected cross-cultural spokesman for American Indian rights was especially successful. Brant was as competent in diplomacy as he was in war, and he walked easily between different cultures. He became a prosperous Canadian gentleman farmer, a village chief and sachem, who enjoyed the cosmopolitan style of London. His dress habits were described as impeccable and meticulous, and he always seemed aware of the importance of his visual representation upon others and how the subconscious was capable of influencing opinions. Brant was educated and enlightened, intelligent, handsome, charismatic and ambitious – a winning combination, made more formidable by his successful hybrid acculturation. Through his leadership Joseph “hoped to appropriate elements of British culture to serve Indian ends: to build a syncretic cultural fire wall against colonial domination.”¹³⁸

*The first
shots reached
the world
revolution/
independence
war on/ father
against son against
brother/ torn between
England and Freedom.*

*The Indian lost.*¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Taylor, *Divided Ground*, 49.

¹³⁹ Maurice Kenny, *Tekonwatonti: Molly Brant*, 48.

Ultimately, the Americans' successful rebellion against the British had dire repercussions for Native Americans.

The Treaty of Paris, which concluded the direct hostilities between the British and Americans, gave away land the British did not own -- vast tracts of land in and around the Mohawk Valley. Adding insult to injury, Native American tribes who had fought with the British were even excluded from negotiations. In arbitrating with British authorities for recompense, Brant's diplomatic strategy argued for compensation based on Mohawk loyalty rather than attempt to regain the unattainable. Brant recognized the government tendency to compensate on the basis of loyalty not losses. It was a wise move for his people. Along with grants of land in Canada, the Grand River acreage, the government agreed to expenditures for a school, a church, and a mill. The English also remitted £15,000 to the Mohawks, whereas the other Five Tribes combined received only £12,000 to share between the five.¹⁴⁰ There are both positive and negative interpretations of Joseph Brant's actions and the long-term results. However, it appears that in the two centuries that have followed, those Native Americans who had relocated to Canada fared far better and received more respect than their counterparts who remained in the United States. The key may have been Joseph Brant's ability to effectively represent the Mohawks in negotiations with the British. He understood the culture and politics of those with whom he negotiated. Molly's and Sir William's greatest political success was

¹⁴⁰ "Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers, RG10, October 25, 1784," Library and Archives Canada, accessed March 2009, collections.canada.gc.ca. For a more expansive discussion of how provisions in the Peace of Utrecht and the Paris Peace treaty were part of a larger pattern of imperial hubris, see Jack P. Greene, "The Gifts of Peace: Social and Economic Expansion and Development in the Periodization of the Early American Past, 1713-1763" in *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 93-130.

in providing Chief Joseph with the cross-cultural skills he would require to help preserve the Mohawk people and their culture into the future.

CHAPTER III

INTELLECTUALS OF COLOR IN COLONIAL AMERICA: POLITICAL FRIENDSHIP AMONG THE UNREPRESENTED

Embracing Ethnicity: Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson¹⁴¹

“We proceeded to form a Body Politick – We Named our Town by the Name of Brotherton, in Indian Eeyawquittoowauconnuck.”¹⁴² This statement indicates that not all North American communities desired to be subjects of the British Empire or members of the newly formed United States -- some simply sought autonomy. Brotherton, established in 1775 on the New York frontier, was the first community planned by Native American missionaries for their Indian brethren. While many Native Americans had adopted the Christian religion in sincere hope of salvation, and possibly acceptance, others believed that whites would never fully accept their race and that survival depended upon segregation. It was in the context of the latter that Brotherton was founded.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Joanna Brooks uses the term “pantribal” to “designate indigenous intellectual, cultural, and political forms that entail a blending of specific tribal features into new supratribal forms of ‘Indianness.’” Joanna Brooks, editor of *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

Brooks defines the discipline of ethnohistory as “efforts to understand colonization not as simple conquest but rather as a complex set of encounters that required of both Native peoples and European colonists strategic negotiations, adaptations, and accommodations (*Occom*, 30).

¹⁴² Journal entry, Samson Occom diary, November 7, 1785, as published in Brooks, ed., *Occom*.

¹⁴³ Brooks, *Occom*, 23.

Two primary leaders of the movement, Joseph Johnson (c. 1750-1776)¹⁴⁴ and his father-in-law Samson Occom (1723-1792), believed that Christianity and education, combined with English language literacy, would facilitate political autonomy for Native Americans. Johnson and Occom, both of the Mohegan tribe, were allied through their political ideology, theology, kinship, and friendship.¹⁴⁵ These were strong bonds, each sufficient to produce a political friendship, but when shared by members of an oppressed minority they became powerful ties of mutual support for ethnic endeavors. Together these men directed the unification and relocation of Christian members from seven Algonquin tribes of New England to form the multi-tribe, or pantribal, community of Brotherton.¹⁴⁶ Johnson had initiated the idea but his early death left Occom as the key organizer, spiritual and political leader of the project.¹⁴⁷ In addition, it was also an effort to ignite a cultural reawakening, an attempt to recapture Native American social traditions of common good, and to restore racial dignity and pride.

Personal experiences convinced Johnson and Occom of the necessity in order to establish an identity-defining pantribal community. As boys, Occom and Johnson, a generation apart, had gained entry into Eleazar Wheelock's Moor's Indian Charity School

¹⁴⁴Joseph Johnson, a Mohegan Indian, was no relation to Irishman and backcountry baron Sir William Johnson. Neither the year of his birth nor the exact date of his death is definitively known.

¹⁴⁵ Joseph Johnson married Samson Occom's daughter Tabitha in December 1773. Joanna Brooks, editor of *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁴⁶ Brotherton and Brothertown have been used to designate the same tribal movement interchangeably for centuries. The seven Algonquin Tribes were the Mohegan, Montaukett, Farmington, Narragansett, Niantic, Pequot, and Stockington tribes.

¹⁴⁷Brooks points out that German scholar Bernd Peyer "identified Occom as the 'father' of modern Native American literature." Brooks, *Occom*, 31.

for Indians. Both men were gifted in languages, writing, and elocution. Both became ministers of the enthusiastic New Light Presbyterian faith and educators of Native Americans. As itinerant preachers, both had witnessed the repression and poverty experienced by most Algonquins in New England. Indian tribes in the northeastern colonies had been steadily decimated through war, disease, and displacement since the first white Europeans had arrived.¹⁴⁸ They continued to suffer from the greed and ethnic hatred professed by the majority of the white race. Occom and Johnson recognized that poverty, the lack of rights, and social ostracism incited and imbedded widespread racism and perpetrated more ethnic injustice. Native Americans of New England, by the mid-eighteenth century, resided in small population pockets within territories dominated by white people. Surviving members of the tribes that had once thrived in the region were referred to as “remnants.” The Indians were, essentially, a voiceless minority. Johnson and Occom contended that the answer to their problems was the establishment of segregated communities with enough territory for Native Americans to return to the hunting and fishing traditions of their forefathers but still embracing Christianity, as well as implementing a grid-based village and European-American agricultural structure. The community would be self-sufficient and a pantribal sovereignty -- all interwoven with

¹⁴⁸ For causation and effect see Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: Norton, 1999); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2001); Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, *The Atlantic World: Essays on Slavery, Migration, and Imagination* (New Jersey: Pearson, 2005); Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possessions in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1462-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of Other* (Norman: University of Oklahoma State Press, 1999).

education, egalitarianism and common good (Enlightenment) values which would ultimately forge a new political identity for these Native Americans.

Personal experience induced Johnson's and Occom's convictions that Native Americans could best be ministered unto, taught, and governed by other Native Americans. Conversion was a survival tactic for many Christianized Native Americans. The longstanding argument for white European superiority had been their acceptance of Jesus Christ. Johnson and Occom applied the same argument to their own people. Unlike Sir William, who, arguably, made convenient use of religion, Occom and Johnson were committed to incorporating New Light principles into Brotherton politics and culture. They adhered to the notion that their native forefathers, and any other unrepentant Indians, who failed to accept Jesus Christ as their savior were justly judged as *savage*. Johnson was more fervent in his opinion, declaring that Native American non-believers were deserving of "disrespect and disesteem."¹⁴⁹ To different degrees the men shared the conviction that the non-converted invited prejudice toward all Native Americans. Already the majority of whites unfairly viewed all Indians with "disdain," even those who had "Sincerely Separated ourselves [by accepting Christianity] ... be also despised, in the eyes of the Polite world."¹⁵⁰ It had long been obvious to Johnson and Occom that even Christianized and "civilized" Indians would remain far from equal in the white world. Occom had stated years earlier that whites "don't want the Indians to go

¹⁴⁹ Laura J. Murray, ed., *To do Good to my Indian Bretheran: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751-1776* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 207.

¹⁵⁰ Murray, *Johnson*, 207.

to heaven with them.”¹⁵¹ He commented on being the victim of discrimination in his autobiographical narrative in 1768. Occom had demonstrated that he was a superb minister and missionary, but the Presbyterian commissioners continued to treat him as inferior. They saw Occom as “an Indian first and Christian second.”¹⁵² White missionaries, who could not speak the language of the native people, were paid much more for their work among the Indians than Native American missionaries.¹⁵³ “I am an Indian,” Occom wrote, and “I did not make myself so.”¹⁵⁴ What he was implying was God, who created all, made him an Indian. What gave other Christians the right to claim superiority when it was clearly stated in the Bible that God created man in his own image? Why were Christian Indians victims of racism when they had done nothing to warrant discrimination? Johnson vented his frustration too. Prior to his relocation west he leveled criticism at the unchristian behavior of white New Englanders, writing “So now Brethren [fellow Native Americans Christians], we leave the English [whites] those who have acted unjustly towards us in New England, I say we leave them all in the hands of that God who knoweth all things, and will reward every one according to their deeds whether good or Evil.”¹⁵⁵ In other words, there would be a reckoning and Native Americans would be recognized by the Holy Deity as the more worthy Christians. However, while on earth, Native Americans would be more harshly judged than their

¹⁵¹ Brooks, *Occom*, 57.

¹⁵² Keely McCarthy, “Conversion, Identity, and the Indian Missionary,” *Early American Literature* 36 (2001): 353-369.

¹⁵³ Brooks, *Occom*, 57-58.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Murray, *Johnson*, 281-2.

white counterparts. Indians had to present a morally superior example of Christianization and civilization if their segregated communities were going to be considered politically equal.

“Indians must have Teachers of their own Colour or Nation.”¹⁵⁶ To Occom and Johnson it was essential that Indian children learn to speak, read, and write in the English language. The intention was not to supplant native dialects: the objective was to preserve traditions and cultural identity (to the exclusion of Pagan religion). Their approach was bilingual education. They taught and preached in both languages. Native vernacular was an important feature in retaining identity. English was the language of those who held power. It was important for Native Americans to understand, and have the ability to communicate in the language of the whites for economic and legal issues and for negotiations to retain resources and rights. Additionally, Occom had recognized that Native American children learned by using a different set of skills than whites. He realized that oral teaching (orality) was a far more effective means for teaching Indians. Native American culture was based on oral tradition, a style formatted by “sentence structure, thought clusters, redundancy,” and “proximity to the human life world” that was “empathetic and participatory.”¹⁵⁷ He recognized that “they distinguish the sounds by ear, but their eyes can’t distinguish the letters.”¹⁵⁸ Strategies for teaching whites centered on literate styles of grammatical “analysis and abstraction” that were

¹⁵⁶ Brooks, *Occom*, 133.

¹⁵⁷ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York: Methuen, 1988), 36-49.

¹⁵⁸ As cited in Keely McCarthy, “Conversion, Identity, and the Indian Missionary,” *Early American Literature* 36 (2001): 353-369.

“counterintuitive to New England’s [Native] oral-based cultures.”¹⁵⁹ Oocom adopted teaching strategies that were phonic, tactile, and that incorporated the natural world. For example, he placed each letter of the English alphabet on a piece of tree bark for students to pick up (tactile), often with a pictogram from the natural world (a leaf on the letter “L”), then he randomly enunciated either the name or sound of the letter. To Oocom and Johnson it was paramount that the Native children gain proficiency in English. They were certain that maintaining a separate but equal existence required understanding intricacies in American dealings which was not possible without fluency in English.

On March 13, 1773, Johnson and Oocom presented their plan for unity, relocation, and autonomous segregation to council leaders of various southern New England tribes. By December the project, subsequently called the Brotherton Movement, was ready to invite Christian members of seven Algonquin-speaking nations to merge and emigrate: the Mohegan, Montaukett, Farmington, Narragansett, Niantic, Pequot, and Stockington tribes. Johnson and Oocom literally wrote and preached their imagined community into creation.¹⁶⁰ Emigration and resettlement were expensive, thus fundraising was essential. Relocation was fraught with danger and discomfort -- intimidating factors that could inhibit adherents. Communication and correspondence, speeches and sermons, in Algonquian and English, were necessary to generate capital, supporters, and settlers. They worked tirelessly, driven to achieve their objectives. The

¹⁵⁹ Ong, *Orality*, 49-57.

¹⁶⁰ For an analysis on community and connection see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso Printing, 1999). Anderson’s text, particularly page 7 in this instance, explored the importance of print languages on the formation of community consciousness and connection. Such connections form the basis for imagined communities, and their collection of ideals and ideas lead to a notion of shared nation.

amount of correspondence produced indicates that these men were networkers long before the term was fashioned. Friendships and acquaintances developed at former posts as schoolmasters and ministers provided them with contacts who could offer political or financial assistance to the Christian Indians' endeavor.

The most important contact, in the context of the project, was Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs in North America. Samson Occom and William Johnson had established an acquaintance during Occom's first ministerial visit to the Oneida Indians in 1761. Subsequent visits had strengthened the connection. In fact, it appears quite friendly which is interesting considering Sir William's opinion of Presbyterians as noted in the previous chapter.¹⁶¹ Occom was well aware of Sir William's dedication to Native peoples. He had sought Sir William's advice and assistance in 1764 regarding a dispute with the governing bodies of Connecticut over land and Mohegan autonomy. Sir William shared Occom's and Johnson's conviction that education and Christianity were equal components in establishing Native American citizenship and necessary to gain and maintain political and territorial rights.¹⁶² Occom and Joseph Johnson having taught and ministered intermittently in Iroquoia understood Iroquois-style diplomacy and were familiar with the Iroquoian language. Occom, and later Johnson, in corresponding with Sir William, wrote in English but incorporated the traditional complimentary and flowing manner of Native American language, and integrated terminology common in Mohawk diplomacy of which Sir William was most

¹⁶¹ See Chapter I "An Imperial Project Gone Wrong? Political Friendship Crossing Gender, Ethnicity, and Race: Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant," page 40, note 5.

¹⁶² Murray, *Johnson*, 198.

acclimated. The complimentary language of Native American diplomacy could hold a variety of implications: sincere admiration, appeals, aspirations, polite shaming, even veiled insults politely delivered. To truly understand the message one must gain insight into the individuals, their relationship, and the context in which the material was written.

The same theory is necessary in determining the nature of a friendship. Occom commenced his letter requesting relocation assistance acknowledging that the New England Mohegans were aware of the “true friendship and sincere Service”¹⁶³ that Sir William had availed to the Six Nations of the Iroquois (primarily located in New York territory). Occom appealed for assistance to New England Indians on par with that received by the Iroquois, and, of course, conveyed the request within complimentary language. God, he wrote, in “great Wisdom and unstand[i]ng has Sent you [Sir William] in these parts of the World ... and it mov[e]d your Heart in a Way of Commisiration – and God hath made you a mideator [mediator] between the Natives and the other Nations, and Now the Eyes of Many Nations are upon you for help ...”¹⁶⁴ Unfortunately, Sir William’s response is lost, probably destroyed by the Albany State Capital fire in 1911. Regardless, Sir William was, by political position and strength of personality, the most influential spokesman for Native affairs and contacting him set the stage for visitation and relocation of Algonquin Christians.

Sir William’s support was essential. He was able to apply a degree of influence on Six Nations council decisions -- upon which an invitation to relocate depended. In

¹⁶³Brooks, *Occom*, 144.

¹⁶⁴Ibid.

September 1773, Joseph Johnson, with the encouragement of Sir William, spoke to the Oneida council regarding land for resettlement.¹⁶⁵ Most certainly he and Occom had long conferred on the content and approach for the speech. He addressed them in the English language, although from his years spent in the region he was familiar with Iroquoian dialects and translators were readily available too.¹⁶⁶ Arguably, he used English as it was the language of the literate, the vernacular of the politically powerful. The delivery of the speech in English also stressed Occom's and Johnson's objective for English language literacy among the Native Peoples. Addressing the Oneida as wise and beloved elder brothers, Johnson described the experiences of Algonquin communities:

... our forefathers were blind, and ignorant yea drowned in Spirituous Liquors; the English stripped, yea they as it were cut off their Right hands; -- and now we their Children just opening our Eyes, and having knowledge grafted ... -- I say that now we being to look around, and Consider and we perceive that we are stripped indeed, and having nothing to help ourselves, and thus our English Bretheran leaves us and laugh.¹⁶⁷

Essentially, Johnson contended that western Indians were fortunate to have had less contact with whites for it meant their way of life had been less degraded, yet as the Oneida had adopted Christianity they had spiritually advanced. He asserted that the English had purposely prompted the Algonquin ancestors to drunkenness in order to gain

¹⁶⁵ Murray, *Johnson*, 198.

¹⁶⁶ Sir William and his deputies were fluent in the Iroquois dialect.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph Johnson in Bernd C. Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press), 107.

unfair advantage.¹⁶⁸ They had “stripped” the New England tribes of their land, their culture, customs, traditions, and left them devastated. Then, to add insult to injury, they had the audacity to laugh at the Native Americans’ trusting quality of character and called them gullible. The Algonquin Christians looked to their elder, thus wiser, Oneida brothers to help them resuscitate traditional hunting and fishing customs. The Oneida, for the most part, and with some prompting from Sir William, embraced their brothers and granted a section of land for the Brotherton project. Occom recorded the news of Joseph Johnson’s success rejoicing that “Sir William is Heartily engag’d in the affair ... he promised us his assistance, all in his power, and he has already ... [done much] to help us.”¹⁶⁹ His enthusiasm was compounded by the fact that more members of the Algonquin tribes had “Joined to seek for a new Country amongst our Western Bretherin; ...”¹⁷⁰ The first hurdle in the realization of their project had been cleared: western territory had been secured. Johnson and Occom were going to lead their saved, sober, and hardworking followers toward a Native American Canaan.

Joseph Johnson led the first group of pantribal settlers into Oneida territory in 1775. Occom remained anxious for information regarding their progress and was quick to send inquiries and advice:

¹⁶⁸ Research regarding alcoholism indicates that some ethnic groups, Native American among them, have genetic designs more susceptible to alcohol addiction. One reason Indians were attractive to Occom’s form of Presbyterianism was the prohibition of alcohol use that was so addictive and destructive to Native culture. Occom and Johnson used religion to preach avoidance to alcohol in hopes of promoting a bond of spirituality that had been lost over generations.

¹⁶⁹ Brooks, *Occom*, 110.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Let me know by the first opportunity, how the Indians [in New York] appear now towards our Indians [from New England], and if anything is in agitation Worthy of notice let us know it, -- Whatever you do keep Peace among yourselves and hear to one another for your mutual *good*, -- Take God with you in all your Concerns, let his Word be your Rule both in your Religious and Temporal [secular] Concerns, Enrich your Minds with the Word of God ...¹⁷¹

The initial plan had been for the two men to divide the political, spiritual, educational, and social leadership responsibilities between Johnson in the West and Occom in the East. However, the American Revolution erupted before many members were able to relocate, making travel too dangerous. Johnson and the early Brotherton emigrants caught by the intensifying war found refuge among the Native Americans of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Not until 1784 was emigration to Brotherton able to resume. However, the time they spent with the Stockbridge Indians resulted in achieving another of Johnson's and Occom's long-term goals. Following the example set by the Brotherton group, Christian members of the Stockbridge community decided to relocate westward founding New Stockbridge in New York territory between 1783 and 1786. Among Occom's many messages of encouragement to the Brotherton community was: "Let us, then go on in Serving the Lord our God and let us help one another in all our Concerns, May we be found to build up one another both in our Temporal and in our Religious Life ..."¹⁷² His rhetoric to the Native American autonomous community held tones of theocracy which, inevitably, caused friction as some individuals gained interest in the separation of church and state. Objectively, we must recognize that Occom's letters, in

¹⁷¹ Brooks, *Occom*, 111-12.

¹⁷² Brooks, *Occom*, 135.

addition to being supportive morale boosters, were also sermons to his flock. Part of the community design was rooted in the morals, lessons, and reasons cited by their religious leaders.

As the War for American Independence appeared imminent, Johnson and Occom sought to persuade Native Americans against involvement in the conflict of the whites. Johnson stated his concerns of a bloody war in a letter to Sir William, July 8, 1774.¹⁷³ He worried for the survival of their fledgling society amid destruction. They hoped Sir William would caution the Indians to remain neutral. Unfortunately, Sir William had died on July 11th. Joseph Johnson died in 1776. His death was a great loss to the Brotherton movement.¹⁷⁴ He disappeared while traveling alone and his body was never found. Joseph had been carrying missives from George Washington to the Native Peoples appealing for moderation and neutrality. Occom, too, appealed for moderation. He wrote the Oneida, in 1775, that he rejoiced that they had not yet meddled in the “Family Contentions of the English” [British and American]...¹⁷⁵ The following extract from his letter, although lengthy, is valuable for its many important insights:

Beloved Brethren... the People in this Country [America] live more upon a level and they live happy, and the former Kings of England use to let the People in this Country have their Freedom and Liberty; but the present King of England wants to make them Slaves to himself, and the People in this Country don't want to be Slaves,---and so they are come over to kill

¹⁷³ Bernd Peyer, *American Indian Nonfiction: An Anthology of Writings, 1760s-1930s* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 76.

¹⁷⁴ John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 324.

¹⁷⁵ Brooks, *Occom*, 112.

them, and the People here are oblig'd to Defend themselves, they don't go over the great Lake [Atlantic Ocean] to kill them. And now I think you must see who is the oppressor and who are the oppressed and now I think, if you must join ... you can't join the oppressor¹⁷⁶

Occom notes the disparity between English classes in Britain versus the middling nature and sense of egalitarianism in American society. Americans were being oppressed by the British. Additionally, war would reduce Native American numbers and make relocation on a mass scale impossible in a conflict zone. Interestingly, Occom grouped whites into two categories: those who sought liberty and freedom and those who oppressed. If Native Americans felt they had to participate in the war, Occom argued, at least let them assist those who were being subjected to repression -- the Americans -- for surely, those who were freed from oppression would not seek to repress others.

Resettlement progressed again, but not until 1785. On November 7, Occom christened the town Brotherton and the members "proceeded to form a Body Politick."¹⁷⁷ Samson Occom had been left without his primary partner in the project. Nearly alone, it fell to Occom to intellectually, politically, and spiritually lead the movement and pursue diplomacy on behalf of his brethren in Connecticut and New York. This he accomplished by his ceaseless, exhausting, often painful travel between the two

¹⁷⁶ Brooks, *Occom*, 111-12; Early in the conflict the Oneida had declared neutrality, but like most of the tribes of the Six Nations Confederacy they were convinced to choose sides and fight. Iroquoia territory was destroyed by the years of constant turmoil between opposing factions. Native Americans became embroiled, sadly and ironically, against each other in a war for white men's rights -- both American and British.

¹⁷⁷ "The Brotherton Indian Nation," accessed October 8, 2010, Brothertownindians.org/History.htm.

locales.¹⁷⁸ Occom relied on his brothers-in law, Jacob and David Fowler for assistance. The Fowler brothers had been trained at Wheelock's and were teachers and preachers from the Montauk tribe and among the original organizers of the Brotherton Movement. Occom continued to work for the preservation of Native American souls, property, and political rights. What Occom and Johnson had started together was left to Occom and the Fowler brothers to finish.

Driven by the goals formulated in his political friendship with Joseph Johnson, protection of Native American rights in the newly formed United States constituted most of Occom's political activities. The revolutionary years had wrought destruction on the land and post-war competition for resources brought extreme hardship. Racial prejudice among government officials caused unfair judgments and granted white people greater access to natural resources. Occom petitioned the Connecticut Assembly on behalf of the Mohegan and Niantic Tribes in 1785, questioning why the tribes were being charged taxes on the fish they caught that was not for sale but for consumption. With irony he noted, "Whilst the King of England had authority over here they order no such thing upon us."¹⁷⁹ Indeed, the formerly oppressed were repressing others. The tribes also opposed the reduction to one fishing net for two tribes, rather than one each which had been traditional. They adamantly argued that their tribes had done nothing to forfeit their natural rights. Occom, in the language of complimentary diplomacy, contended that the

¹⁷⁸ A fall from his horse had permanently damaged his hip.

¹⁷⁹ Brooks, *Occom*, 148.

tribes “conclude your excellencies must have mistaken our request and thus they were applying again.”¹⁸⁰

In a 1785 petition from the Brotherton Tribe to the United States Congress, Occom argued that the Christianized, and thus civilized, tribe of Brotherton had lost much as a result of their support for the Americans during the War for Independence. As others had been recompensed for sacrifice so too should their tribe. The Indians had been driven from their land, forced to leave their personal effects and implements for farming and trade. Compounding the situation, their defense of the Americans during the war had led missionary support, contributions, and aid from British Christians to dry up.

We are So poor ... the late war has stripped us of all help we used to have ... Therefore our most Humble petition and Request is, this once, to help us a little, in our Settling, in this Wilderness, we extremely want, and need, a grist mill, a saw mill, and tools necessary for farming.¹⁸¹

The debt-ridden United States had little it could avail, even if they had been inclined.

Congress was “depending on the sale of public lands to pay its national debt.”¹⁸²

Likewise, the New York State Assembly, petitioned in 1791, declined assistance.

Instead, representatives of New York State began seeking possession for tracts of Oneida-held land. Initially the tribe had agreed not to lease to whites in order to maintain their segregation and avoid land disputes, but desperation led to the acceptance of white tenants. Next the State decreed that white tenants be allowed to buy any land they leased

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 150.

¹⁸² Peyer, *Turotr'd Mind*, 58.

from Indians – regardless of whether the Native American owners wished to sell it or not. “Almost instantly, more than half of the Brotherton tract was gone. By 1796, the original tract of 24,052 acres had been reduced to 9,390.”¹⁸³ Still, the community did manage a decent level of success. Town records, from 1796, show that Brotherton was a growing and quite stable community. They adhered, for the most part, to the principles adopted at the inception. A schoolhouse had been built, as well as two sawmills and a gristmill, more than 2000 acres cleared and planted, carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors and weavers were employed by the more than sixty families that had relocated.¹⁸⁴ Eventually the Brotherton tribe found the squeeze insurmountable. The United States wanted their land for white settlers. The Brothertons relocated to Wisconsin in the nineteenth century. Since the Wisconsin land was considered less desirable than that held by the Brotherton tribe in New York, the Federal government assisted Native Americans in relocation. Descendants of the Brotherton Movement identify themselves as the Brotherton Indian Nation of Wisconsin and have retained cultural and political autonomy. However, somewhere along the complicated legal channels, Brotherton Indians lost their federal recognition by the United States government. In August 2009, their claim for recognition, and the benefits it awards, was again rejected. They continue to fight, following the tenacious examples of Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson. True political friendship is unusual and extraordinary because the individuals involved focus on the greater good, striving to achieve what is in the best interests for their community, region,

¹⁸³ Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 324.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 326.

or nation above those of self. The political friendship shared by two Native American intellectuals worked to establish a pantribal community founded upon precepts of Enlightenment and political ideology, incorporating religion as a central feature for unification.

Crossing Races: Samson Occom and Phillis Wheatley

Phillis Wheatley to Samson Occom, 1774:

Rev'd and honor'd Sir,

I have this Day received your obliging kind Epistle, and am greatly satisfied with your Reasons respecting the Negroes, and think highly reasonable what you offer in Vindication of their natural Rights: Those that invade them cannot be insensible that the divine Light is chasing away the thick Darkness which broods over the Land of Africa; and the Chaos which has reign'd so long, is converting into beautiful Order, and [r]eveals more and more clearly, the glorious Dispensation of civil and religious Liberty, which are so inseparably Limited, that there is little or no Enjoyment of one Without the other: Otherwise, perhaps, the Israelites had been less solicitous for their Freedom from Egyptian slavery; I do not say they would have been contented without it, by no means, for in every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and by the Leave of our modern Egyptians I will assert, that the same Principle lives in us. God grant Deliverance in his own Way and Time, and get him honour upon all those whose Avarice impels them to countenance and help forward tile Calamities of their fellow Creatures. This I desire not for their Hurt, but to convince them of the strange Absurdity of their Conduct whose Words and Actions are so diametrically, opposite. How well the Cry for Liberty, and the reverse Disposition for the exercise of oppressive Power over others agree,--

I humbly think it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher to determine.--

The Connecticut Gazette, March 11, 1774¹⁸⁵

As white Americans loudly expounded concerns for their freedom, liberty, and natural rights, an African-American woman, mere months after having achieved her own freedom, Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) penned the above letter to a fellow intellectual of color, Native American Samson Occom (1723-1792). It was one of the most eloquent and compelling commentaries opposing slavery and “until the emergence of Frederick

¹⁸⁵Letter from Phillis Wheatley to Samson Occom, published first by the New London *Connecticut Gazette* on March 11, 1774, with numerous subsequent publications both primary and secondary. Joanna Brooks offer a twentieth-century linguistic conversion of the original in *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 97. An accurate eighteenth-century language copy is available online from “Africans in America,” PBS Online, accessed February 2009, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h19t.html>.

Douglass, Wheatley was commonly used as an icon of black intellectual perfectibility by the abolitionist movement.”¹⁸⁶ Whereas Samson Occom’s political union with Joseph Johnson established a movement for Native American autonomy, his friendship with Phillis Wheatley encouraged both to apply their talents for sermon and poetry to oppose racial prejudice and slavery. Their friendship provided each with intellectual and moral solidarity. It influenced and prompted one another’s work to raise public consciousness on the trials and tribulations faced by their races. They understood the persuasive possibilities of language and the power of printed publication. Although Samson Occom was the first Native American to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister and poet Phillis Wheatley was the first African-American to publish a book, both had been denigrated for their ethnicities and been victims of racial hatred. Their drive for personal achievement was not rooted in aggrandizing self-interest: their efforts were in the hopes of promoting social and political change.

Their friendship was based in the beliefs of New Light Calvinist Evangelicalism. They incorporated religious rhetoric to communicate their arguments for personal freedoms and civil rights to persons of color. Although few letters remain, it appears contact between the Wheatleys and Occom was regular. John and Susanna Wheatley, Phillis’ owners, were contributors for the proselytization of the Gospel to Native Americans. When in Boston Occom was a guest in their home. One of the first letters Phillis composed was to Samson. His respect for Phillis’ talents, as well as evidence of his progressive thinking, is obvious in his suggestion to Susanna Wheatley, dated March

¹⁸⁶Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley: America’s First Black Poet and Her Encounters with the Founding Fathers* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 74.

1771, that Phillis be sent “to her Native Country as a Female Preacher to her kindred, you know Quaker Women are allow’d to preach, and why not others in an Extraordinary Case.”¹⁸⁷ Phillis Wheatley was certainly extraordinary.

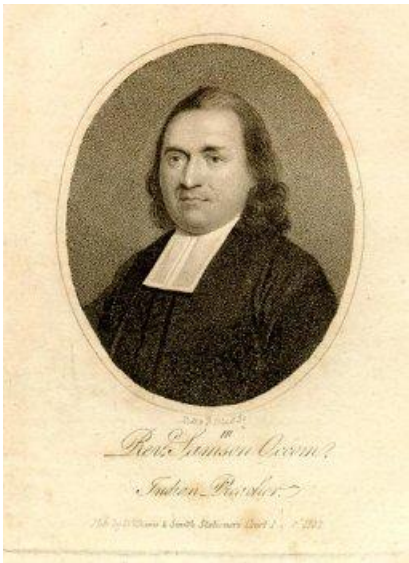


Figure 7. Samson Occom , 1802 engraving. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania

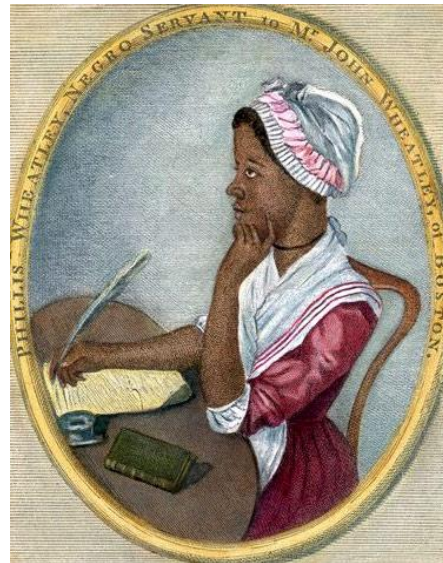


Figure 8. Phillis Wheatley. Manuscript Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library

Phillis Wheatley’s genius was not immediately recognized when she arrived in the American colonies. She had been kidnapped from her family on the West Coast of Africa when she was approximately seven years old and sold into slavery upon arrival in Massachusetts. Sickly in appearance she was sold on the Boston docks “for a trifle” to John and Susanna Wheatley who “were in want of a domestic.”¹⁸⁸ They named her Phillis after the slave ship on which she had arrived. Exhibiting intellectual gifts she was

¹⁸⁷Brooks, *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom*, 96.

¹⁸⁸ “The Poetry Foundation,” Sondra A. O’Neale, accessed June 2009, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org>

taught by Susanna Wheatley and her children. Within a few years she had mastered the English language, read the Bible, Greek and Roman classics, British literature, studied Latin, and had a poem published in 1769. Her elegy to Reverend George Whitefield, 1770, won her acclaim and patronage from Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon. With the assistance of Mrs. Wheatley, Phillis sought publication for a collection of her poetry. Lacking the support of the colonial literary community, they had to look to London for a publisher. That the poems were written by Phillis was disputed on the basis of her race, gender, and youth. In many circles it was argued that Africans lacked intelligence. Women were generally considered intellectually inferior. At the time Phillis was still a teenager yet her poetry indicated advanced proficiency in history, literature, the classics, and Biblical interpretation. John Wheatley, to validate Phillis' authorship to skeptics and detractors, arranged for her expertise to be assessed by seventeen learned leaders of Boston. Among the board to which she made her defense were Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson, Lieutenant Governor Andrew Oliver, John Hancock, several lawyers, and seven Doctors of Divinity. They all attested to Phillis as being *qualified to write* the poems.¹⁸⁹ Beyond doubt, Phillis was found to be an intellectually gifted individual capable of complex composition. Many in society found this fact particularly difficult to acknowledge for two primary reasons: she was black and she was a woman.

¹⁸⁹ John Wheatley, *To the Publick*, 1772, in Vincent Carretta, ed., *Phillis Wheatley: Complete Writings* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 6-7.

A significant portion of the white population in the colonies, north and south, considered African-Americans, slave or free, intellectually inferior. Contrary to less elucidated assumption, the concept of inferiority was not developed by Americans but was transplanted from Europe. That some of the great minds of the Enlightenment, Francis Bacon and David Hume for example, adopted such discriminatory concepts made acceptance all the easier for common minds. There were people who contended that Africans were not humans but another species altogether, perhaps descended from apes. In the colonies, as in Europe, there were men admired for their enlightened intellects who set an example for others. Unfortunately for those who sought civil equality, many social leaders subscribed to the theory of white male, predominantly Protestant, superiority. Thomas Jefferson openly expressed his opinion that Africans had “human souls, they merely lack[ed] the intellectual endowments of other races.” In light of Jefferson’s views on Africans, his defense of Native Americans as “formed in mind as well as body, on the same module with Homo sapiens Europeans” and thus capable of improvement unattainable by blacks could be perplexing, but it was a matter of color.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰Gates, *Trials of Phillis Wheatley*, 44-47; Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Mysterious Science of the Law: An Essay on Blackstone's Commentaries Showing how Blackstone, Employing Eighteenth Century Ideas of Science, Religion, History, Aesthetics, and Philosophy, made of the Law at once a Conservative and a Mysterious Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 101-102; George Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (Paris: Imprimeries royales); This story is excerpted from an 1818 letter from Thomas Jefferson to Robert Walsh available online “The Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition,” Yale University, accessed October 8, 2010, <http://www.yale.edu/glc/archive/1036.htm..>; “Thomas Jefferson’s Fossil Collection: Buffon’s Degeneracy, Part II, The American Reaction,” Academy of Natural Sciences, <http://www.anasp.org/museum/jefferson/otherPages/degeneracy-2.php>; “Thomas Jefferson, ‘Notes on the State of Virginia, Query 11: Aborigines,’” Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library, accessed March 2009, <http://etext.virginia.edu>.

Skin color, indeed, was a factor, and African-American complexions were of far greater concern than those of Native Americans, although as Phillis Wheatley noted in 1773, that both Africans and Native Americans were “despised on earth on account of our colour, ...”¹⁹¹ American Indians had been described as tawny and tanned, often depicted as having lighter skin than they actually had in English promotional materials to attract settlers to the British colonies.¹⁹² The “red” race could not have turned black-skinned within a few generations. Native Americans were, however, dark enough to be disadvantaged and often despised. African-Americans were further marginalized by language. The terminology of “black” was associated with degenerate characteristics and the morally corrupted, i.e., black-hearted; blackmail; black arts; black as Cain. White was the ideal of beauty, the fairer the better. In Western cultures white was representative of goodness and purity. Black was the exact opposite. Thus, by the darker color of their skin Africans were judged as wicked and ignorant, suitable only for servitude.¹⁹³

In colonial America, women, regardless of color, held very little autonomy over their lives and relatively few had the privilege of expansive educations.¹⁹⁴ Most men

¹⁹¹ Carretta, *Wheatley*, 149; Jordan, *White Over Black*, 216-231.

¹⁹² Jordon, *White Over Black*, 241; 257-9.

¹⁹³ Jordan, *White Over Black*, 241; 257-59. It is common knowledge that Africans were forced into slavery, but, admittedly to a lesser degree, so had Native Americans and the Irish.

¹⁹⁴ “During the colonial period and well into the nineteenth century, married women did not control their own earnings, nor could they legally own property in their own name. Under the law of *baron et feme*, an area of common law that persisted after American independence, all property brought into marriage by a woman belonged to her husband. However, women did have some control over property. At the death of her husband, a widow was entitled to one third of his property as her dower. Because of this entitlement, a husband could not sell or transfer property without his wife’s consent. If he did so, after his death she could claim that the sale was illegal and demand the return of the property. For this reason, wives usually signed deeds of sale to show their consent. Often a statement that a woman was signing of her own free will and

considered women incapable of independent or intellectual thought, much less so of political contemplation. Women were economically and legally restricted, without regard to social position. They were regularly demeaned by the misogyny prevalent in the era. Gender-bashing humor (against women) was relatively common. Women were targets of ribald humor in public, private, and print (newspapers and almanacs). The “fairer” sex (in an irony of terminology) was considered inferior. It must have been a shock to proponents of racial and gender superiority when an enslaved African woman and her poetry were described as “genius.”

According to the New Light Calvinism, Occom’s and Wheatley’s spiritually “saved” souls were equal.¹⁹⁵ Occom’s influence is detectable among Wheatley’s earliest poems. As evaluated in the previous section, Occom had long argued that Native Americans’ adoption of Christianity established their moral equality, as it should have. He contended, however, that they were politically and socially equal as well. Accepting Christ as one’s Savior was a central argument for ethnicities to be recognized as civilized. In his sermon *In Christ, He is a New Creature*, July 1766, Occom insisted the acceptance of Christianity was more than spiritually altering: “Now if any man be in Christ he is a New Creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new ... in name and disposition.”¹⁹⁶ The impact of the sermon’s message on Wheatley is

was not being coerced by her husband accompanied the signature.” Definition offered by Harvard Business School, http://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/wes/collections/women_law/marriage_coverture.

¹⁹⁵ Michael Elliott, “‘This Indian Bait’: Samson Occom and the Voice of Liminality,” *Early American Literature*, 29 (1994): 245.

¹⁹⁶ Brooks, *Occom*, 173-74.

particularly evident in the last two lines of her poem *On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA* written in 1768, which read:

Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.¹⁹⁷

She was reminding Christians that salvation was not determined by skin color, and the very acceptance of Christianity was indicative of civilized behavior. And, worthy black Christians would be accepted in heaven too as there were no indications that the Holy Realm was segregated. Wheatley also incorporated the language of color to subtly shame, even criticize, those who professed to be Christians yet considered people of the “sable race” to be “diabolic” and unequal due to their skin color.¹⁹⁸ Correspondingly Occom, in 1768, had written on the racial prejudice he experienced from white Christians. The Evangelical Bishops of England “don’t want the Indians to go to heaven with them” he corresponded.¹⁹⁹ That Occom and Wheatley communicated their opinions to each other is obvious in the similarity of their arguments. The correlation between dates and topics indicate that coincidence is unlikely. What we are viewing in these works is the transition of a religious relationship into a political friendship.

Wheatley and Occom were witnesses to the radical changes underway in the philosophies, principles, opinions, and sentiments of the American people. The Wheatley residence was on King Street – the geographical center of revolutionary Boston, a hotbed

¹⁹⁷ Carretta, *Wheatley*, 13.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁹⁹ Brooks, *Occom*, 86.

for discussions on rights and freedoms in the colony. The location also brought them into contact with numerous leaders from the New England clergy. The sermons and pamphlets available would have kept one informed of the latest philosophical and theological thinking of the day, concerning human rights and social contracts. The transformation in thought that would bind Patriots together was swirling just beneath the surface. Occom was a guest in the Wheatley home in mid-1773.²⁰⁰ Naturally, he and Phillis would have discussed current events, perceptions, and possible outcomes. Influence is notable in Wheatley's elegy for Christopher Snider, an eleven-year-old boy shot by Loyalist Ebenezer Richardson on February 20, 1773, written within days of the event. It "dwells on just how 'the first martyr of the common good' brings the community together into one 'Illustrious retinue against fair freedom's foes.'"²⁰¹ Her poetry was documenting a transformation in American political thought. Wheatley and Occom hoped that "providence and reason would ultimately ensure the political victory of these two momentous causes [anti-slavery and revolution]."²⁰² It is important to remember, however, that these two intellectuals of color are from different races so their perspectives on what was best for their people, aside from freedom and liberty, differed. Occom, by 1773, had become a proponent for Native segregation and autonomy whereas Wheatley implied integration for African Americans.

²⁰⁰ Sara Dunlap Jackson, "Letters of Phillis Wheatley and Susanna Wheatley," *The Journal of Negro History* 57 (1972): 211-13.

²⁰¹ Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997): 1, 3, 13, 173.

²⁰² James A. Levernier, "Phillis Wheatley and the New England Clergy," *Early American Literature* 26, (1991): 32.

In her reply to Occom's now lost letter, Wheatley's use of the term "Epistle" is intensely revealing in itself. A review of her correspondence indicates that she used the term once to Obour Tanner in 1772, again to Obour in 1773, and to Samson Occom in the famous epistle of February 11, 1774. In eighteenth century context the term, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, meant "1. A communication made to an absent person in writing; a letter. Chiefly (from its use in translations from L[atin] and Gr[reek]) applied to letters written in ancient times, *esp.* to those which rank as literary productions, or after the analogy of 2) to those of a public character, or addressed to a body of persons."²⁰³ Wheatley's grasp of the English language and her level of intelligence make the possibility of her integrating the term implausible. Her understanding of classical and neo-classical literature may have had some bearing on her terminology, but it is highly interesting that those whose letters Phillis refers to as epistles are non-white individuals, each is a close friend of color. Each response by Phillis is saturated with evangelical sentiments, and consecutively increased in commentary on moral, natural and civil rights. However, the most important implication may have been the realization of the political power of publication that they were witnessing in revolutionary-ripe Boston.

It is additionally relevant that the political messages within Wheatley's poetry became progressively more blatant, rather than oblique. An example is the poem sent "To the Right Honourable WILLIAM [Legge, (1731-1801)], Earl of DARTMOUTH, His Majesty's Principle Secretary of State for North-America, &c." in 1772, and published in 1773. She relayed to him that her love of freedom and wishes for the common good can

²⁰³"Oxford English Dictionary," <http://libproxy.uncg.edu>.

be most acutely felt by someone who has had their liberty denied. Notably, her verse does not imply that liberty denied was restrictive to slavery. It read, in part:

Should you, my lord, while you peruse my song,
Wonder from whence my love of Freedom sprung,
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood,
I, young in life, by seeming cruel fate
Was snatch'd from Afric's fancy'd happy seat:
What pangs excruciating must molest,
What sorrows labour in my parent's breast?
Steel'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
That from a father seiz'd his babe belov'd:
Such, such my case. And can I can but pray
Others may never feel tyrannic sway.²⁰⁴

The poem was personal and political, as was Samson's most popular oration *A Sermon, Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian* (1772) which was reprinted innumerable times. Moses Paul was a Native American, unfairly tried,²⁰⁵ found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Occom accepted Moses Paul's request to deliver the religious service preceding his hanging. In the sermon Occom condemned the problems wrought by colonialism, mainly alcoholism, against the Native population. He applied "sin" as a social leveling mechanism: all social classes and races "Indians, English, and Negroes" had the same susceptibility to sin. It was a less than subtle acclamation for equal rights -- moral and civil. Therefore, perhaps Phillis' use of the term "epistle"

²⁰⁴ Carretta, *Wheatley*, 40.

²⁰⁵ In a drunken bar brawl Native American Moses Paul inflicted a blow which subsequently ended the life of a white man. The argument of his being tried unfairly arises from the fact that he was not judged by a jury of his peers but one of only white men.

applied less to what her intimate friends had relayed and more to the antislavery indictment she was writing in February of 1774.

Phillis Wheatley commented with a tone of authority when expressing to Samson Occom that she was “greatly satisfied with your Reasons respecting the Negroes, and think highly reasonable what you offer in Vindication of their natural Rights.”²⁰⁶ She was an intellectual and had been a slave. Wheatley’s racial consciousness had been expressed early in her correspondence and more prominently in her poetry during and after 1770. She knew, like many others of her race, that she was more than just a trapped and transported African slave. One example is Wheatley’s use of the term Ethiopian in regard to her ethnicity. In the eighteenth century its usage was not restricted to a specific geographical location but was also an appellation commonly used to describe someone as ethnically African. It possessed both a racial and biblical context. She cited African-Americans as possible descendants of Moses and his Ethiopian wife; the rescuer of Jeremiah; and a theme she incorporated often “Psalm 68:32 to ‘Ethiopia stretching out her hands to God’ – a verse which Wheatley repeats ... became ‘a symbol of the country’s [Ethiopia’s] passionate adherence to the orthodox faith.’”²⁰⁷ It is possible to observe her outspoken criticisms of slavery increase after her manumission in October 1773. Wheatley’s tone of racial authority had been notable quite early in her career. Occom, however, became racially outspoken after four years of soul-searching (1768-1772). The *Moses Paul* sermon, in 1772, appears as a turning point in Occom’s

²⁰⁶ “Africans in America,” PBS Online

²⁰⁷ Sondra A. O’Neale, “A Slave’s Subtle War: Phillis Wheatley’s Use of Biblical Myth and Symbol,” *Early American Literature* 21 (1996): 154; O’Neale, “Challenge to Wheatley’s Critics: ‘There Was No Other ‘Game’ in Town,” *Journal of Negro Education* 54 (1985): 500-11.

ministerial career and personal racial revelations. The sermon was the “first recorded occasion when Occom speaks as a Native minister to Native audiences about specifically Native American issues.”²⁰⁸ He emerged from his experiences as a political leader for his people, with a renewed political vision in the Brotherton Movement (1773), and a “strengthened resolve to serve Native communities and use his growing celebrity to advance their concerns.”²⁰⁹ Although they sought to assist their own races, Wheatley and Occom continued to communicate ideas to each other for the benefit of both minorities. They intellectually heartened one another in the support of human rights and continually encouraged the confidence and courage to speak out against racism.

For Wheatley and Occom “politics and theology were inextricably intertwined.”²¹⁰ Just as eighteenth century politics were imbued with theories of Enlightenment so too was the theology of the age. As Wheatley communicated to Occom, “Dispensation of civil and religious liberty, which are so inseparabl[e] ... that there is little or no Enjoyment of one Without the other...”²¹¹ Wheatley compares the ancient Hebrews and their bondage in Egypt to eighteenth century African-Americans who lived and suffered under “Modern Egyptians.” She simultaneously employed politics and religion, interweaving her arguments between civil and religious rights -- laws of man and laws of God -- and asserting that love of freedom in the civil context is

²⁰⁸ Brooks, *Occom*, 163.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 164.

²¹⁰ James A. Levernier, “Phillis Wheatley and the New England Clergy,” *Early American Literature* 26 (1991): 23.

²¹¹ “Africans in America,” PBS Online. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>, last accessed November 3, 2010.

only made possible because God implanted the principle of such love “in every human breast.”²¹² What she was stating was perfectly clear, and quite radical, to readers of the era: -- every human, regardless of race, gender, or social status was entitled to freedom because it was granted by God, not man. Wheatley was able to make such “radical implications without risk of counterattack. There was safety in leaving the political details to God’s separate and inscrutable agenda.”²¹³ It is analogous to Occom’s use of sin as a leveler in the *Moses Paul* sermon. They adopted and adapted each other’s arguments. Furthermore they incorporated the precepts of American Enlightenment, for which the colonists were actively arguing in 1774, that a person’s natural (or inalienable) rights could not be revoked without that individual having broken a civil code. God-given rights could not be color oriented.

Occom and Wheatley were Patriots but to different extents. Although both viewed the English as oppressors, Occom’s aspirations for pantribal autonomy were not, like Wheatley’s, tied to American success for independence. Wheatley’s 1774 letter to Occom and subsequent poetry reflect her belief that American freedom from Britain would lead to manumission for African-Americans. In this train of thought Wheatley’s very flattering poem to General George Washington in 1775, whom she described as “famed for thy valor, for thy virtue more,” was interpreted as admiration for him and reflective of the hopes of Patriots.²¹⁴ However, Wheatley was well aware that

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 173.

Washington was a slaveholder. Considering Phillis' intellectual acuity, it is more probable that she constructed the poem to Washington as another avenue to stir anti-slavery sentiments, especially in her use of the goddess Columbia as representative of America. Columbia, as depicted in Wheatley's poetry, represented the virtue, spirit, and ideals of American Enlightenment. This meant the principles of freedom, rights (natural, civil, and religious) and liberty to all. Aside from the flattery there is a very different implication in "Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,/ Thy every action let the goddess guide."²¹⁵ Applying Wheatley's terminology from her letter to Occom, "it does not require the Penetration of a Philosopher" to determine her implication for virtuous actions in "freedom's" land.²¹⁶

Slavery was incompatible with both Christianity and democracy. By 1778, Wheatley's poetry demonstrates her disappointment that slavery had not ended with the formation of the United States. The sense of disillusionment was illustrated in her poetry. For example, to honor *The Death of General Wooster*:

... While yet (O deed ungenerous!) they disgrace
And hold in bondage Afric's blameless race?
Let virtue reign – And thou accord our prayers
Be victory our's, and generous freedom theirs ...

²¹⁴ Carretta, *Wheatley*, 87-90.

²¹⁵ General Washington, upon receipt of the poem that honored him, responded by inviting Phillis Wheatley to visit his headquarters in Cambridge. They met for approximately thirty minutes in 1778. The issue of slavery troubled Washington, and as John C. Shields wrote on page 4 of *Phillis Wheatley's Poetics of Liberation: Background and Contexts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), "I will venture a guess that Washington's meeting with Wheatley contributed mightily to both his angst and to his decision to free his slaves, as well as to provide them with literacy and skills training. Indeed the encounter with Wheatley put forever to rest the claim that Black peoples were 'made for servitude.'"

²¹⁶ "Africans in America," PBS Online, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/home.html>, last accessed November 3, 2010.

She questioned the incongruity of American patriots, predominantly Christian, who proclaimed a deep hatred of political oppression and love for liberty yet held Africans in bondage and denied them their natural and civil liberties. Nevertheless, she retained hope for African emancipation.

Neither Samson Occom nor Phillis Wheatley lived to see the end of slavery and certainly not an elimination of racial prejudice even by practicing Christians. They used their talents to subvert the social restrictions that had effectively limited minority voices. They had the support, from each other, of a like-minded colleague. Phillis Wheatley died in December 1784, disheartened and definitely destitute. However, she left an amazing legacy of antislavery verse, some subtle poems and others overt. Occom, undoubtedly influenced by Wheatley's experiences, became extremely outspoken in his opposition to slavery and "preached frequently against slaveholding during the 1780s, when antislavery sentiment was not widely vocalized even among New England clergy."²¹⁷ In his sermon *Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself*, c. 1784, Occom stated "Slaveholders ... are no Christians, they are unbelievers, yea they are ungentle and inhumane, ... they will take all liberty but the will give none."²¹⁸ He held particular animosity for ministers who owned slaves, declaring that it was "Inconsistent," according to the gospel, "with their Character and Function" and was in opposition with the American message "of Freedom and Liberty, both Temporal and Spiritual."²¹⁹ Phillis would have responded with a resounding "Amen!"

²¹⁷ Brooks, *Occom*, 165.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 206.

²¹⁹ Brooks, *Occom*, 206.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS UNDESIRABLES CROSS THE ATLANTIC

Laying the Groundwork for Revolution:
Presbyterian Dissenters Francis Hutcheson and Francis Alison



Figure 9. Francis Hutcheson
<http://homepage.newschool.edu/>



Figure 10. Francis Alison.
http://www.archives.upenn.edu/people/1700s/alison_fra.html

Lifelong camaraderie often emerges from mentor-protégé relationships but in the case of the political friendship between Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746) and Francis Alison (1705-1779) the result was revolutionary. The association was traditional in its time-honored pattern for academic training and the imparting of knowledge: it was however, Hutcheson's moral philosophy that proved radical. The Reverend Dr. Hutcheson had been developing and teaching his *System of Moral Philosophy* at the University of Glasgow, in Scotland, for three years by the time Alison arrived in 1733 to continue his studies. Not members of the Anglican Church of Ireland, Presbyterian "Dissenters"²²⁰ could not attend universities or pursue teaching careers in their own country. Dissenters who sought higher education had to follow an established educational corridor extending from Ireland to Scotland. Subsequently the corridor expanded to include the American colonies as a final destination. Alison had completed his Master's Degree at the University of Edinburgh, where he specialized in classical philosophy and theology and was pursuing his Doctorate in Divinity at Glasgow. It is logical that Hutcheson's class on Moral Philosophy would have been required for advanced degrees. Hutcheson and Alison shared a great deal in common. The similarities in their interests probably led to long discussions. They were, of course, products of the cultural milieu of time and place: proponents of Enlightenment, ministers of Dissenting Presbyterianism and passionate educators deeply influenced by Irish perspective.²²¹ As early as 1725, Hutcheson was constructing arguments on the link that

²²⁰ In post-Restoration Ireland, Dissenters were predominantly identified as Presbyterians but encompassed most Protestants who refused to accept the Anglican Church of Ireland.

should exist between politics, virtue, and society. In *An Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Hutcheson coined the famous phrase that became the utilitarian standard: “that action is best, which procures the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers,”²²² – thus arguing for the greater good, or in American terminology, “the common good.” Alison soon adopted Hutcheson’s political creed as his own. The most effective means for achieving their objective was to provide students “guidance as to their conduct as citizens,”²²³ by teaching enlightened ideals, a rationale for rebellion, and the promotion of religious freedom in Scotland, Ireland and America.

They were participants in a tradition described as a “thinking class.”²²⁴ The connotation of a “thinking class” is not a construct of elitist theory: it is an approach for

²²¹In this essay the term Irish will be used to identify individuals born in Ireland instead of the accustomed terminologies of Scots-Irish, Scotch-Irish, and Anglo-Irish. It is relevant that the term Scots-Irish was not only applied to those of Scottish descent who had immigrated to Ulster, Ireland, but included “Puritans from England, Huguenots from France, and [economic, political, or religious] refugees from Scotland, as well as the Lowlanders” (Carlton Jackson, *A Social History of the Scotch-Irish* (New York: Madison Books, 1989), 9). Nor were the terms “Scots-Irish” or “Scotch-Irish” readily used by those who immigrated to North America and who typically referred to themselves simply as “Irish”. Not until rising “nativist” resentment erupted against the droves of starving and desolate Famine Irish who arrived in America during the mid-nineteenth century was the appellation adopted by non-Catholic Irish-Americans to distinguish themselves from the new immigrants (H. Tyler Blethen, “Ethnicity without Identity” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 59 (2002).

²²² Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*, fourth edition (London, 1738), 180-81.

Hutcheson wrote *An Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725) while teaching at the academy he had established in Dublin. In 1730 he accepted the position at the University of Glasgow but returned to Ireland each summer.

²²³ Caroline Robbins, “When it is that Colonies May Turn Independent” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 11 (1959): 217.

²²⁴Darren Staloff conceived the concept of a “thinking class” in *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). His approach addressed intellectuals within Puritan society as a distinct social group with its own set of agendas.

exploring the impact on a given society by groups of educated or experienced individuals. Hutcheson, who also mentored Adam Smith (noted author of *The Wealth of Nations* and Hutcheson's successor to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow) and philosopher David Hume, communicated to an ever enlarging network of intellectuals, many of whom were his former students. After Alison relocated to America, he kept Hutcheson abreast on the Presbytery in the colonies and continued to solicit his advice.²²⁵ When Alison planned to open the New London Academy in 1740, he consulted his mentor. Hutcheson responded with recommendations for books, "suggestions on curriculum and organization."²²⁶ He also initiated a book drive among "Irish supporters [who] sent books for the library ... supplemented by a later shipment of 'useful books' from ministers in Dublin."²²⁷ Probably the most important resource sent, with regard to subsequent arguments for liberty, was *The Compendium*, or *Compend*, a shortened version of *System for Moral Philosophy*. Alison dictated to students from his personal copy until reproductions could be secured. In applying Hutcheson's methodology to generations of colonial American minds, Francis Alison, as minister, political activist, and educator, was instrumental in imparting the ideological values upon which the United States was formed.²²⁸

²²⁵ Few of their letters have survived, and those that have are in different repositories in several countries. Fortunately, numerous references are contained in the personal papers of the men's friends, for example the Ezra Stiles Collection at Yale University.

²²⁶ Elizabeth Nybakken, "In the Irish Tradition: Pre-Revolutionary Academies in America," *History of Education Quarterly*, 37(1997): 180.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1959), constituted a Rosetta Stone for historians of political and intellectual thought during the

Hutcheson's and Alison's attitudes were shaped by their birth in a country where legal and overt religious prejudice had fermented for centuries. The people of eighteenth century Ireland had inherited a collection of discriminatory enactments commonly referred to as Penal Laws.²²⁹ The target of the first repressive statutes, adopted in 1695, was the Roman Catholic majority, and, to a lesser degree, the Protestant Dissenters.²³⁰ The Sacramental Test Act (1704) was a constraint coalesced into the penal codes, but it most affected Presbyterians at the time for it allowed discrimination against any person who would not receive communion in the Church of Ireland. Those who refused to

eighteenth century. Political historians like Robbins, J.G.A. Pocock, "The New British History in Atlantic Perspective" in *American Historical Review*, 104, no 2, (April 1999); Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, Volumes I and II (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); Trevor H. Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1965); Jack P. Greene, *The American Colonies in the Eighteenth Century, 1689-1763* (New York: Appleton-Century Croft, 1969); Greene, *Great Britain and the American Colonies* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969); Wood, *Rerepresentation in the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969) searched for historical explanations which led them to develop the field of ideological history. Progressive history, as successful as it had been, proved too simplistic to explain the personal realities that motivated historical figures. There existed motivating factors that extended far beyond assumptions of position, power, and prestige. Ideological history incorporated the psychological reasoning, and the thoughts and values, behind personal decisions and recognized the importance of political culture. Not only did such scholars profoundly impact the discipline of history, their work has continued to stimulate the scholarship of subsequent generations.

Historians, notably Nicholas Canny, S. J. Connolly, and Kerby Miller, integrated the work of the originators to explain how politics of ideology, identity, and culture was experienced by Irish and Irish-Americans in the Atlantic World. Paul A. Rahe, Darren Staloff, and, Lee Ward, amongst many others, have combined the histories of politics and ideas as a means of reassessment and to gain further insights into the past.

²²⁹ Penal laws are also referred to as penal codes, or more recently as popery laws. The terms are, in most cases, interchangeable.

²³⁰ Connolly, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 438.

adhere were excluded from military ranks and banned from participation in government or civil positions. Non-Anglicans were denied entrance to Irish universities, and Dissenting schoolmasters were prohibited from teaching above the level of grammar school. Another antagonism was Anglican tithing, which required payment to the Church of Ireland whether one practiced the religion or not. The Test Act was not rescinded until 1780, by which time dissatisfaction with discrimination prompted a diaspora of an educated, overwhelmingly resentful, group of people to the American colonies. Such individuals proved pivotal in shaping the colonies into a rebellious and republican-minded society. Inevitably, living in the shadow of oppression, whether in Ireland or America, created in many a longing for liberty and an “agitation for reform.”²³¹

It had begun with European Enlightenment, a repercussion to religious fervor that had intensified during the Middle Ages and culminated in the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. Traditional church hierarchy had commanded authority and demanded obedience. Much of Enlightenment’s early focus was on replacing superstition with rationalism. Knowledge and skepticism were fundamental features of Enlightenment, but not to the exclusion of religious beliefs.²³² Although it may appear contrary in nature,

²³¹ Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transition, Development, and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1959, 2004), 3.

²³² An explanation of the phenomenon is available in *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005), 7, in which Darren Staloff identified three central attitudes or assumptions that characterized the Enlightenment movement. The first addresses the epistemology of the Enlightenment, its unique posture toward the nature of knowledge, belief, and human inquiry. The second focuses on the metaphysics of the Enlightenment. It describes the peculiar worldview, its account of the nature of reality, the universe, and the human condition and role of man that distinguished the beliefs of the eighteenth century republic of letters. The final feature is a bit

many participants in the cultural movement were devout in their faith. In the eighteenth century, philosophers built upon the concepts of Rene Descartes and John Locke. The French philosophes Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, centered in Paris and widely acclaimed, were not alone in their efforts. In Ireland the Molesworth Circle, of which Francis Hutcheson was a member, formed the foundation of Irish Enlightenment. This group of Irish scholars, of varying disciplines and religions, were united in the promotion of knowledge and rejected the traditional political and social dictates. They emphasized rationalism and scientific application to societal issues, embraced freedom of conscience, promoted moral philosophy and social responsibility, and frequently stressed religious tolerance. The members of Viscount Molesworth's intellectual think tank contemplated economic and political issues that were "unusual by English or Scottish standards, though not by those of continental Europe."²³³ In fact, "Irish constitutional thinking was more advanced than that in any other dominion during the early decades of the eighteenth-century."²³⁴

In the past the great Irish intellectuals had been separated by discipline and incorporated into the histories of other cultures. Most obvious to the focus of this study are those of the English and Scottish. Frances Hutcheson is an excellent example of such academic appropriation. Considered the "Father of Scottish Enlightenment" Hutcheson

harder to characterize than the first two. It deals not with the doctrinal orientation like epistemology or metaphysics but rather with a cultural quality, tone, or posture.

²³³ Patrick Kelly "The Politics of Political Economy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland" in S. J. Connolly, ed., *Political Ideas*, 108.

²³⁴ Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthman: Studies in the Transition, Development, and Circumstances of English Liberal Thought from the Restoration of Charles II until the War with the Thirteen Colonies* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc., 1959, 2004) 18.

was in actuality an Irishman.²³⁵ It is in Francis Hutcheson²³⁶ that we can see the most profound contributions to Irish Enlightenment and the development of American political ideology. He conceived a new interpretative model for the study of moral philosophy: one which advocated the autonomy of man and defended resistance against oppression. Tenets from ideology forged in Ireland proved critical in the construction of colonial American thought. There was, for decades, much disagreement within the academic community as to whether a glorious, golden age of Irish thought had existed, even as scholars offered convincing evidence. The decades between 1690 and 1750 witnessed the

²³⁵ What is of primary relevance to this question of Irish ethnicity is how persons of eighteenth-century Ireland viewed their own nationality. Some historians note that at the beginning of the eighteenth-century many Irish-Protestants considered themselves as Englishmen living in Ireland, however, as argued by S. J. Connolly in *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000) 107.) “by mid-century this sense of a separate ethnic identity was in decline ...” especially in light of “recurring patriot writing throughout from the 1690s to the 1780s, which focused instead on the specific liberties of the kingdom of Ireland.” Likewise, Nicholas Canny, found the eighteenth-century to be a period rife with transformations in identity and a self-consciousness necessary to challenge political authority. This is particularly well illustrated in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., “Afterward: From Identity to Independence” in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987). Arthur Dobbs, considered a member of the Irish intelligentsia, was a member of Parliament, served as surveyor of Ireland from 1733, and relocated to North Carolina where he became the Governor of that colony in 1754. In 1729, he had written that “it is ... every man’s duty to promote the happiness of the *nation wherein he lives*,” thus his concern with Ireland’s economic predicament was motivated by “love of country and a sense of duty to fellow countrymen” in Arthur Dobbs *Essay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland, Part I* (1729). The passage is quoted by Patrick Kelly “The Politics of Political Economy in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Ireland,” in *Political Ideas in Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, S.J. Connolly, ed. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 107. Dobbs considered his nation, at the time, to be Ireland, as illustrated by the title of his composition: *Essay on the Trade and Improvement of Ireland* (1729). Thus, his fellow countrymen would be Irishmen, and he does not make ethnic nor religious distinctions. As stressed by Canny “even the settlers in Ireland ... came to recognize that -- at least in the early modern world -- where you were very largely determined who you were” (Canny, *Colonial Identity*, 267). Hence, Irish-Protestant leaders styling themselves “Patriots” combined with the “radical character of Irish constitutional thought throughout the eighteenth-century” (Canny, *Kingdom and Colony*, 122). Contributing to a political debate would have been impossible without a cohesively formed identity. The sense of shared identity is also evident in personal correspondence dated to the era, for example the interpretations that have arisen from *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial to Revolutionary America, 1675-1815* (Miller, et. al.).

²³⁶ In 1730 Hutcheson left the Irish dissenting academy he had previously established in 1721, in Dublin, Ireland, to serve as Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University in Scotland, where his theories would gain fame as “Scottish Philosophy.”

extensive flowering of Irish intellectual edification in the fields of literature, philosophy, politics, and theology, and explored issues that dealt with concepts the modern world would understand as psychology and sociology. Ideas formulated within Molesworth's circle of friends found wide circulation within society: liberal notions for the age, such as concerns for public welfare; calls for social, political and economic reforms for the benefit of the poor and improved conditions for the working class; expanded civil and religious liberties, even equalities; naturally inherent rights of mankind; and checks and balances in government. It appears that Irish intellectuals had a profound impact on the concepts adopted by American colonists.

Much of the American and Irish radicalism reflected an ideology developed in Ireland and transported to colonial America. Hutcheson's works regarding colonial systems maintained that "as the end of all political unions must be the general good of those thus united ... if the plan of the mother country... degenerates ... a severe and absolute one [the colonists] are not bound to continue their subjugation."²³⁷ Additionally, "when it is evident, that the publick liberty and safety is not tolerable secured ... then it becomes lawful, nay honourable, to make such efforts and changes to the government. ... The rights of the people are divine, ... and in every sort of government the people has this right of defending themselves by violence against the abuse of power."²³⁸ However, "this doctrine of the right of resistance in defense of the rights of a people [should not] tend to

²³⁷ Robert M. Calhoon, *Dominions and Liberty: Ideology in the Anglo-American World 1660-1801* (Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1994), 48.

²³⁸ Francis Hutcheson, *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria, with A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy* (reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2007), 253-264.

excite seditions and civil wars.”²³⁹ In these words there was a tone set, an attitude imbedded in early American society that went beyond the ideology of Locke. The influence of John Locke’s epistemology on America is without doubt, but it was Hutcheson’s opinion, one which he consistently conveyed, that people had the moral right, *even duty*, to forcefully resist tyrannical government. Moreover, the Reverend Dr. Hutcheson “defined the autonomy and eventual liberty of the colonies as a moral imperative more clearly than any other piece of British Republican writing.”²⁴⁰ Francis Hutcheson was the man for whom his colleagues wrote: “if ever one had the art to create an esteem for liberty and contempt for tyranny and tyrants, he was the man.”²⁴¹ The individuals who supported American Independence held a common belief that people possessed the right to rebel against a tyrannical government. Forceful resistance is not a tenet found within Locke’s doctrine. No, to discover the origin of such a philosophy we must refer to the work produced by the Irishman, Francis Hutcheson.

Irish Enlightenment and Hutcheson’s curriculum crossed the Atlantic Ocean and contributed to the enlightenment of America. Consistent with many educated Presbyterian men born in eighteenth century Ireland, Francis Alison immigrated to the colonies after attending Glasgow University. Like his peers, he was forbidden to attend university in his own country or teach above grammar school level. Alison, who embraced his mentor’s moral message and didactic teaching style, would prove to be an

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Calhoun, *Dominion and Liberty*, 48.

²⁴¹ David Dickson, *New Foundations: Ireland 1660-1800* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 106.

extraordinary educator and the greatest proselytizer of Hutcheson's philosophy. Hutcheson and Alison, on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean, argued for a more sociological approach in politics and economics. The promotion of the greater good is their central thesis. Also illustrative of their radical contemplations were the beliefs that the people were a constitute power and that both virtue and morality were tied to freedom and voting. Hutcheson's messages that "virtue ever was and will be popular, where men can vote freely" and "any obstacle to this freedom would be a deterrent to morality" were taken to heart by many.²⁴² Hutcheson and Alison stressed religious tolerance and the rights of man. Their belief in empiricism, education, and Enlightenment stirred in students ideals of social consciousness that promoted progress, freedom, and charitability, all meshed with the classical concepts of virtue and honor.

Francis Alison arrived in the American colonies in 1735, where he taught and established institutes of learning.²⁴³ It is suspected that Hutcheson himself prompted Alison to immigrate to America. Lifelong promotion of Irish Enlightenment would influence innumerable colonial minds. He continually articulated Hutcheson's philosophies and used Hutcheson's published lectures *Philosophiae Moralis Institutio Compendiaria*, or *System of Moral Philosophy* as a text for his students. Alison instructed students from his personal copy of the text until his request for multiple copies could be supplied. Hutcheson reportedly sent the first copies to Alison in America

²⁴² Robbins, *Commonwealthman*, 188-9.

²⁴³ Miller, *Land of Canaan*, 512.

himself.²⁴⁴ Alison quickly realized there were no colleges “nor even a good grammar school” in the Middle colonies.²⁴⁵ By 1740 he had opened the New London Academy in Pennsylvania. Eventually, this academy relocated to Newark, Delaware, and became the College of Delaware. Another academy of his affiliation, the College of Philadelphia, became the University of Pennsylvania. His curriculum prepared the student for a lifetime of study -- one based on observation, inductive reasoning, and inquiry. Alison’s application method for enhancing students’ comprehension of Hutcheson’s moral philosophy was brilliant in its simplicity.

Alison had his students summarize Hutcheson’s *Compend* chapter by chapter under each of its three major headings: ‘The Elements of Ethics,’ ‘The Elements of the Law of Nature,’ and ‘The Principles of Economics and Politics.’ The last two introduced the students to questions touching on natural rights, religious duties, property, contracts and oaths, family life, the origins of society and government, politics, and civil and international law. Through the teaching of Francis Alison the full sweep of the reconstruction of moral philosophy, in which Hutcheson played such an important initial role, entered the American college at a very early date.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Elizabeth Nybakken “In the Irish Tradition: Pre-Revolutionary Academies in America,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 37 (1997): 171.

²⁴⁵ Nybakken, “In the Irish Tradition: Pre-Revolutionary Academies in America,” 173. In 1752 he accepted a position offered to him by an enthusiast of his work, Benjamin Franklin, to head the Philadelphia Academy (Miller, *Land of Canaan*, 513). Franklin had founded the academy in 1750. By 1755 Franklin’s academy, without doubt under the strong influence of Dr. Alison, became the interdenominational College of Philadelphia, where Alison not only served as Vice Provost but continued to teach as Professor of Moral Philosophy until his death in 1779. The College of Philadelphia is recognized today as the University of Pennsylvania.

²⁴⁶ Douglas Sloan, *The Scottish Enlightenment and American College Ideal* (New York: Teachers College Press at Columbia University, 1971), 91.

Additionally, Alison incorporated a list of controversial topics which he had students analyze and debate. In doing so, Alison, as Hutcheson before him, imparted to students the importance of moral philosophy to their own lives and the practical application of Enlightenment questioning to their personal experience. This remains the most effective mode of stimulating student interest and cognitive comprehension.

The Hutcheson-Alison influence on America was not restricted to education. Dr. Alison was an inspired agitator. Having been born and raised in Ireland, and academically trained in Hutcheson's Moral Philosophy, Alison was acutely aware of the machinations of the British government to suppress colonial rights and the Anglican political power play in both Ireland and America. An ardent political organizer, Alison perceived a replay of British despotism. He became a politically active proponent for freedom of religion and the separation of church and state.

Two events in particular alarmed Alison and incited him to action. In 1764 Pennsylvania Quakers petitioned the English crown to convert the colonial territory into a royal colony. They took this action despite the fact that Sugar and Quartering Acts were being imposed and a lack of judicial procedure regarding customs cases had been exhibited in the same year. Secondly, in 1776 the Anglican clergy of the Middle Colonies petitioned England to appoint an Anglican Bishop to the American colonies. Compounding Alison's misgivings, the Stamp Act should not be forgotten. In addition, he suspected Parliament had plans for revoking colonial charters, for creating peerage in the colonies, and for restricting civil and government offices and positions -- "even

professorships in American colleges -- to members of the Anglican church.”²⁴⁷ Alison felt the threat of a Sacramental Test Act being imposed on American colonies as it had been in Ireland.

Alison feared that if the current colonial administration were to be abolished in Pennsylvania, then Parliament would swiftly revoke William Penn’s 1701 *Charter of Liberties* which granted all settlers of that territory civil and religious freedoms. Dr. Alison was instrumental in organizing a Pennsylvania-based “Presbyterian Party.”²⁴⁸ The Party proved amazingly triumphant in the 1764 elections against the Proprietary Party. Alison, with the assistance of Ezra Stiles, successfully united the Middle Colonies Presbyterians and the New England Congregationalists against the Anglicans. Alison, and those of his mindset, could easily comprehend the consequences of an Anglican Bishop being appointed to America. It meant that the Church of England, British government sanctioned, would by law be the state religion of the colonies. Experience had taught them that state-sponsored religion spawned repression, serving not only to strip nonconforming citizens of their religious rights but also their civic freedoms. For forty years Alison had taught his students that they, and all mankind, had natural and inalienable rights that must be defended absolutely against tyranny, even should the result mean revolt.

In the gathering storm Alison took pen to hand and authored a series of nineteen essays printed as *The Centinel*. Most of the *Centinel*’s essays explained the need for the

²⁴⁷ Miller, *Land of Canaan*, 515.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

separation of church and state. The articles were addressed to all citizens who might possibly experience repression should the Anglican Church gain religious control of the colonies. The essays offered highly effective examples of historical evidence against religious ascendancy. The arguments were composed simply, in an extremely logical manner, easily understood by the general populace. Irish intellectuals had produced compelling arguments against English domination and oppression, whether in Ireland or America. This, coupled with the “Irish capacity for passionate human solidarity,”²⁴⁹ had a profound impact in the development of American ideals. “The persons who left Ireland were not all men of the same political persuasion, but among them were some whose roles in the country they adopted were significant, both in achievement of independence and in drafting new constitutions.”²⁵⁰ Francis Alison was foremost among these contributors.

Pedagogy and rhetoric incited a rebellion. The Irish who landed on America’s shores in the periods preceding and including the eighteenth century carried social and psychological scars which they attributed to England. Education, components of Irish Enlightenment, and the parallels drawn between circumstances under which the Irish had endured for generations contributed to the American colonies rising in rebellion against taxation without representation, mercantilist policies, social inequalities, quartering experiences, and the prospect of additional tyrannical and religious repressions. The degree of impact that Alison’s instruction had on formulating the ideals of young

²⁴⁹ David R. Chestnutt and Clyde N. Wilson, *The Meaning of South Carolina History: Essays in Honor of George C. Rogers, Jr.* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 51.

²⁵⁰ Robbins, *Commonwealthman*, 156.

America was substantial.²⁵¹ In a survey of forty-six, verifiable, former students only five have been counted as Loyalists.²⁵² Alison's training produced Patriots. At least five signers of the Declaration of Independence were his former students: Francis Hopkinson, Thomas McKean, William Paca, George Read, and James Smith. Many others are thought to have been under his tutelage, but no extant evidence survives, whereas long-term correspondence with the aforementioned men is recorded. In addition to the signers of the Declaration of Independence, two of Alison's former students served as Presidents of the Continental Congress and another served as Secretary to that body; three served as Chaplains to the Continental Congress; another was the first Director General of the Medical Service of the Continental Army; one was Secretary for the Continental Board of War; at least four served as generals in the Continental Army; sixteen held offices in the newly independent states; five more received executive posts from the Continental Congress; numerous others participated in the writing of their state constitutions and others played a role in penning the Federal Constitution; one designed the American flag²⁵³; and John Dickinson, Alison's first pupil and his lifelong friend, author of *A Pennsylvania Farmer* essays, is a premier example of the success of Hutcheson-Alison objectives: a moderate, not rash, educated man using his abilities to achieve political and social change for the greater good.

²⁵¹ David Berman, "Irish Philosophy and the American Enlightenment during the Eighteenth-Century," *Eire-Ireland: Journal of Irish Studies* 24 (1999), 24.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

Inciting Change: The Catholic Carrolls, Charles of Annapolis and Charles of Carrollton

Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only Catholic signer of the Declaration of Independence, reflected upon that document fifty years after his signing:

I do hereby recommend to the present and future generations the principles of that important document as the best earthly inheritance their ancestors could have bequeathed to them, and pray that the civil and religious liberties they [the ideals of the Declaration] have secured to my country may be perpetuated to the remotest posterity and extend to the whole family of man.²⁵⁴

Civil and religious liberties ... secured to my country -- the political agenda of Charles Carroll of Carrollton (1737-1832) and his father Charles Carroll of Annapolis (1702-1782)²⁵⁵ had not, initially, been so far-reaching as to contemplate the founding of a nation. They had hoped, however, that civil and religious liberties would be restored to their country – the colony of Maryland. Although Maryland had been founded as a refuge for Catholics, the politics of religion had eradicated that vision. As Catholics the Carrolls had been restricted from political participation. Their forebears, the O’Carrolls of Ireland, had been a powerful and prestigious Catholic family, but their refusal to reject their faith had left them vulnerable to persecution when the English government stripped adherents of liberties. It was particularly galling for Charles Carroll of Annapolis to be

²⁵⁴ Kate Mason Rowland, *The Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 1737-1832: with His Correspondence and Public Papers, Volume II* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1898), i.

²⁵⁵ Ronald Hoffman, Sally D. Mason, and Eleanor S. Darcy, eds., *Dear Papa, Dear Charley: The Peregrinations of a Revolutionary Aristocrat, as Told by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and His Father, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, with Sundry Observations on Bastardy, Child-Rearing, Romance, Matrimony, Commerce, Tobacco, Slavery, and the Politics of Revolutionary America, Volumes I, II, and III* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), xlvii.

denied civil liberties because he was a Catholic when few could question his intelligence or integrity and, in his own words “but one man in the Province whose Fortune” equaled his own.²⁵⁶ Without the right to vote, one’s political voice was quite curtailed. His fortune offered him some protection, but neither he nor any other Catholic was allowed to hold a public office. They could not serve civically, judicially, or militarily. It was unlawful for Catholic offspring to be educated to an advanced degree. Sending children to Europe for elucidation was technically illegal although charges and fines were rarely enforced in eighteenth century Maryland. Naturally, Charles of Annapolis wanted better for his son, but there was more to the matter: it was the injustice. Charles Carroll of Annapolis, hereafter referred to as Charles of Annapolis, and his son Charles Carroll of Carrollton,²⁵⁷ hereafter referred to as Carrollton, were each other’s closest confidantes; they were lifelong best friends, business partners, and extremely effective political allies. And, just as their father-son relationship evolved and expanded to include political as well as religious and intellectual issues, their objectives transitioned from common good for family and co-worshipping community to the greater good of State, and then a Nation founded on principles of civil, natural, and religious rights.

For the Carrolls, “family” was a political issue. Charles Carroll, known as the Settler (1660-1720) for being the first of his line established in Maryland, arrived to the colony in 1688 with a commission as Attorney General and a revised motto on his family

²⁵⁶ Hoffman, ed., *DPDC*, 32, July 26, 1756.

²⁵⁷ It is for ease of clarity that this study refers to Charles Carroll of Carrollton simply as Carrollton. He did not, in actuality, adopt the designate “Carrollton” to his name until his return to Annapolis from Europe in January 1765.

crest, “Anywhere so long as there be freedom.”²⁵⁸ In 1691 his refusal to renounce his religion cost him his government position and prohibited him from practicing law. Seeds of generational resentment were sown. The Settler’s son, Charles of Annapolis, funneled his antipathy into surpassing his father’s fortune, which originated from financially advantageous marriages, and made profitable investments. The death of his father, however, required Charles of Annapolis to return from France before completing his legal studies. He keenly felt a lack of accomplishment from not finishing his law degree, but it was a personal, psychological sense of deficiency that had no detrimental effect on his affairs, financial or otherwise. When Carrollton informed his father of his distaste for the study of law,²⁵⁹ his disgust for London and the system of patronage,²⁶⁰ and his desire to return to Maryland without securing a law degree, Charles of Annapolis responded in a manner that indicated a clear political mind-set: expectations of loyalty to faith, family and friends, and goals. He relayed to Carrollton his opinion on the importance of studying the law in order to understand, and thus protect, oneself and one’s property, but “On the other hand how commendable is it for a Gent[leman]: of an Independent fortune ... to be able to advise & assist his friends, Relations & Neighbors of all sorts, ... Suppose you sh[oul]d be called upon to act in any publick Character [capacity] ? ... I do

²⁵⁸ The Charles Carroll House Museum, <http://www.charlescarrollhouse.com/history.shtml>.

²⁵⁹ A professional education in law was not available in the colonies until The College of William and Mary designated the degree as part of their curriculum under American’s first Professor of Law, George Wythe, in 1779. Prior to that date one was “trained at law” by an established lawyer.

²⁶⁰ Positions were granted on the basis of connections, not based on integrity, intelligence, ambition, or good intentions but primarily on personal greed.

not send you to the Temple²⁶¹ to spend (as many do) 4 or 5 Years to no purpose, I send you to Study & Labour, ... nihil nisi bene (nothing but well-done).”²⁶² Catholics were still banned from practicing law but Charles of Annapolis perceived a connection between achieving a law degree, as an opportunity for public service, and as a means to reestablishing the family’s stolen prestige. His letter, and many previous and subsequent, extolled the history of Irish Catholics.

Oliver Cromwell’s (1599-1658) campaign against Catholics in Ireland was ethnic cleansing.²⁶³ Under Cromwell’s regime, 1642-1651, in the years following the English Civil War,²⁶⁴ persecutions of Catholics, especially those in Ireland, drastically increased. Some Irish Catholics converted to the Protestant Church of Ireland in order to maintain or gain economic, political, or social advantages – and literal survival. Another alternative was emigration to the colonies. Maryland was a primary site for Catholic immigration. The proprietorship colony, chartered by Charles I on June 20, 1632 to Cecilius Calvert, Baron of Baltimore, had been established as a refuge for Catholics and other refugees of religious persecution, where Catholics and Protestants could live together in *mutuall* [sic] *love and amity*.²⁶⁵ It was the most religiously tolerant colony²⁶⁶ until Oliver Cromwell

²⁶¹ The Inner Temple and Middle Temple refer to two of the Inns of Court where one trained for the legal profession and lodged. The Inns of Court, of which four exist, had the exclusive right to permit persons to practice law. The physical area is located in central London near the Royal Courts of Justice.

²⁶² Hoffman, ed., *DPDC*, 32.

²⁶³ John Cannon, ed., *The Oxford Companion to British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 261-3.

²⁶⁴ The English Civil War of 1642-1646.

²⁶⁵ Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 69.

and his Parliamentarians usurped government from, and executed, Charles I in the English Civil War. Henceforth Catholics were stripped of their civil and religious rights. The Cromwells' (Oliver had named his son Richard as his successor) Puritanical Protectorate failed and the Stuart monarchy was restored. The coronation of Charles II (1630-1685) in 1660 led to a peaceful period for Maryland's Catholics until William and Mary's Glorious Revolution of 1688 wreaked religious havoc on non-Protestants. In 1695 a collection of discriminatory codes against all non-Anglicans, but especially directed toward the Roman Catholic majority in Ireland, were adopted.

Regardless of the label applied, Penal Laws, Popish Codes, or Papist Codes served a single objective: the annihilation of a specific cultural identity, Roman Catholics. As noted in Chapter I of this study but worthy of reiteration, Irish Catholics were forbidden to teach or operate facilities for learning, and it was against the law for them to send their children abroad for edification. They were prohibited from owning, manufacturing, or selling weapons, books, or newspapers. Catholics could not own a horse worth more than £ 5. The codes forbade Catholics from purchasing land or renting land worth more than thirty shillings or for longer than thirty-one years. Catholic estates had to be divided between all of the sons of the deceased, not entailed (bequeathed to one child) to retain acreage. Laws disenfranchised Catholics. They could not hold public office, sit in Parliament, practice law, or hold military posts. Protestant heiresses who married Catholics were to be disinherited. Catholic Bishops were banished from Ireland,

²⁶⁶ Michael Graham, "Meetinghouse and Chapel: Religion and Community in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in Lois Green Carr, Philip Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds. *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 242-76.

and priests were limited to one per parish. Irish-Catholic orphans were to be raised in Protestant households, and thus, submit to that faith. The purpose of such penalties was to create a people too ignorant, too poor, and too unequipped to raise resistance. Codes created an overwhelmingly poor, oppressed and resentful people. The last Papist Code was not repealed in Ireland until after Catholic Emancipation in 1829.²⁶⁷

In Maryland, however, Catholics managed to survive, and even thrive, under less repressive conditions. It is estimated that during the seventeenth century, three-fourths of the emigrants from Ireland were Catholics.²⁶⁸ The majority of those made passage as indentured servants (or redemptioner), trading between three and seven years of labor (indentureship) for the price of passage.²⁶⁹ The lives of indentured servants were often brutish and short. Many of the Maryland Catholics who survived their “seasoning,” or adjustment to the Chesapeake climate, and their period of indenture, many became productive members of society: farmers, planters, crafts persons, and paid servants. They acclimated themselves well enough to form a tiny but vibrant and visible artisan and merchant middle class,²⁷⁰ and their upper-class construct is one of their most distinctive features in eighteenth century America.²⁷¹ Although a minority Maryland, Catholics

²⁶⁷ Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 48.

²⁶⁸ Kerby A. Miller, et. al., *Exiles and Immigrants: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 131-168.

²⁶⁹ Hoffman, ed., *DPDC*, 506;

²⁷⁰ Miller, *Exiles and Immigrants*, 144. Miller also noted that middle class Catholics in Maryland, for the most part, resided in seaport towns and cities.

²⁷¹ Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience*, 79.

possessed more wealth than their Protestant neighbors and owned larger and more valuable estates, which made them a target of envy.²⁷²

Colonial Catholics regarded their religion as a private matter, usually, compartmenting it from their public and professional lives while maintaining their practices and beliefs within their families and religious community. Most American Catholics supported the legal separation of church and state. It would allow their entry into local and national politics, grant the right to retain their religious heritage, suspend double-taxation, and, most importantly, prevent one religion from seizing all political, economic, military, judicial, and civil power as the Anglican Church of England had done in Ireland. Their embrace of Enlightenment created democratization in American Catholicism, an Americanized version of the faith which developed separate and independent loyalties: one to faith and family, the other to nation (or community or state). Religion and statecraft functioned completely independently of each other.

From the moment of his son's birth Charles of Annapolis actively guided Carrollton's development. Advanced education was a family tradition. In 1748, ten-year-old Carrollton was sent to the English Jesuit College at St. Omer's,²⁷³ in Flanders (modern Belgium), to be educated by English Jesuits (the Catholic religious order of the

²⁷² Miller, *Exiles and Immigrants*, 131-168.

²⁷³ St. Omer's, founded in 1593 by Father Richard Persons, purpose was "to circumvent penal laws that prohibited Roman Catholics from establishing schools in England." By 1614 the school was run "entirely by English Jesuits." The college relocated to Lancashire, England and is now known as Stonyhurst College. Hoffman, *DPDC*, 5.

Jesuits are members of the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola. Long associated with pedagogy, the Jesuit aim has traditionally been to train students intellectually, spiritually, and athletically to produce confident, spirited individuals.

Society of Jesus) for six years. The correspondence of the elder Charles during this period provides evidence of his expectations and early emphasis on the common good, which at the time was directed toward family and friends.²⁷⁴

Dear Child I long to see you, but I did not send you so far only to learn a little Greek and Latin, [I expect you to] ... lay a foundation for other Studies which may hereafter be profitable to your Self and useful to Your Friends ... keep in the Paths of Trust and Virtue ... [your] ambition to excel at Virtue and Learning is laudable.²⁷⁵

Charles of Annapolis also indicated his anticipation of improvement in any areas he considered his son lacking: “You have now read Cicero’s Epistles and are reading his Orations, & therefore I hope to find you improved in the Stile [style] of your Letters.”²⁷⁶

It was while studying under the Jesuits at St. Omer’s that Carrollton was introduced to and inspired by enlightened ideals. He read the neo-Thomist²⁷⁷ philosophy of Jesuit political thinkers that predated the works of Hobbes and Locke. The texts of Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), Juan de Mariana (1536-1624), and Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), independently and with great diversity readdressed concepts of Thomas Aquinas regarding the divine duty of kings versus the divine right; a monarch’s duty to encourage virtue in his subjects and thus in society; the promotion of the “Christian commonwealth”;²⁷⁸ and the assertion that one had the right, even the duty, to resist

²⁷⁴ The year was 1753 and Carrollton was fifteen years of age.

²⁷⁵ Hoffman, *DPDC*, 21, October 10, 1753.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 19, October 9, 1753.

²⁷⁷ Scholars who specialized in the literature of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

tyranny.²⁷⁹ Carrollton was sixteen in 1754 when he completed his education at St. Omer's. It had long been obvious that Charles of Annapolis anticipated more from his son than just an ability to manage a large estate. Although his father communicated love and praise for his son, he also expressed desire for Carrollton's future greatness:

My Affection toward you is greatly increased by the most agreeable Acco[un]ts I receive of your Pious, Prudent and Regular behaviour, of your sweet temper and disposition and the proficiency and Figure [progress] you make in your Studies which gives me the strongest Reason to hope that you will in the Course of your Life no less *distinguish your Self among men* [historian's emphasis] than you have hitherto done among your School Fellows. *Initium Sapientiae timor Domini* (the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord).²⁸⁰

The message was clear to Carrollton: continue in the path set by his father.

Carrollton spent 1755 under the tutelage of French Jesuits at the College of Rheims and completed his master's degree in universal philosophy at the College of Louis le Grand, in Paris, in 1757.²⁸¹ Both locations prompted instructions for honorable and moral behavior from his father: "This [letter] will find you at Rheims where ... you will ... enjoy a greater degree of Liberty than you have hitherto had, I trust you will use it with ... discretion ... that your conduction will be instructive and edifying to your

²⁷⁸ See Introduction of this study, 13; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* (III.123).

²⁷⁹ Bradley J. Birzer, *American Cicero: The Life of Charles Carroll* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books), 11-14. Also see Francis Hutcheson and Irish Enlightenment in Chapter III section 1 of this work.

²⁸⁰ Hoffman, ed., *DPDC*, 33-36, July 26, 1756.

Initium Sapientiae timor Domini translation "'The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord.' PS. 110:10."

²⁸¹ Hoffman, ed., *DPDC*, 2.

Schoolfellows.”²⁸² The elder Charles continued, “Do not let anyone lead you into any Action inconsistent with probity, Honour, your Duty to God and your Superiors whose Friendship and good Will I am certain you will study [endeavor] to deserve.”²⁸³ Study in Paris induced a more candid warning from Charles of Annapolis, as the city was aptly known as a den of vice, especially during the reign of Louis XV.

My D[ea]r Child I cannot close this long letter without cautioning you in particular ag[ain]st any familiarities with Women especially Women of the Town [prostitutes] avoid them as you would a Rattle Snake ... if the more noble & pure Sentiments of Virtue & Duty should fail to keep you innocent, let regard to y[ou]r health deter you from a Crime w[hi]ch may in this world make you most miserable [from venereal disease]. Y[ou]r Mother & I offer our daily prayers to the God of Mercies to avert all Dangers from you ...²⁸⁴

The following day Charles of Annapolis reiterated his moral and principled warning prose: “You can only rely on God’s grace; y[ou]r own prudence & the good principles instilled into you by a virtuous Education. I beg you will never fail daily & sincerely to implore the first without w[hi]ch the other two can be of no Service.”²⁸⁵ This time he had invoked faith and a *virtuous Education* to keep “Charley” on the straight and narrow by referring directly to Carrollton’s scholarly and, in this case primarily, religious instruction from the Jesuits. In 1758 Carrollton studied Civil Law in France. He later left Paris to continue his legal studies in London in 1759. Charles of Annapolis continued to

²⁸² Hoffman, *DPDC*, 26-28, September 30, 1754.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 26-28, September 30, 1754.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 131, October 5, 1759.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 128, October 6, 1759.

instruct his son on personal qualities, honorable behavior, deportment, frugality, proper attire for a gentleman of his caliber (quality of cloth but simple and modest in design), and even appropriate hair styling. Charles of Annapolis was determined that Carrollton would be a refined, academically achieved, and supremely principled individual.

As Carrollton gained intellectual maturity the correspondence between father and son broadened to include scholarly topics. They discussed Cicero and other classical authors and philosophers. They explored Voltaire's work. Carrollton was particularly attracted to the philosophical essays written by David Hume²⁸⁶ (former student of, and highly influenced by, the moral philosophy of Francis Hutcheson, the Irish father of Scottish Enlightenment). For reasons not yet fully evaluated, Carrollton refrained from Locke, the tone of his prose inflected with disdain when he informed his father that he need not purchase the English philosopher's published works for him.²⁸⁷

Carrollton's correspondence to his father, particularly during his study of law, illustrates his developing political attitudes and an intellectual equalization progressing between the two men. The threat of penal code re-enforcement and unfair taxation in Maryland encouraged a more intense discussion of politics between son and father. Charles of Annapolis relayed, "Tho we are threatened with the introduction of the English Penal Laws into this Province, they are not yet introduced, But last May a Law

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 68, February 11, 1758.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 87-90, November 7, 1758.

pass'd here to double Tax the Lands of all the Rom[an] Cath[olic]s.”²⁸⁸ He explicated in a letter dated July 14, 1760, that:

Benedict L[or]d Baltimore upon conforming to the Established Church [Anglican, Church of England] in the year 1714 was Restored to his Governm[e]nt & died the same year, his Son Char[les], Lord Baltimore ... succeeded [his father] and coerced by the threat of insurgence by insolent Rabble [Protestants] invoked a Test Act in 1715. From that time to the Year 1751 we were unmolested, but then the Penal Laws of England were attempted to be [re]introduced here [Maryland] ... in 1756 an Act was passed to double Tax us [Catholics].²⁸⁹

Charles of Annapolis was frustrated, alienated, and felt a sincere threat to his property. He had informed Carrollton, in July 1756, that as much as he loved his beautiful lands and the climate in Maryland he was prepared to sell everything he owned, at a loss, in order to escape the “Envy and Malice and [to] procure a good establishment for You[,] I am willing to undergo the struggle with all the difficulties and inconveniences attending on a new Settlement in a new Climate.”²⁹⁰ He strongly considered relocation to Louisiana, on the Arkansas River, or even France. In June 1758 Carrollton inquired if his father was still determined to sell his lands, and if so had he received any offers. He

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 33-34n 6. “By this time the animosity between Protestants and Roman Catholics had been an unpleasant characteristic of provincial life in Maryland for nearly a century. Despite the fact the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the subsequent establishment of the Protestant succession to the British throne gave Maryland Protestants the political hegemony they had long sought, they never rested easily in their triumph. Even the exclusion of Roman Catholics from the political life of the colony after 1718 through the combined efforts of Gov. John Hart and the lower house of the assembly was not enough to allay the distrust and suspicion of the Protestant power structure, and anti-Catholic legislation appeared more or less routinely on the agenda of the lower house in succeeding years.” Also, *DPDC*, 28-36, July 26, 1756.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

questioned if their enemies in Maryland (the Protestants) “still continue to persecute us? The injustice and ungratefulness quite surprises me: what have we done to deserve such treatment from them?”²⁹¹ He asked again in November 1758, and for the first time, offered an opinion: “Are you still firmly resolved to leave Maryland, where will you go to be better off? If I dared to counsel you a moment, I would tell you not to do anything: or at least wait Until affairs are clearer, and the troubles in Europe calmed.”²⁹² It was the first time Carrollton offered “counsel” to his father, but certainly not the last.

Carrollton’s rising indignation and clear self-identification with Irish Catholic oppression became apparent in December 1759 in his criticism of Parliament:

I can’t conceive how any Roman Catholick especially an Irish Roman Catholick can consent to Live in England or any the British dominions, if he is able to do otherwise. It is true we are quiet and unmolested at present, because the reigning king is not prejudiced against us: but the most *tyrannical laws are still subsisting* [historian’s emphasis], they can be put into execution to day[,] tomorrow, whenever it shall please the King for the Parliament wou’d always readily comply with such a demand.²⁹³

In February 1760, he referred to his country, Maryland, as separate from that of England. Noting that his father was still inclined toward leaving the colony, Carrollton projected a voice of moderation and cautioned patience. It becomes obvious that the two men balanced each other’s strengths and that they were aware of that fact. In true political

²⁹¹ Ibid., 70, July 26, 1756.

²⁹² Ibid., 88, November 7, 1758.

²⁹³ Ibid., 140, December 10, 1759.

friendship fashion there existed thoughtful consideration of advice and influence of one partner on the actions of the other:

I must own you have great reason to be displeased with the people [officials]: yet as much as I can learn concerning the country [Maryland] ut sic (“as much”), you won’t be able to exchange it for a better, and as the people become more civilized [enlightened] we may reasonably hope that their prejudices and animosity will wear off with time. We suffer at present in Maryland for our religion, that same religion exposes us in England to the very same oppression, which tho’ not openly exercised, even suspended for the present may break out a new whenever our government thinks proper. If you repair [relocate] to France there *you will only exchange religious for civil Tyranny, and In my opinion of the two [the latter is] the greatest evil* [historian’s emphasis].²⁹⁴

The threat of religious and civil tyranny could not be erased simply by relocating.

Wherever they went they would be exposed to one or both. The motto of the American Carrolls, “Anywhere so long as there is freedom,” had not been realized. Their best hope was a change in social perception and perhaps a constitutional revolution.

A change in our constitution is I think at hand. Our dear-bought Liberty stands upon the brink of destruction. Is such a change to be wished for by Roman Catholicks? They enjoy great peace and tranquility under his present Majesty. I mean in England. They may perhaps enjoy the same hereafter in Maryland: but men’s minds and dispositions in that country must undergo a great change, before so favourable a revolution can happen.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 149-50, February 20, 1760.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 146, January 29, 1760.

Carrollton was exhibiting a freethinking politically independent position that was thoughtful, insightful, and well written. He had become the man of his father's expectations.

Charles of Annapolis and his son Carrollton became a politically active alliance. The father gave his son his first assignment in 1759. If, while studying in London, Carrollton ever found himself in the company of the current Lord Baltimore or the Lord's uncle Cecilius Calvert he might:

let them know that you are not unacquainted that y[ou]r Grand Father came to this Country [Maryland] after a Regular Study of the Law in the Temple [as] Attorney General, that he was hon[ore]d with the Posts of Agent, Receiver General, Judge in Land Affairs, Naval Officer, ... that after he had served 3 L[or]d Baltimores for many years with Credit and Reputation [distinction] he was deprived by the late L[or]d of his Posts to gratify a faction whose aim was to devest the family of their Government: you may also let them know that you are not ignorant of the Laws made at that time & lately to deprive the Rom: Catholicks of their liberties ...²⁹⁶

In addition, Charles of Annapolis urged Carrollton to “remember the ill treatment of y[ou]r Grand Father ... remember the cruel usage of the Rom: Catholicks by the late & present L[or]d Baltimore, & let that so weigh with you as never to Sacrifice y[ou]r own or y[ou]r Country's Int[erest] ...”²⁹⁷ His message to his son was clear: do not forget the past or injustices done to family and his religion, and remember that America was their country. Carrollton had already decided that “Religious persecution, I own, is bad, but civil persecution is still more irksome: the one is quite insupportable, the other is

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 130, October 5, 1759; also see letter dated September 9, 1761

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 130, October 5, 1759; also see letter dated September 9, 1761.

alleviated by superior motives ... where that greatest blessing civil liberty is enjoyed...”²⁹⁸ By this time their concept of “country” had transformed from Maryland to America. Carrollton was actually ahead of most American revolutionaries when he declared in November 1763 that “in time it [America] will & must be independent.”²⁹⁹ Carrollton returned to Maryland early in 1765, after having been in Europe for sixteen years. His relationship with his father had already evolved to incorporate another category of friendship, a political friendship.

The Stamp Act in 1765 fired the Carrolls’ indignation, but they were still political outsiders. They saw Parliament’s taxation policies on the colonies as acts to gain economic relief from deficits caused by Parliamentary corruption. Carrollton recognized the possibility of united colonies and found it inexplicable that Parliament could contemplate forced policy compliance. “Nothing can overcome the aversion of the people to the Stamp Act, and their love of liberty, but an armed force ... Can England, surrounded with powerful enemies, distracted with intestine factions, encumbered and almost staggering under the immense load of debt ... send out such a powerful army to deprive a free people, their fellow-subjects, of their rights and liberties?”³⁰⁰ Carrollton’s preference was to incorporate methods other than violence. For example, he advocated monetary impact through embargos and boycotts and agitation through print and publication. The opportunity for Carroll political activism in colonial politics arose

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 193, January 1, 1761.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 337-38, November 12, 1763.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., 382, September 30, 1765.

during Maryland's "fee controversy." With the same spirit and determination exhibited by his father, whose preference was face-to-face confrontation, Carrollton composed his attack on injustice.

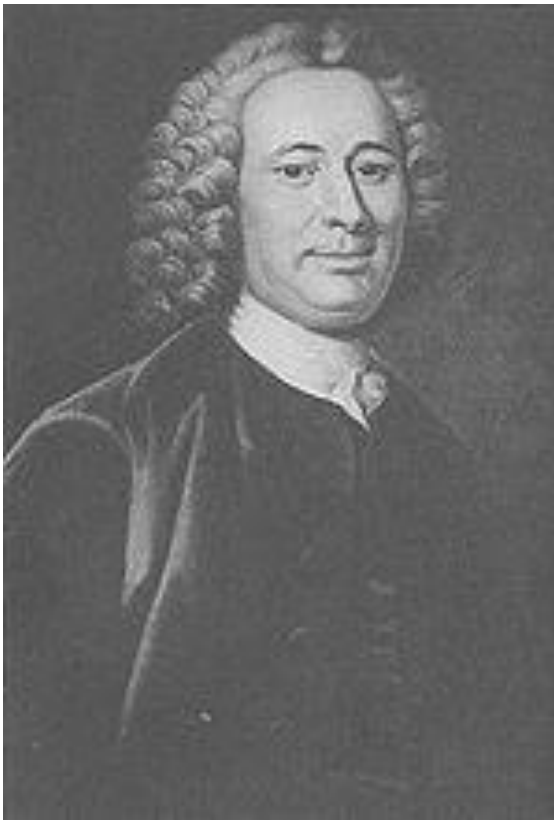


Figure 11. Charles Carroll of Annapolis.
Maryland Artsource
http://www.marylandartsources.org/artists/detail_000000071.html



Figure 12. Charles of Carrollton,
U.S. Capitol Building.



Figure 13. Carroll House in Annapolis, Maryland.
Hometown Annapolis, <http://hometownannapolis.com>



Figure 14. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, by Michael Laty, 1846.
Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

In the years preceding the American Revolution, Marylanders had been immersed in their own set of issues against their Proprietary government.³⁰¹ Proprietary officials (who often received their posts through nepotism) charged exorbitant fees, and all Marylanders – regardless of religious affiliation -- were required to pay a “poll tax” which supported clergy members of the Anglican Church of England. It had been derisively tolerated since shortly after the Glorious Revolution (1688). A legislative compromise reached in 1747 had combined the fee schedule of officials and the poll tax into the less contentious Tobacco Inspection Law. The law expired in 1770 and the tax reverted to a previous higher rate. Discord ensued. It became known as “the fee controversy.” Most Marylanders seethed, many retaliated, and some put their pens to paper.

Carrollton was a particularly brilliant writer. When Daniel Dulany, of Protestant Irish descendency, defended the Proprietary position in an essay published in the *Maryland Gazette*, on January 7, 1773, it was the moment the Carrolls had awaited. The eruption was a reverberating echo from acrimonies past. Dulany’s approach attempted a Socratic-style reasoning between the fictional characters of “First” and “Second” Citizens. The imaginary First’s position was opposition to fee proclamation, but patient and erudite “Second Citizen” explained to fictional and confused “First’s” the latter’s

³⁰¹ Proprietary governments were grants of land titled in the name, or names, of the proprietors. These individuals had vast powers: they could make laws, create courts, appoint officials, etc., and were most often hereditary. Proprietors collected taxes or quitrents annually on properties they had leased or sold. Maryland’s propriety family were the Calverts, Lords Baltimore. The colony was founded in 1632. The Glorious Revolution in 1688 revoked the Catholic Calverts’ proprietorship. William and Mary appointed a royal governor until May 1715 when the fourth Lord Baltimore converted to Anglicanism and the family’s proprietorship was restored.

errors. It was at this point that Carrollton entered the debate, under the pseudonym mantle of “First Citizen” -- a real “First Citizens” rather than Dulany’s imaginary dolt. Carrollton as “First Citizen” blazed a red-hot response that was printed in the February 4th edition of the paper. Not surprisingly, he sent drafts of his work to his father before submitting them to the press. They were a team. The debate, which continued in six issues from winter through the spring 1773 with Dulany writing under the pseudonym “Antilon” instead of “Second Citizen,” was one of the historically great disputes regarding constitutional principles. The discussion excited and engaged the public. Marylanders waited anxiously for the next installment. Charles of Annapolis relayed to his son that people “retiered [retired] to their Lodgeings[,] Many to private places (to avoid interruption) to read it, that the Publick houses were that night as quiet as privates Ones, [and] that next morning every mouth was open in praise of 1st Citizen.”³⁰² Dulany had miscalculated the effect of his anti-Catholic diatribes as “Antilon.” Public sentiments and Carrollton’s skill diminished the emphasis that had formerly been placed on his religious adherence. “When the anti-Catholic attacks on First Citizen in the press failed to arouse the public, Papa [Charles of Annapolis] sensed that a new day might be coming, and with consummate skill he positioned the son he had so painstakingly shaped to take full advantage of its opportunities.”³⁰³

Charles Carroll of Carrollton was elected to the Second Maryland Convention, November 1774, in effect ending the law banning Maryland Catholics from political

³⁰²Hoffman, *DPDC*, 662-63, March 17, 1773.

³⁰³ Ronald Hoffman, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500-1782* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000), 293.

office. Within months of his “First Citizen” publications he was catapulted into positions of political leadership, his success opening the door for talented others previously excluded from civic participation. He served in the Continental Congress from 1776-1778. In early 1776 he was selected as a commissioner to Canada, seeking aid from Catholic Quebec for the American Revolution. He was elected to the Maryland State Senate from 1777-1800 and served in the United States Senate from 1789-1792. Civil and religious liberties remained his primary platforms: “To obtain religious, as well as civil liberty, I entered zealously into the Revolution ...”.³⁰⁴ Religious intolerance did not cease because Carrollton was elected to office. It remained an issue to be fought for decades, but Carrollton’s achievement was truly a momentous step.

Carrollton’s rise in participatory politics required preparation, and timing too had been essential. Charles Carroll of Annapolis did not, and could not, have foreseen a period of time so ripe for reshaping politics. When he cultivated his son’s intellectual abilities and prompted him toward an honorable and virtuous character, Charles of Annapolis had sought to retain wealth, regain prestige, and protect family and religious community. Along the way he shaped his most effective political ally. Of course, father and son did not consistently agree, politically or otherwise, but they were always partners in interests beyond than themselves, toward a greater good. It was a devoted relationship of unparalleled political success in the era.

³⁰⁴ Rowland, *The Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton*, 357-58. Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Reverend John Sandford, October 9, 1827; Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty and Christianity, Volume 10, No. 6., 2009; Birzer, *American Cicero*, 173.

Fighting for Citizenship: The Jewish Sheftalls, Mordecai and Levi

Mordecai and Levi Sheftall, brothers, business partners, religious and community leaders, and Patriots, lost nearly everything they owned in their support of the American Revolution. Although born and raised in Savannah and obviously white men of European descent, they were forced to fight for citizenship in post-war Georgia because they were Jewish. Partners and best friends throughout life, injustice prompted their concentrated efforts for political inclusion.

The Sheftall brothers, Mordecai (1735-1797) and Levi (1739-1809), were an active team for personal and public advancement. Their father Benjamin, a Prussian-born Jew, and his wife Perla had arrived at Savannah from London in 1733.³⁰⁵ The senior Sheftalls were noted by their contemporaries as charitable, ethical, hardworking and modest people, who held firm to their Judaism. The brothers, beginning life with practically nothing, began purchasing lots and land in 1755, together and separately, in downtown Savannah and surrounding counties. It is difficult to discern their partnership investments from their independent ventures. Both were merchants, deeply involved in commerce. Owning 1000 acres of pine forest, they established and managed a sawmill. On additional acreage they bred cattle and operated a tannery business. Levi was also a butcher.³⁰⁶ In addition he supplied Colonial Georgia Agents, later U.S. Agents, to Native

³⁰⁵ The Sheftall brothers were actually half-brothers. Perla, Mordecai's mother, died the year following his birth. Benjamin Sheftall married Hannah Solomon in 1738, approximately two years after Perla's death. Levi was born one year after the marriage of Benjamin and Hannah. Levi Sheftall Diary, Keith Read Collection, University of Georgia, Athens; Levi Sheftall *Memoirs*, unpublished, Keith Read Collection, University of Georgia, Athens.

³⁰⁶ David T. Morgan, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (1973): 348-353.

Americans.³⁰⁷ Both outfitted American forces early in the Revolution. The brothers also owned numerous slaves as did most wealthy southern men. Slaveholding was not deliberated as right or wrong but was viewed as an economic measure. Mordecai and Levi were civically active, publically aware, and well respected by most Savannahians.

In religion and politics Mordecai appears to have been the more active leader of the two. It was probably a pattern set early in life; Mordecai was the elder by four years. He was recognized as a religious leader by Savannah's small six-family Jewish community. Levi, too, was closely connected with the Mickve Israel Synagogue which they initially helped establish in Mordecai's house and re-established in 1790. Both brothers were involved in the founding of the Jewish Cemetery, which had proven a contentious struggle against the Anglican hierarchy that sought influence over colonial affairs.³⁰⁸ The brothers were great benefactors to establishing the arts in Savannah. Levi, conscientiously, scheduled theatre performances in order that they not interfere with the Jewish Sabbath or Christian services. In addition, Mordecai cofounded, with Richard Milledge, an Anglican, and Peter Tondee, as a Catholic who was legally prohibited from residing in Georgia but managed to do so seemingly unharassed none the less, the Union Society for charitable works. Their initial project was the establishment of Bethesda, the

³⁰⁷ "Southeastern Native American Document, 1730-1842," Digital Library of Georgia, <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/Collections>

³⁰⁸ Levi Sheftall Diary; Sheftall *Memoirs*; *Sheftall Family Paper*; B. H. Levy, *Mordecai Sheftall*, 96-100.

first orphanage in British North America.³⁰⁹ Long before the impact of enlightened principles on American society, the brothers contributed to, and firmly believed in, common good.

“Although few in number, the Jews not only rose to the highest levels of Georgia society, but became leaders in the province’s political life.”³¹⁰ In the summer of 1775, Mordecai was named Chairman of the Parochial Committee established in Savannah. Levi served the committee which was comparable to the Committees of Safety in other colonies. Their tasks were to prevent English ships from unloading their cargos and to enforce the American boycott of British goods. Mordecai was appointed Commissary General of Purchases and Issues to the Georgia Militia. Levi assisted. Both brothers proved ardent Patriots early in the conflict and eventually sacrificed all their wealth to the American cause. When the British routed Savannah, Mordecai and his son, Sheftall (indeed, his name was Sheftall Sheftall) were captured. Mordecai was a prisoner of war from December 1778 through July of 1780; his son’s imprisonment was longer. Levi had escaped, “traveling north,” and was, for an extended period of time, unable to contact his family for fear of endangering them or revealing himself, apparently moving around the Carolina and Virginia backcountry.³¹¹ At some point he fell under British control. It is unclear whether he accepted amnesty from the British in 1780, as a tactic to protect his

³⁰⁹ William Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654-1800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 156.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 158.

³¹¹ Sheftall Family Papers, Frances Hart Sheftall to her husband Mordecai Sheftall on the prison ship “Nancy.” Georgia Historical Society, Savannah Georgia.

property or his person. It is doubtful, according to evidence available, that he actually became a Tory sympathizer. Regardless, Levi was denounced as a Tory by Patriots and as a Patriot by the Tories. In 1782 he was banished from Georgia. With Mordecai's assistance the judgment was subsequently retracted, and Levi returned to Savannah in 1785.³¹²

In 1784-85, Mordecai and Levi became embroiled in Georgia's political debate over which ethnicities and religions would be guaranteed rights of citizenship.³¹³ That their status as equal citizens was even questioned must have been offensive and disappointing. Before the war they had actively contributed time, energy and funds for the promotion of the greater good for their community. Unfortunately, their support of the United States in the War for Independence cost them their fortunes, and each lost years of personal liberty as a result of their war participation. While the Georgia Legislature was debating the issue, a man of white and Native American parentage brought suit against Mordecai, charging that half-white Christians should be entitled to rights before a "full-blooded Jew."³¹⁴ The case went to the Georgia Supreme Court, where the decision was made in favor of Mordecai. While the issue was fermenting about society an anti-Semitic pamphlet circulated around Savannah. Titled "Cursory Remarks on Men and Measures in Georgia" authored by "Citizen." "Citizen" argued against Jews having political rights because they lacked "modesty and decorum" and

³¹² Levi Sheftall Diary; Levi Sheftall *Memoirs*; B. H. Levy, *Mordecai Sheftall* 96-100; Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America, 1654-1800*, 150-165; Morgan, "The Sheftalls of Savannah," (1973): 348-361.

³¹³ For additional details see Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles in Early America*, 166-73.

³¹⁴ Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles*, 166.

were a race of “despised and unhappy people.”³¹⁵ “Citizen” cited, as primary offenses, the Georgia Jews’ penchant for serving as “volunteers upon every public occasion ... even having the audacity to pass [pretending to be white] as jurors upon the life and death of the freeman on trial.”³¹⁶ Jewish inclusion, the “Citizen” contended, would lead to Christianity becoming “a capital heresy, the synagogue [would] become the established church, and the mildness of the New Testament compelled to give place to the ferocity and severity of the Old.”³¹⁷

Mordecai and Levi wasted little time in responding to the bigotry of the “Citizen” pamphlet which sought to rob them of their United States citizenship. Working in concert, the brothers responded to the anti-Semitic sentiments by publishing an essay in the *Georgia Gazette* on January 13, 1785. Both Levi and Mordecai have been separately credited with authorship. The handwriting of the draft is consistent with Levi’s, but the sentiments recorded are reflective of both men as illustrated in their correspondence with others. The “Citizen” had not mentioned the brothers specifically but there was little doubt in Savannah as to who his target was. Writing under the pseudonym “A Real Citizen,” the Sheftalls confronted allegations against Mordecai and decried a “co-partnered” collusion between those who brought the case against him and the author called “Citizen.”³¹⁸ They challenged accusations of Levi being a traitor and contended

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ As cited in Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles*, 167.

the “Citizen” had been a Loyalist throughout the war, citing evidence that said “Citizen” of had profited from the theft of Patriot- owned property as “reward ” for his “friendship ” with Tories.³¹⁹ The “Real Citizen” claimed the “Citizen” was a “deserter of his Country’s Cause.”³²⁰ It seems there was more going on behind the scenes than anti-Semitism. We can safely assume that using racism had been a means to another end, probably prompted by financial contention. The Sheftalls faced their adversaries squarely and publicly, unlike the pamphlet that had circulated “*under the cover of night*” [underground].³²¹ Why, questioned the “Real Citizen” should “*a whole sett of people* be denied their *privileges and rights*,”³²² especially those who had sacrificed so much for the American ideals of civil and religious freedom? The general public and, obviously, the judicial authorities agreed. On February 13, 1785 the Georgia Legislators formally recognized “free white persons” as “naturalized” and entitled to all rights thereof.³²³ The Sheftalls had succeeded in the most important political objective of their lives: citizenship regardless of religious affiliation.

Years later James Madison corresponded to the leaders of Savannah’s Jewish community:

³¹⁸ “A Real Citizen,” *Sheftall Family Papers*, Keith Read Library, Special Collections, University of Georgia, Athens.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Pencak, *Jews and Gentiles*, 169.

Among the features peculiar to the political system of the United States, is the perfect equality of rights which it secures to every religious sect; and it is particularly pleasing to observe in the good citizenship of such as have been most distrusted and oppressed elsewhere ...³²⁴

Admirable sentiments and representative of the religious tolerance adopted by many of the central formers of the nation.

³²⁴ Jewish History, 1 (January 1844), accessed May 2010, <http://jewish-history.com>

CHAPTER V

NOT SIMPLY A MALE REBELLION

The Radicals: Abigail Smith Adams and Mercy Otis Warren

Abigail Smith Adams (1744-1818) and Mercy Otis Warren³²⁵ (1728-1814) shared a passion for politics. The ladies were enthusiastic Patriots, as well as passionate about their husbands and families. John Adams and James Warren were already political agitators when their wives were introduced to each other in 1773. The Warrens' home in Plymouth had long been a hub for like-minded Whigs, and John Adams was a frequent guest when his law practice necessitated his travel to the area. Both women were highly intelligent, opinionated, strong-willed, and characterized patriotism with New England Puritanism. They equated the principles of Congregationalism to qualities expected in personal character. Their friendship flourished, initially. Friendship, in theory, is founded on compatibility and common conceptions and is reciprocal in nature. Political friendship in eighteenth century America is a separate category of personal relationship in which the goal or objective is for the common good. Personal gain was not the initiative; yet, in the decades that surrounded the Revolutionary War, sacrifice for country, upon which many political friendships were founded, could seem never ending. For the American experiment to succeed required great sacrifice of time, energy, and money by

³²⁵ Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*, 16, 152; Rogers, Dorothy and Therese Dykeman, "Women in the American Philosophical Tradition 1800-1930" *Hypatia* 19:2 (Spring 2004): 8.

the most gifted and educated individuals. Abigail Adams and Mercy Warren encouraged each other in developing personal attributes into political voices. Both believed they could endure the sacrifices necessary to support their husbands' political participation for achieving independence and the common good of their newly formed country. It was a unifying force which rapidly moved their friendship from the pleasantly personal standard expected of genteel women to a relationship that shared radical politics. Commitment to an American Republic, support of their husbands' political objectives, and personal development that went beyond the traditional boundaries for women produced the friendship between Adams and Warren. The same features destroyed it. Limitations placed on sacrifice by the Warrens ruptured Abigail's and Mercy's relationship. Although the couples retained a casual, often strained, friendship from 1773-1778, their political connection was shattered beyond repair. It had waxed and waned within five years.

Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren had received education advantages beyond the traditional norms for their gender, especially Warren. Few females were educated to the intellectual degree that they could discuss and write on complex or nontraditional issues. Mercy Otis Warren had had access to the same tutors and texts as her older brother, James Otis, with the exception of Greek and Latin. She was talented in the literary arts, ambitious, and extremely self-confident. Adams, Warren's junior by sixteen years, was born into a family of voracious readers. She was predominantly self-educated, exceptionally well read, with an abundance of natural intellect. Both women had studied the works of classical thinkers, including Livy, Tacitus, and Cicero. Adams

was also attracted to, and related with, the works of poet Alexander Pope, whose “good sense and judgment with eloquence and ethics” made him the “great poet of reason, the first [among] ethical authors in verse.”³²⁶ Both women could cite the enlightened work of Locke and radical critics of the British political system, Sidney and Harrington.³²⁷ Initially, Adams lacked confidence in her written thoughts but she was absolutely certain of her ideals and ethical mores. Under Warren’s tutelage Adams became much more comfortable with, and developed, her own writing style. It was less formal than Warren’s, less eruditely dense, and has withstood the test of time. Adams was more politically astute than Warren and more cognizant of human nature. Both women were intensely interested in American politics and, by the time of the Revolution, were politically competent individuals, supremely articulate in presenting arguments, and capable of holding discussions with intellectuals of Thomas Jefferson’s caliber.

For Abigail Adams and Mercy Warren, Congregationalism was central to their understanding of patriotic support. Both were from families rife with ministers, scholars, and generations of active participants in colonial Massachusetts politics. They were of Puritan descent and adherents to the theories and practices of rational (and enlightened) Congregationalism, as opposed to the enthusiastic form of piety that divided the Calvinist faith especially after the Great Awakening of the 1730s.³²⁸ It incorporated a sense of

³²⁶ *Correspondence of Abigail Adams*, as cited by Charles Akers, *Abigail Adams: A Revolutionary American Woman* (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 10.

³²⁷ Lynne Withey, *Dearest Friend: A Life of Abigail Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981, 2002), 47; Akers, *Abigail Adams*, 9-13, 41.

³²⁸ For further explanation see Charles Lloyd Cohen: *God’s Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 140-172, 239-24; Philip Greven, *The*

duty to family, community, and country -- private and public in nature. Its women were expected to epitomize virtue and social morality.

From the inception of their friendship in 1773,³²⁹ Abigail Smith Adams and Mercy Otis Warren agreed that Britain had “grievously” injured and insulted America. When Mercy wrote of British “Evils Brought on this much injure’d Country [America] by the hand of Wanton power united With treachery and Venality.”³³⁰ Venality, she knew, from their discussions that Abigail understood and concurred. In eighteenth century language, “wanton” was not a simple interpretation of being tempted toward extravagance and luxury but additionally meant to be insolent in prosperity and reckless in regard to justice and humanity. It meant the British had been neglectful and arbitrary. In their vernacular, “treachery” symbolized a violation of faith. More than a betrayal of trust, treachery was perfidious conduct of disloyalty paired with “venality,” the readiness to give support or favor in return for profit; indeed, it was a “prostitution of principles.”³³¹ With the use of these three pertinent terms -- wanton, treachery, and venality -- Mercy effectively communicated the colonists’ many bones of contention

Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America (New York: Meridian, 1977), 11, 23-4; on ranks, 12n Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Images and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: 1982); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 159-160, for post-revolutionary changes toward women’s responsibilities see Wood, 332; and Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 224-226.

³²⁹ John Adams’ friendship and association with James Warren predated his acquaintance with his acquaintance to Mrs. Warren, which predated Abigail’s introduction to Mercy.

³³⁰ MOW to JA and AA, 5/17/74, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³³¹ Letter from MOW to John and Abigail Adams, May 17, 1774. <http://www.masshist.org/> For eighteenth-century vernacular usage: OED, Second Edition.

against Great Britain. Moreover, the words Mercy incorporated held undertones of Congregational theology that Abigail would recognize. It was as though Puritan emphasis against the corrupting influences of political power had become inherent in New Englanders' genetic makeup. Abigail had previously conveyed similar sentiments directed toward derisive factions: Patriots versus Loyalists. She took the Loyalists to task as those with "restless ambition ... designing men ... [who have] broken this people into factions ..." who would "barter Liberty for gold."³³² Rather than having the passions in their hearts as virtuous persons for the "good Neighborhood ... good nature and humanity" they acted "contrary to that precept of Christianity thou shalt Love thy Neighbor as thy self."³³³ Congregationalism was fundamental to their patriotism. Their political ideology was, in fact, founded upon religious precepts that evolved into principles of State.

The correspondence between Abigail and Mercy reveals that they visited each other and exchanged letters following such visits to further encourage and more deeply develop the concepts on which they had conversed or debated. Although both women would become radical Patriots, Abigail was far more politically astute. Mercy was a gifted writer, her natural abilities further developed by tutors and mentors, but she needed encouragement.³³⁴ Abigail shared her political insights. On December 5, 1773, she

³³² AA to MOW, February 27, 1774, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ Although JA and MOW corresponded and he encouraged her writing pursuits, their relationship was much more one of his mentorship rather than one of political friendship: their friendship remained formal,

informed Mercy from Boston of the subsequent attempt to land the “weed of slavery (tea).” She felt she “dared not openly express half” her fears, but in Mercy she could confide that in opposition to tea “our Citizens have been united, Spirited and firm. The flame is kindled and like Lightening it catches from Soul to Soul. Great will be the devastation if not timely quenched or allayed by some more Lenient Measures”³³⁵ “... Altho the mind is shocked at the Thought of shedding Humane Blood, more Especially the Blood of our Countrymen, and a civil War is of all Wars, is the most dreadful.”³³⁶ If the current spirit prevailed, Adams foresaw that “Many of our Heroes will spend their lives in the cause, With the Speech of Cato in their Mouths, ‘What a pitty it is, that we can dye but once to save our Country.’”³³⁷ Warren responded that she thought they had less to dread than Adams apprehended.³³⁸ The tone of her correspondence implied that surely Abigail was overreacting. Within months Warren realized that Adams’ instincts were exceptionally accurate and well worth heeding. By August of 1774 she, too, was convinced that “Nothing but the Blood of the Virtuous Citizens Can repurchase the Rights of Nature, unjustly torn from us ...[sic]” and she closed the letter safe in the knowledge that God was on the side of the upright – which, of course, meant the

they did not share goals or objectives, and their correspondence indicates less common good ideology and more commentary of current events and constructive criticism and suggestions for Mrs. Warren.

³³⁵ This point is footnoted for clarification in the *Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 1*, Massachusetts : The *Dartmouth*, the first of the tea ships, had arrived in Boston Harbor on November 28, the “Boston Tea Party” assembled on December 16, 1773. <http://www.masshist.org/>

³³⁶ AA to MOW, December 5, 1775, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³³⁷ AA to MOW, December 5, 1775, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³³⁸ MOW to AA, 1/19/1774, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>,

Americans.³³⁹ Abigail concurred: “Love thy Neighbour as thy self” was a commandment from God, which when applied to “publick cause will breed passions in the hearts of virtuous persons to which the Regard of their own private interest would never have betrayed them.”³⁴⁰

Customarily, women were not invited to share their political insights, much less participate in verbal or written discord. Adams and Warren had unique support from their husbands. Mercy contributed articles to newspapers, initially submitted anonymously, as print was the domain of men. The appearance of a woman’s name on public works was considered immodest, and the majority of men still considered women incapable of understanding, much less articulating, politics.



Figure 15. Abigail Smith Adams.
Specialcollections.vassar.edu



Figure 16. Mercy Otis Warren.
picture gallery, University of Montana, umt.edu.

³³⁹ MOW to AA 8/9/1774, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁴⁰ AA to MOW, 27 February 1774, <http://www.masshist.org/>

In May 1775, days after the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Abigail wrote to Mercy on the justice of their shared cause and the sacrifices they were willing to suffer. “All our worldly comforts are now at stake – our nearest and dearest connections are hazarding their lives and properties. – God give them the wisdom and integrity sufficient to the great cause.”³⁴¹ In response Mercy communicated her concerns for the dangers “to Which the Best of men and the truest Friends to Virtue, Liberty ... were exposed,” and intoned that the women were united in their opinions that the “situation of the Country and the Interest of posterity Calls for the utmost Exertions of Every Man of Ability, Integrity or Virtue.”³⁴² Supporting men, more often than not, saddled women with additional responsibilities. Abigail made ends meet without John’s law firm contributions by managing the farm by herself and negotiating crop fees. For many women it meant acting as a single, working mother without modern conveniences and with the heightened threat of enemies, literally, at your gate, and armies pillaging and confiscating food and livestock. Adams was more competent in household management and generating economy than Warren.

As the war progressed, fault lines in their friendship, both personal and political, became apparent. Abigail informed Mercy: “You will readily believe me when I say that I make no small sacrifice to the publick.”³⁴³ The Warrens, James and Mercy, had failed to maintain the standard of personal qualities and sense of public duty expected by the

³⁴¹ AA to MOW, May 2, 1775, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁴² MOW to AA, May 15, 1775, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁴³ Ibid.

Adamses. They still abided by the precepts of their religion, but they fell far short on the principles of State. Abigail and John loved each other as deeply as James and Mercy, but they were committed to country first. “Those who could lead were expected to, whatever toll it might take on their private lives.”³⁴⁴ Even as Abigail and Mercy read and supported the radical views presented in Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense*, James Warren had started withdrawing from public service. When appointed to the Massachusetts Supreme Court in 1776, he declined. Although James Warren had served the public for many years, his continued refusals to serve “gained him a reputation as a quitter, as someone whose willingness to sacrifice for the common good was in doubt.”³⁴⁵ Warren had resigned from his position as Paymaster General to the Continental Army instead of relocating to New York with the Army. He served as Major General in the Massachusetts militia, although he asserted his option as a high ranking officer to not lead his unit into battle and resigned his post months later.

In fairness to James Warren, it must be acknowledged that he might have, from necessity, had to place family duty above commitment to country. James Warren’s explanations to John Adams sounded artificial to the Adamses. They do in the historical record too. However, in James’ defense, perhaps the facts are not what they appear. He lived in an era, among a class, where it was considered poor form (bad manners) for one to discuss intimate family details or to use family issues as a basis for excuse from obligations. The Warrens’ formal personal demeanor, family standing, and quite possibly

³⁴⁴ Rosemarie Zagarri, *A Woman’s Dilemma: Mercy Otis Warren and the American Revolution* (Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1995), 108.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

embarrassment, may have prohibited them from an open explanation. James had been ill, Mercy had suffered from both physical and probably mental illness, and several of their five sons were less than stable. Psychiatric illness, or mental disability, was not well understood in the eighteenth century but to modern scholars its presence in Mercy Otis Warren's family seems undeniable.

A quick study of the Otis family psychological history reveals much about them.³⁴⁶ The few references Mercy makes to her mother imply that Mary Allyne Otis (1702-1767)³⁴⁷ suffered periods of depression. Of course, it would not be surprising for a woman who had given birth to thirteen children and had six of them die in infancy to suffer from psychosocial stresses (for example, mourning) or postpartum depression. However, the Allyne-Otis family history is highly suggestive of depression associated with biological factors (genetics, imbalances in brain chemistry, chromosome-linked) rather than trauma or environment. It was well documented that Mercy's brilliant and very affable brother, James (Jemmy) Otis (1725-1783), had bouts of "insanity." Even a layperson can identify possible indicators of bipolar depression in Jemmy's reported behavior patterns. Mercy's and James' eldest son, James Jr. (1757-1821), had experienced an "emotional breakdown" during his senior year at Harvard, in the spring of 1776. Informing John of James Jr.'s condition, Abigail commented: "Impaired in Health

³⁴⁶ These are comments and insights by a layperson, avidly interested but not formally degreed in the field. The following sources support the arguments presented above: American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (New York: American Psychiatric Association, 2009); Augustine Burroughs, *Running with Scissors* (London: St. Martin's Press, 2002); Benjamin J. Sadock and Virginia A. Sadock, *Synopsis of Psychiatry* (New York: Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins, 2002); Kevin E. Stanovich, *How to Think Straight About Psychology* (New York: Pearson, 2004).

³⁴⁷ Nancy Rubin Stuart, *The Muse of the Revolution: The Secret Pen of Mercy Otis Warren and the Founding of a Nation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008), 7, 8, 12.

[,] impaired in mind [,] impaired in Moralls, is a situation truly deplorable, but do not mention the matter -- not even to them by the slightest hint. Tis a wound which cannot be touched.”³⁴⁸ A deeper analysis of Abigail Adams’ note on health, mind, and *morals* would be required to ascertain if James Jr. suffered from a “disordered mind”³⁴⁹ or if an episode of college drunkenness, womanizing, possibly accompanied by gambling, had caused his parents such alarm. However, an urgent message had been sent to his father who was sufficiently concerned to leave immediately to retrieve his son, which implies more than just bad behavior. James Jr. later served in the Continental Navy and received an injury in battle that required the amputation of his leg. The Warrens’ second son, Winslow (1760-1791), exhibited behavior with simultaneous extremes of charm and callousness. He was self-centered, grandiose, impulsive, and egotistical with seemingly little guilt or empathy -- a combination of traits commonly associated with a psychopathic personality (which contrary to popular belief does not mandate violence and cruelty). Lastly, for this short overview, Mercy Otis Warren’s letters provide evidence of mood swings, even hysteria, that raises questions regarding her consistent stability. Additionally, Mercy was too smart not to incorporate masterful manipulation to get her way. She loved James deeply and was dependent upon him; yet, even in the flowery language of the age, “All my Earthly Happiness depend[s] on the continuance of [your] Life”³⁵⁰ sounds obsessive, especially for a woman who was reserved and exhibited great self-confidence and ambition. This is just one of numerous examples. James

³⁴⁸ AA to JA August 5, 1776, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁴⁹ Stuart, *Muse*, 13.

³⁵⁰ Cited from Zagarri, *Woman’s Dilemma*, 19.

Warren, who appears in his correspondence sane and stable, may well have had his hands full at home and could have worried about the consequences his prolonged absences might trigger. It is certainly a problem worthy of contemplation.

Regardless, whether from love or necessity, James Warren declined from serving in positions that would require him to leave close proximity to Plymouth and Mercy, and this fact caused a serious breach in the Adamses' friendship and respect. To John and Abigail Adams, who sacrificed extensively, almost any excuse for failing to serve would have been viewed as negligible. As early as 1776, John Adams had commented to Abigail that James "Warren has both Talents and Virtues beyond most Men in this World, yet his Character has never been in Proportion. This it always is, has been, and will be."³⁵¹ James did serve on the Navy Board from 1776-1781 and in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1779-81 and 1787,³⁵² but he rejected a position on the Massachusetts Supreme Court, a position for which Adams had personally nominated him in 1776. Twice he was nominated to the Continental Congress and refused his seat. He declined to serve as Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor in 1780. James Warren had loudly espoused the rhetoric of revolt but refused active participation in the forming of a new nation. For the Adamses it was a deplorable flaw. I use the plural because Abigail and John had individually shared a political friendship with Mercy and James, as well as with each other. The Warrens' shortcomings were disappointing on many levels. James Warren's rejection of his "Appointment" to the

³⁵¹ Adams Family Correspondence, August 18, 1776, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁵² Zagarri, *A Woman's Dilemma*, 104.

highest bench of the Massachusetts justice system was upsetting to many Patriots and held the potential, as the Warrens later realized, for political retribution.³⁵³ In 1776, John was already making comparisons to sacrifice. In correspondence to Abigail he noted, I “suppose it must be disagreeable to him and his Lady, because he loves to be upon his Farm, and they both love to be together. But you must tell them of a Couple of their Friends who are as fond of living together, who are obliged to sacrifice their rural Amusements and domestic Happiness to the Requisitions of the public.”³⁵⁴ The pattern continued, as Abigail confided to John in November of 1778: “Our Friend Genl W[arren] is chosen Member of C[ongres]s. I should be loath he should for the 3rd time refuse as it leaves impression upon the minds of our good citizens no ways to his advantage.”³⁵⁵ Abigail and John inferred that a lack of respect by the public could cause long-term damage to his reputation and could hurt him later politically or publically. She suspected that “... his Lady opposes if not by words, by that which has as strong an influence.”³⁵⁶ The reader is welcome to explore the many contexts by which Mercy

³⁵³ Correspondence between Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren dwindled to nil by 1781. When contact, albeit limited, was re-established post-Constitutionally their letters refrained from politics. John Adams retained some contact with the Warrens. Extracts from their letters, and correspondence among the members of the Adams and Smith families, indicate that Mercy complained that they had no political friends in Braintree or Weymouth; that Mercy’s father had left her nothing at his death, thus she had lost what her Grandfather had left her; that the Warrens were in need of funds, hence James was seeking offices and judicial positions, but to no avail. John Adams knew well that Mercy was writing an history of the American Revolution. It is plausible that he retained contact in the hope of being accurately and /or favorably depicted and not the victim of a poisoned pen. In the end, her depiction of Adams was rather harsh and his reaction was oversensitive.

³⁵⁴ JA to AA, May 27, 1776, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁵⁵ AA to JA, November 25, 1778, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

³⁵⁶ AA to JA, November 25, 1778, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/>

could have demonstrated her displeasure to James. That Abigail could comment on the causes indicates the issues were present.

To Abigail the character of Mercy was fully suspect too. Abigail sensed Mercy's involvement in James' refusals and it represented, in Abigail's opinion, a lack of support for her husband and their country. When James Warren had considered joining George Washington and the Continental Army in New York, in 1776:

How earnestly did I ever entreat my dear Mr. Warren not to accept an appointment which ... would involve me in the depth so distress? With my eyes now swimming in tears do I recollect how many honorable, how many profitable, and how many useful employments you have refused, and accepted of this one which ... was ... a dagger in my bosom!³⁵⁷

By contrast, Abigail's letters to John reflect support and praise for both her husband and their country: "I hope in time to have the Reputation of being as good a Farmeress as my partner has of being a good Statesman." Lines later included a poem:

Though certain pains attend the care of State
A Good Man owes his Country to be Great
Should act abroad the high distinguish'd part
And shew at least the purpose of his Heart.³⁵⁸

Abigail suffered loneliness, she desperately missed her husband's presence, and her life was made much harder from the demands of being a "deputy husband,"³⁵⁹ but she

³⁵⁷ Stuart, *Muse*, 119

³⁵⁸ AA to JA, April 7-11, 1776, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

³⁵⁹ Termed coined by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Press, 1991) to describe women who, usually

understood John's efforts on behalf of their country. "All domestick pleasures and injoyments are absorbed in the great and important duty you owe your Country for our Country is as it were a secondary God, and the First and greatest parent. It is to be preferred to Parents, Wives, Children, Friends ... Thus do I suppress every wish, and silence every Murmur, acquiescing in a painfull Separation from the companion of my youth, and the Friend of my Heart."³⁶⁰

More than three hundred miles and 14-21 days of travel³⁶¹ separated Abigail in Braintree, Massachusetts from John who was attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. In July 1777, Abigail gave birth to a stillborn daughter, Elizabeth, without the comfort of her husband close by. Shortly thereafter she was notified that John would soon leave for France, having been appointed as a delegate for negotiations in an alliance with France. Distraught by what she knew would be a long separation she sought emotional support from Mercy.

Mercy's response, dated January 2, 1778, probably stunned Abigail and certainly cleaved their friendship, political and otherwise. It read, in part:

Great Advantages are often Attended with Great Inconveniences, And Great Minds Called to severe trials. If your Dearest Friend had not Abilities to Render such important services to his Country, he would not be Called to the self Denying task ... while I Weep with my Friend the painful absence [of her husband], I Congratulate her that she is so Nearly Connected with a Gentleman Whose Learning, patriotism And prudence

in the absence of their husbands, had the authority to conduct business on his (in actuality the couple's interests) behalf.

³⁶⁰ AA to JA, May 7-9, 1776. MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

³⁶¹ JA to AA, November 14, 1777, MHS <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

qualify Him to Negotiate at Foreign Courts the affairs of America at this Very Critical period.

I think I know your public spirit and Fortitude to be such that you will Throw no Impediment in his way. Why should you[?]. You are yet young and [have] ... many Years ... after He has finished ... You Cannot my Dear avoid Anticipating the Advantages that will probably Rebound ...

... that you will justly say we [Mercy] are Ready to Give advice when we but Illy practice the principles we lay down. True -- but we may profit by the advice Though we despise the Weakness of the Advisor ...³⁶²

Advantages? Connection? Offer no impediment! On January 8th, Mercy continued that she would have “Readily” offered “Consolation” and arguments of support but she was sure that Abigail would “Consent to what she knows is Right, to what she is sensible will Contribute Much to the welfare of the public.” She also answered a question Abigail had posed: if their places were changed, would Mercy have supported James in serving his country abroad? The response was “Frankly, No, ...”³⁶³

Abigail, who had a keen understanding for human nature, had probably supposed that the common political objectives she had shared with Mercy had diminished but it is doubtful that she had realized their unity in purpose was completely dispelled. Mercy, instead of supporting her husband in goals of American independence and nation building had deterred him, one way or another. She encouraged Abigail to make sacrifices that she, herself, was unable or unwilling to make. Realistically, few people could have equaled the extreme commitment of Abigail and John Adams, but that level was not

³⁶² MOW to AA, January 2, 1778, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

³⁶³ Ibid.

expected. It was readily acknowledged by the Warrens and numerous others that John was particularly gifted. However, support for achieving political and ideological objectives had been persistently stressed. Additionally, Mercy's letter of January 8th clearly reflects self-interest and personal benefit that Abigail viewed as incompatible with patriotic effort. More disconcerting was the latter realization that Mercy anticipated benefits consistent with the old forms of patronage, the same system Whigs had despised and decried as crippling corruption in the British government. Could it have been generational differences of interpretation? Perhaps. What is clear is that after January 1778 their letters became far less frequent, ceased for years, and generally focused on commerce, weather, or family. Their political friendship had waxed and waned swiftly and had possibly been based on misassumptions.

The Moderates: Quaker Women:
Milcah Martha Moore, Susanna Wright, and Hannah Griffitts

*Milcah Martha Moore's Commonplace Book*³⁶⁴ provides a window into the perceptions and opinions of a "thinking class" of politically conscious Quaker women.³⁶⁵ Connected through kinship, religion, business association, and their location in the Delaware Valley of the eighteenth century, Milcah Martha Moore (1740-1829), Susanna Wright (1697-1784), and Hannah Griffitts (1727-1817) were the progeny of an economic upper class. "An aristocratic elite -- either natural or artificial -- was an ineradicable component on any political community."³⁶⁶ In her commonplace book Milcah Martha Moore recorded topics relevant to her interests in friendship, the politics of revolutionary

³⁶⁴ Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf, eds., *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 11.

Commonplace books were notebooks or journals in which one copied important phrases or passages, poetry and prose on topics the writer found particularly relevant. They often include commentary by the writer or readers of the collection.

³⁶⁵ Darren Staloff, *The Making of an American Thinking Class: Intellectuals and Intelligentsia in Puritan Massachusetts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). Staloff identified the social and political influence exerted by seventeenth century Puritan educated elites in Massachusetts, namely clergymen and magistrates. In contrast, authority was not the exclusive realm of Quaker intellectual elites in Pennsylvania; however, distinct parallels are apparent regarding their prewar political, cultural, and economic power. Relatively, the theoretical approach can also be applied to intellectual Quaker women. On education: Quakers who followed William Penn to his colony of tolerance proposed a pedagogy that was relative to their spiritual inspiration, social and political perspectives. For Quakers, educational principles included sectarian concepts and "purveying as they did radical doctrines of equality, democracy, and individuality that in their very nature seemed subversive" to the traditional social order (Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 304). Penn proposed education for all children "in useful knowledge, such as is consistent with truth and godliness..." (Cremin, 304). The very term "children" rather than "boys" or "young men" indicated the inclusion of females. Although early pedagogical hopes remained unrealized throughout the eighteenth century, learned Quakers contributed much to colonial education. However, there were some Quaker individuals, even communities, that found intellectualism too akin to the much despised Anglicanism and therefore opposed all but rudimentary education, for most Quakers education remained paramount to their society.

³⁶⁶ Staloff, *Hamilton, Adams, and Jefferson*, 188.

America, and poetry. Although material written by men was included in Martha's collection the primary focus were works by women. The book particularly reflects the women's contemplations on life, death, and war. Poetry was often the medium for which women questioned pertinent political issues and traditional women's roles, even evaluated their identity. The majority of the selections are poetry, most of which was written by two of Moore's friends: Susanna Wright and Hannah Griffitts. The three women shared beliefs of the Quaker faith, intellectual depth, views on womanhood and were very clear voices for political moderation.

Political moderation is a blend of education and statecraft and guided by principles. During the era of revolution, both Patriot and Loyalist extremes regarded moderates with suspicion rather than as thoughtful, temperate, conscientious, and cautious voices searching for a middle ground. In the case of Quakers, both men and women of the faith, whether Patriot or Loyalist, abided to the doctrines of their religion, which included a greater equality between the genders compared to the rest of American society. Most Quakers tried to remain passive, as dictated by their faith, but the American Revolution was also a civil war that demanded allegiances. Because American members of the Quaker faith did not sever ties with their English counterparts, it is argued that a purely American denomination did not exist, which complicated the issue.³⁶⁷ This strong trans-Atlantic link coupled with their pacifism left Friends susceptible to patriot denigration. Their pacifist ideology forced many Quakers to withdraw from politics. Those who partook in revolutionary activities were disowned.

³⁶⁷ J. William Frost, *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 1.

Other Friends formed offshoot groups of “Freedom Quakers” and “Fighting Quakers.” Women, it appears, were less susceptible to being disowned for their political opinions. Eighteenth century “Americans wrote poems to support or castigate politicians at home and abroad and to express their connections with England or their emerging sense of political and independent cultural control.”³⁶⁸

Analysis indicates that Moore consciously balanced both sides of revolutionary arguments in her collection. She constructed the book so that, quite often, positions of political extremes were juxtaposed side-by-side, which steered the reader toward a midline interpretation. Moore’s commonplace book was shared with others in her community, where it was read, passed around, commented in, and discussed. Moore was definitely more of a collector than a writer, but Wright and Griffitts were talented poets and their verses are some of the finest examples of the interconnection of women’s political consciousness.

Quaker women did not possess political power but did share political opinions. Moore, Wright, and Griffitts had familial ties to many of the prewar political and economic leaders of the region.³⁶⁹ Their networks of family and friends would have

³⁶⁸ Wulf, ed., *MMM*.

³⁶⁹ Richard Bauman, *For the Reputation of Truth: Politics, Religion, and Conflict among the Pennsylvania Quakers, 1750-1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971); Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700-1775* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 8, 9, 339; Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969, 1998), 84-90. Larson explains that the religious and business ties Quakers held with the British resulted in an exodus by members of the Society of Friends from Revolutionary American government. Bauman’s work maps the political contention that developed among Pennsylvania Quakers and with non-Quakers during the revolutionary era, and he examines the interplay of religious traditions and social assumptions on political culture. Bauman found that Quakers began withdrawing from colonial affairs when revolutionary overtones increased, around

provided them close contact with, and observation of, men of prominence and power.

The women's political ideology was not necessarily different from their male counterparts; in fact, more often they shared the same viewpoints. Although secular social hierarchy limited these Quaker women's political activity their shared friendships, intellects, education, and doctrine of the Society of Friends provided them avenues to express their politically moderate views on the revolution in America.

Quaker women in general viewed themselves differently than most women of the age. They formed their sense of identity in an atmosphere of spiritual equality and egalitarian marriages. Most eighteenth century Friends shared a set of life views: pacifism, ethical practices, religious tolerance, the function of schools, and the position of women. Quaker religious belief held that the genders were equally receptive to, and inspired by, the Holy Spirit, which established a sense of religious equality.³⁷⁰ Preaching in other Christian denominations was an exclusive male domain, but women of the Quaker faith were entitled to serve as ministers. Women preached in meeting houses, town halls, courthouses, and traveled to share their message. These women were considered "public friends" and the Quakers' "different understanding of religion led to a different social reality for these eighteenth century women."³⁷¹ Rather than having been

1770. Wood's work describes the complexity of pre-war Pennsylvania politics and noted that of all the states Pennsylvania "saw the most abrupt and complete shift in political power" (84) – a result of Quaker withdraw, voluntarily and forcibly relinquished, from the political spectrum.

³⁷⁰ Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light*.

Rebecca Larson cites as examples Susanna Hatton who ministered to the Delaware Indians at Easton in 1761; Esther Palmer Champion was a minister, wife and mother who navigated the North American wilderness to carry her spiritual message to others in the early eighteenth century; and Rachel Wilson who visited Patrick Henry to commend his support of his promotion of religious toleration before the Virginia Assembly and in doing so was expressing her religious and political opinions.

criticized for their work, “their courage and religious commitment generally drew praise from all who knew them.”³⁷² Their religious, social, and economic experiences gave them an enhanced sense of women’s liberties compared to females raised in other religions and thus expanded their possibilities beyond the traditional gender role.

Raised in an environment in which they had experienced spiritual equality, this group of friends, Moore, Wright, and Griffitts, could express their views as social and political critics and had witnessed surprisingly egalitarian marriages for the period. As men still retained economic control colonial Quaker women often yielded to traditional gender hierarchy.³⁷³ Wright’s and Griffitts’s compositions are illustrative of the different ways in which Quaker women viewed themselves. Susanna Wright was the eldest, the sage, and the mentor to Moore and Griffitts. As well as an accomplished poet, she was a scientist and philosopher. Susanna Wright was proudly acknowledged by her Quaker community as an intellectual and a stateswoman. She associated, corresponded with, and was held in high regard by persons of outstanding brilliance, notably Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush. Wright, although disenfranchised by her gender, was politically active. She actually campaigned and canvassed for political candidates, mainly her brother and father who both served in the Pennsylvania Legislature with the

³⁷¹ Larson, *Daughters of Light*, 10-12.

³⁷² Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, 1996), 127-28.

³⁷³ Both Wright and Griffitts chose never to marry. Quaker women’s poetry and prose expressed a view that marriage was not necessarily the greatest calling for a woman. Wulf presented data to support her contentions that many Quaker women chose not to marry: 2.9 percent of all Philadelphia women prior to 1775 remained single versus 17.6% of Quaker women (between 1751 and 1776). Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin A. Wulf, eds., *Milcah Martha Moore’s Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America*, (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 11.

Norris cousin of Moore and Griffitts. Although Moore, Wright, and Griffitts were from different generations, the long established connections between their families were of “familial friendships and political alliances.”³⁷⁴

Wright’s³⁷⁵ primary contribution to the younger women was instructional. She, in essence, provided the graduate level training for the development of their minds and improved their ability for independent thought. Her poetry incorporated classical history and an abundance of friendship theory, political thought, Enlightenment perspectives, and conveyed ideals regarding society and common good. Wright permeated the gender boundaries of her day. Her poetry questioned gender rights and equality. She even contended that the model of celibacy could be superior to egalitarian marriage.³⁷⁶ Moreover, Wright’s piety and devotion to Quaker doctrine made her the epitome of moderation. Her poems and essays on friendships illustrate a philosophy in concord with Aelred of Rievaulx that virtuous friendships created unity, whether political or otherwise. Her perceptions paralleled the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, believing that following a virtuous path, caring for fellow humans, and the pursuit of common good were essential to interpreting God’s message. Wright’s combined experience of having been raised in a political family with extensive political networks and communication rendered a profound influence on her protégé.

³⁷⁴ Blecki and Wulf, eds., *MMM’s Commonplace Book*, 33.

³⁷⁵ Susanna Wright, (1697-1784) was educated in England followed parents to the Pennsylvanian frontier at the completion of her education. An intellectual, she was revered for her intelligence and civic activities, and followed political and scientific debates. Wright corresponded with Benjamin Franklin and Benjamin Rush up to twenty-five years prior to the American Revolution

³⁷⁶ Blecki and Wulf, *MMM Commonplace Book*, 33.

Hannah Griffitts was religious, rich, and opinionated. She advocated moderation and abhorred the extreme rhetoric of Loyalists and Patriots alike. Her poem *Daughters of Liberty*³⁷⁷ was widely published and circulated.

... If the Sons (so degenerate) the Blessing despise,
Let the Daughters of Liberty, noble arise,
And 'tho we've no Voice, but a negative here...

Stand firmly resolved & bid Grenville to see
That rather than Freedom, we'll part with our Tea ...

This poem has often been misinterpreted by readers as being more radical and feminist than it was intended because they are unacquainted with the author's background and her political positions. Griffitts' point of criticism focused on the failure of male merchants to support and enforce the boycott on British goods. Understanding poetry written during the era is difficult in itself, and in Griffitts' case the complexity is compounded by the use of classical history to parallel the context of her eighteenth-century experience. Her poem *Wrote on the last Day of Feby. 1775. Beware of the Ides of March* is a critique of Lord North's stubborn insistence of British authority instead of mediation with the colonies. Her support of tea boycotts is evident but her moderate tone is also apparent in her advice to:

Leave him [Lord North] for Justice to controul [sic]
And strive to calm our own Commotion
With us each prudent Caution meet,
Against this blustering Son of Thunder, ...³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ The full title was: *The Female Patriots. Address'd to the Daughters of Liberty in America. By the same* [Hannah Griffitts] 1768..

Her wrath for Lord North continued in the satirical *The Ladies Lamentation over an empty Cannister*.³⁷⁹ Writing under the pseudonym “Europa,” instead of her usual “Fidelia,” Griffiths compared British taxation of the colonies to the Patriots’ threat of harm to those who handled the “Indian Weed” (tea from the East India Company).³⁸⁰ Susanna Wright’s comments in the margins convey her grasp of Griffiths’ message. Wright noted the “despotism” in British and American actions and confessed that she, like Griffiths, would continue to drink tea like “Mahometans” (Muslims) who might imbibe wine “not openly but in a manner to elude scandal & not to give Offence.”³⁸¹ Griffiths, as well as Wright, clearly understood the opposing opinions and volatile atmosphere of society. Griffiths’ poetry in particular illustrated the disparate positions. Her poems beseeched political moderation and her friends shared her views. As Moore’s commonplace book was passed around and copied by others, the political poetry, inevitably, found publication.

³⁷⁸ Wulf, ed., *MMM*, No.81, 246.

³⁷⁹ Wulf, ed., *MMM*, #81 and #82, 246-48.

³⁸⁰ Hannah Griffiths, “The Ladies Lamentation over an empty Cannister” [c.1775], from *MMMB*, #82, 247-50.

Philadelphia merchants understood that there would be dire repercussions for selling tea shipped by the East India Company. Ship captains and river boat pilots on the Delaware were warned by broadside that handling the tea could result in tar and feathering. Similar threats arose in New York and Boston. For elaboration see Don Cook, *The Long Fuse: How England Lost the American Colonies, 1760-1785* (Jackson, TN: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996), 166-78; Christine Daniels, Michael V. Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 245-48.

³⁸¹ Wulf, ed., *MMM*, margin note written by Susanna Wright regarding Hannah Griffiths’ “The Ladies Lamentation over an empty Cannister” [c.1775], #82, 247-50.

The tea tax and its link to the East India Company incensed large numbers of colonists. Even the “penman of the republic” John Dickinson (who married Griffiths’ cousin Mary Norris), one of the most moderate men in Congress, who subsequently sacrificed his political career for his principles³⁸² so strongly objected to the tea tax that his compositions bordered on the radical. Griffiths’ poems played on themes addressed by Dickinson in *Letters on the Tea Tax*. Writing under the pseudonym “Rusticus,” he argued that the tea tax would, in America, “establish a Monopoly for the East-India Company ...”³⁸³ “Oppression” he postulated “will make a wise Man mad.”³⁸⁴ Dickinson also noted that British subjects were born to liberty and prized it highly, whereas the East India Company had little regard for the laws, rights, or freedom of others. Americans, he wrote, had approached the dispute with “a Spirit, Temper, and Moderation that proved them worthy to enjoy that Liberty” for which they contended.³⁸⁵ The inference of Griffiths’ “Beware of the Ides of March” is illuminated by Dickinson’s reference to the East India Company as “hackneyed as they are in Murders, Rapine and Cruelty, would Sacrifice the lives of Thousands to preserve their Trash, and enforce their measures.”³⁸⁶ And, although Dickinson did not call for the tarring and feathering of

³⁸² Robert M. Calhoon, *Political Moderation in America’s First Two Centuries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 92-96; 99; 103.

³⁸³ John Dickinson, *Letters on the Tea Tax*, (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Journal, November 3, 1773), the second of two broadsheets published written by “Rusticus” in 1773 objecting to the tea tax.

³⁸⁴ Dickinson, *Letters*, citing scripture, Ecclesiastes 7:7, November 3, 1773.

³⁸⁵ Dickinson, *Letters*, November 3, 1773.

³⁸⁶ Blecki and Wulf, eds., *MMM Commonplace Book*, “Wrote on the Last Day of Feby. 1775. Beware of the Ides of March,” No. 81, 246.

persons who handled tea, he had declared that those who did would “ever after be deemed an Enemy to his Country, and never be employed by his Fellow Citizens.”³⁸⁷

Dickinson’s moderation slipped, while the position of the thinking class of Quaker women remained steady. The female authors represented in Moore’s book understood political moderation as the best path for maintaining peace and used the means available to them to convince others.

The praise, support, and security that Griffitts received from her circle of friends provided her the intrepidity to compose verse intensely critical of *Common Sense* and its author. The first edition of Thomas Paine’s pamphlet was published in January 1776. Griffitts’ response was swift and surprisingly sharp, providing insight on her comfort level. Like Paine, she sought to sway public opinion on political issues but she steered toward objectivity and moderation. The poem is cited in its entirety as the whole contents complete a picture of political thought.

Wrote by the same [Hannah Griffitts] upon reading a Book entitled
Common Sense. Jany. 1776.

The Vizard drop’d, see Subtlety prevail,
Thro’ ev’ry Page of this fallacious Tale,
Sylvania let not unanswer’d pass,
But heed the well guess’d Snake beneath the Grass,
A deeper Wound at Freedom, ne’er was made,
Than by this Oliverian is display’d.
Orders confounded, -- Dignitaries thrown down,
Charters degraded equal with the Crown,
The impartial Press, most partially maintained
Freedom infring’d, & Conscience is restrain’d,
The moderate man is held to publick View,

³⁸⁷ John Dickinson, *Letters*.

“The Friend of Tyranny and Foe to you,”
 Deny’d the common Right to represent
 Forbid to give his Reasons for Dissent,
 Whilst base Informers – (Own’d a publick Pest)
 Are round the Land encourag’d & carass’d
 Our Representatives – the Peoples Choice
 Are held contemptuous by this daring Voice
 Persons are seiz’d & Posts monopoliz’d
 And all our Forms of Government despis’d, --
 Then from this “Specimen of Rule” beware,
 Behold the Serpent & avoid his Snare.
 “Tis not in Names, our present Danger lyes
 Sixty as well as one can tyrannize,
 Ah, awake Sylvania & beware,
 The fatal Danger of this subtle Snare,
 Hold fast yr. own, yr. charter’d Rights maintain
 Nor let them weave the Snare into the Chain,
 And whilst firm Union stands the British Foes,
 Let not the native Hand yr. Date of Freedom close. --

Griffitts was making a very strong personal and political statement about Paine and his objectives. Insightful persons of the eighteenth century would have, essentially, comprehended the poem as highly critical of Paine in particular and political radicalism in general. Transitioned to modern vernacular we can more fully understand the intensity of the poem in which Griffitts is deliberately demonstrating the moderate viewpoint, neither Tory nor Whig, but simply of concern for her country and its people. Keep in mind that Griffitts wrote the poem in response to Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* and addresses domains both political and personal, public and private. The modern reader would understand the poem to read:

The mask is removed, see the cunning, craftiness, and guile
 That is apparent on each page of this [*Common Sense*] deceitful, deceptive tale

Pennsylvania (Penn's wooded and idyllic countryside) do not let this essay
 go without response
 Heed what is surely a snake beneath the grass [Thomas Paine]
 Because he, and his overt partisanship, are the greatest dangers to freedom
 He seeks to turn the world upside-down,
 The press has a particular interest rather than the common or larger good
 When stressing that our freedom and conscience are being repressed
 His message has no objectivity
 And moderates are publicly ridiculed
 The enemy wishes restriction of public dissent
 While those of low character who are making public proclamations and
 challenges
 Are encouraged and endeared
 The message of *Common Sense* seeks to spread contempt and disdain for
 social order and government authority -- even for officials chosen by The
 People
 Beware of the example [the author, Paine] offers
 Recognize him as a snake and avoid his trap
 His words are tyrannous and dangerous
 Wake up Pennsylvania and beware
 Citizens should hold fast to their honor and virtue in order to maintain
 their rights
 Foes of Britain may be united
 But let not the compatriots have a part in bringing freedom [in America] to
 an end.³⁸⁸

Moore, demonstrating her flare for striking balances in her commonplace book,
 positioned Griffiths' response to *Common Sense* before the satirical "To the Honorable
 Society of Informers" (February 1776) which, depending on one's position, could be
 interpreted as professing a Patriot or Loyalist viewpoint. Paine's response, however, was
 less objective than Moore's presentation. Their public political battle had just begun.

On January 20, 1776, the Society of Friends issued a proclamation to their
 members titled *The Ancient Testimony and Principles* ... which restated the expected
 pacifism and the rationales behind their continued pacifist position. The Quakers'

³⁸⁸ Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com/>

declarations, compounded with Griffiitts' poem which was still in circulation, likely intensified Paine's ire. In the third edition of *Common Sense*, published on February 14, 1776, Paine included an introduction specifically directed toward Quakers. After elaborating upon his objections to the published notification of the *Testimony*, he went on to state:

Wherefore, as ye refuse to be the means on one side, ye ought not be meddlers ... Sincerely wishing, that as men and Christians, ye may always fully and uninterruptedly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be, in your turn, the means of securing it to others; but that the example which ye have unwisely set, of mingling religion with politics, may be disavowed and reprobated by every inhabitant of America.³⁸⁹

Paine, again, directed his criticism specifically at Quakers in his third pamphlet of *The Crisis* series published in April of 1777. "Surely the Quakers forgot their own principles when, in their late Testimony, they called this connection [Britain and the colonies], with these military and miserable appendages hanging to it – 'the happy constitution.'"³⁹⁰ Paine, although his father had been Quaker, loathed their neutral stance.³⁹¹ A person

³⁸⁹ Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, Third Edition, 1776 (<http://www.bartleby.com/133/6.html>).

³⁹⁰ Thomas Paine, *The Crisis*, Section IV (<http://www.ushistory.org/Paine/crisis/c-03.htm>).

³⁹¹ Political moderation is a blend of education and statecraft. During the era of revolution, moderates were regarded by both extremes, Patriot and Loyalist, with suspicion rather than as thoughtful, temperate, conscientious, and cautious voices searching for a middle ground. In the case of Quakers, both men and women of the faith, whether Patriot or Loyalist, abided to the doctrines of their religion and in which the genders were far more equal than those experienced by the rest of American society. Most Quakers tried to remain passive, as dictated by their faith but the American Revolution was also a civil war that demanded allegiances. The fact that American members of the Quaker faith remained strong ties with their English counterparts, and it is argued that a purely American denomination did not exist, (J. William Frost *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 1) complicated the issue. The strong trans-Atlantic link and their pacifism left Friends susceptible to patriot denigration. Quaker members had withdrawn, or been forced, from politics by the pacifist ideology.

“must be a Whig or a Tory ... his political principles must go ... on one side or the other. ... neutral ground, of his own creating, he may skulk upon for shelter ... and either we [Americans] or Britain are absolutely right or absolutely wrong.”³⁹² There was no middle ground for Thomas Paine. Griffitts retaliated immediately with open contempt for Paine and his radicalism in *On reading a few Paragraphs in the Crisis April 1777*:

Paine, tho’ thy Tongue may now run glibber,
Warm’d with thy independent Glow,
Thou art indeed, the boldest Fibber, ...

Of female Manners never scribble,
Nor with thy Rudeness wound our Ear,...

For not from Principle, but Lucre [monetary gain],
He gains his bread from out of the Fire,
Let Court and Congress, both stand neuter,
And the poor Creature must expire. -- ³⁹³

Griffitts’ poem blatantly called Thomas Paine a liar; implied a lack of gentlemanly manners; accused him of acting for profit not from principle; and contended that peace between Britain and America would cause the cessation of his popularity, which, she argued, was exactly why he sought to create contention. The discussion was a

Those who partook in revolutionary activities were disowned, some formed offshoot groups of “Freedom Quakers” and “Fighting Quakers.” Women, it appears, were less susceptible to being disowned for their political opinions. Women of the eighteenth century “Americans wrote poems to support or castigate politicians at home and abroad and to express their connections with England or their emerging sense of political and independent cultural control.” (Wulf, ed., *MMM*.)

³⁹² Thomas Paine, *The Crisis, Section IV*, (<http://www.ushistory.org/Paine/crisis/c-03.htm>). Ibid., *Section III*.

³⁹³ Hannah Griffitts, “On Reading a few Paragraphs in the Crisis April 1777” in Wulf, ed., *Milcah Martha Moore’s Commonplace Book, No. 116*, 299-300.

phenomenal display of a woman publicly opposing a man's politics. Hannah Griffiths' works were included in Moore's Book; Paine's works, however, were not mentioned but they were lengthy and well known at the time. Griffiths' compositions and the scale of her political debate with Paine would have been nearly impossible without the support of her friends and Quaker associates.

Poetry was often the medium and commonplace books the mode of circulation for women's political views. Wright, Moore, and Griffiths shared interests in politics, friendships, and presenting moderate voices in a period of complex and strained allegiances. These women were communicating positions of moderation to each other, their community, and, when published, society.

Conservative Voices:
Patriot Ladies Defending Their Loyalist Sisters-in-War

Wilmington, North Carolina
February 1782

“To His Excellency Governor Martin and the Members of the Honorable Council.

We, the subscribers, inhabitants of the town of Wilmington, warmly attached to the state of North Carolina and strenuously devoted to our best wishes and endeavors to the achievement of its independence, feeling for the honor of and desirous that our Enemies should not have the smallest pretext to brand them as cruel and precipitate, that the dignity of our public characters may not be degraded to the imitation of examples of inhumanity exhibited by our Enemies.

Humbly shew to His Excellency the Governor and the Honorable Council that we have been informed that orders have been issued from your honorable board that the wives and children of Absentees should depart the State with a small part of their property in forty eight hours after notice given them.

It is not the province of our sex to reason deeply upon the policy of the order, but as it must affect the helpless and innocent it wounds us with the most sincere distress and prompts our earnest supplication that the order may be arrested and the officers forbid to carry it into execution.

It is intended as retaliation for the expulsion of some of us, the subscribers, by the British from the town of Wilmington, and to gratify a resentment which such inhumanity to us may be supposed to have excited, its object is greatly mistaken.

Those whom your proclamation holds forth as marks of public vengeance neither prompted the British order nor aided the execution of it. On the contrary they expressed the greatest indignation at it and with all their power strove to mitigate our sufferings. ... But our Town women now ordered out must be exposed to the extreme of human wretchedness.

Their friends are in Charlestown, they have neither carriages or horses to remove them by land nor vessels to transport them by water and a small pittance allotted them of their property could they be procured would be scarce equal to the purchase of them. It is beneath the character of the independent State of North Carolina to war with women and children. The authors of our ill treatment are the subjects of our own and the resentment of the public, Does their barbarity strike us with abhorrence? Let us blush to imitate it ...

If we may be allowed to claim any merit with the public for our steady adherence to the Whig principles of America if our sufferings induced ...us favorable esteem with your honorable body ... they have left wives and children ... and it would be a system of abject weakness to fear the feeble effort of women and children.”³⁹⁴

Twenty-one women from Wilmington, North Carolina, composed and signed this petition to the Governor and Council.

³⁹⁴ Cynthia Kierner, *Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998). Specifically Chapter Four, Case Document 2. Governors’ Letter Books, 4:62-65, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.

The petition is a fascinating illustration of transition toward political consciousness that the War could prompt in women. Twenty-one female family members and friends united for a specific political goal. The Revolution had changed how some women thought about themselves and their place within Republican society. Their gender barred them from full citizenship, arguably any citizenship, because “‘Citizen’ is an equalizing word. It carries with it the activism of Aristotle’s definition -- a citizen is one who rules and is ruled in turn.”³⁹⁵ Citizenship is reciprocal, basically, a friendship between the government and the governed. The ladies were not defined as citizens but they were acting and writing with a sense of new political identities. Contrary to coverture tradition, which dictated they be apolitical or simply mirror the political preferences of their male guardian (husband, father, son), these female petitioners formed an independent group for the purpose of advancing a political opinion. They were challenging military convention. These women of Wilmington formed a political community for the common good of their gender, founded on their patriotism. It demonstrates women acting politically to protect other women.

One can easily follow the ladies two-stepping between past restrictions and new possibilities. They assertively present their opinions but are careful to appear as though they were not overstepping the gender boundaries. “It is not the province of our sex to reason deeply upon the policy of the order, but...” ; however, we want you to rescind this order. They argued that it was not honorable to be cruel to women and children, especially as they were innocent, noncombatants. It was, they pointed out, beneath the

³⁹⁵ Kerber, *No Constitutional Right*, xx.

dignity of their State of North Carolina and their Nation to war on helpless women and children, and descending upon those who had no means of escape “is war ... against innocents.” The Women Whigs of Wilmington were conducting themselves as active political participants implying an equality of opinion based on the logical principles of Enlightenment.

Incorporating the stance from the prewar mythic image of the frail and frightened female and read with the tone and southern accent native to the ladies: “It wounds us with the most sincere distress...” So, we as a group, would like you to forbid the execution of the order. In addition, Gentlemen, if you intend the act as “retaliation for the expulsion of some of us, ... to gratify a resentment” against Tories for the inhumanity which may have been displayed toward to us as Whig-connected ladies while the British pillaged our homes, then your “object [ive] is greatly mistaken.” As the victims of British abuse we do not desire retaliation against other innocents. In fact, the Tory ladies had tried to intercede for us, by opposing the action of the men and readily “received us ... and ministered to our wants [and needs] with generosity and politeness.” What the British soldiers did to us is “our” business, and we hold only one person responsible: “Major Craig and him alone.”

In closing, the ladies cited their political authority. How profound a moment in history? We are Republican women, “our steady adherence to the Whig principles of America ... our sufferings induced by that attachment” should provide us “favor and esteem ...” and shall consider it “as a very signal mark of your respect for us if you will leave our friends alone.” Shame on you [men] for fearing “the feeble efforts of women

and children!” The Wilmington ladies were women united in a political cause, justifying their expectations based on rights and sacrifice and, as they saw matters, had earned a level of respect from men. Respect was not equality but it was another step toward achieving rights of citizenship.

CHAPTER VI

REPUBLICAN MARRIAGE: UNIONS BETWEEN POLITICAL FRIENDS

Wives and Mothers in the New Republic

Post-revolutionary era women “gained public sanction to act politically” at least within the male-determined perimeters as Republican wives and Republican mothers.³⁹⁶ They had supported, participated, and contributed to the war effort. Many had operated as “deputy husbands,” serving in a legal and managerial capacity while their spouses’ were absent. Overwhelmingly they had proven themselves competent. The reward, “Republican” roles as wives and mothers, did little to challenge male political authority. Their task at hand was to complement their husbands’ public and political positions, provide a happy, harmonious home life, and breed little citizens.³⁹⁷ Reciprocal love and displayed affection were components in New Republic marriages. Personal happiness was an ultimate expectation. Superwomen of the Republic thought their efforts would avail them equality within the household: it did in a few cases. However, they received little in return for their expanded duties to family except perhaps exhaustion. Women gained political significance in their roles as Republican wives and Republican mothers,

³⁹⁶ Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 5.

³⁹⁷ Zagarri does identify a classification, or designation, of “female politicians” who “saw themselves -- and were seen by others -- as political actors in their own right” (5). They were viewed as challengers of male authority and definitely not contributors to the greater good, i.e., Mary Wollstonecraft.

but minimal political interaction for most. However, there were extraordinary exceptions, as we will see.

The marital ideology in the New Republic, in the classes that could afford experimentation with ideological models (middle-class and elite), was based on kinship, citizenship, and parenting. Enlightened theory had pervaded the public. “Politics was understood to encompass a capacious realm that involved voters and nonvoters, men and women alike.”³⁹⁸ As mothers, women were mandated important roles in instilling virtue and patriotism to offspring. It was their duty to encourage the children intellectually and produce good citizens for the Republic. Women’s role as pedagogical advisers of their children necessitated a greater access to liberal arts education for females. This was certainly another step in acknowledgement of women’s competency and capacity for intellect, but in the big picture women remained primarily politically invisible.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Zagarri, *Backlash*, 81.

³⁹⁹ Zagarri, *Backlash*, 74.

Elizabeth Washington Gamble Wirt and William Wirt



Figure 17. Elizabeth Washington Gamble Wirt.
www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/marshall/
<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brush/>



Figure 18. William Wirt.
<http://www.npg.si.edu/exh/brush/>
www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/marshall/

From the outset Elizabeth Washington Gamble (1784-1857) and William Wirt (1772-1864) decided they would implement a companionate marriage. Politics permeated all aspects of life in the aspiration of constructing a Republic. In such an atmosphere it is not surprising that many couples attempted Republic-style marriages, hoping to achieve an egalitarian utopia at home. With the Wirts, the intent was there, but finances and fame altered the initial construct. “The Wirts’ marriage reveals how the promise of a companionate marriage defined by symmetry, reciprocity, and mutuality was shaped by the realities of women’s and men’s different realities.”⁴⁰⁰ Reciprocity and

⁴⁰⁰ Anya Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic: Elizabeth and William Wirt and the Companionate Ideal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 7.

mutuality are pertinent components of political friendship. What the Wirts attempted to achieve was the marital mandate of the era: political friendship as marriage.

“It is significant that the Revolution did so little to change the politics of patriarchy in southern households, even as Elizabeth Wirt alerts us to the changing hopes and expectations southern women may have had for their marriages.”⁴⁰¹ Hierarchy of southern families remained the same, and the Wirts were a “southern couple.” She was born and raised in Virginia. He was born in Maryland, practiced law in Virginia, and served as Attorney General in Washington, D.C. All locations are beneath the Mason-Dixon line; more importantly, they were culturally and socially similar. The Wirts were slaveholders. Elizabeth’s father, Colonel Gamble, had purchased many of the five slaves held by the couple in 1802 as a means of assisting his daughter’s household “necessaries” as well as providing a driver for her carriage. Elizabeth Washington Gamble Wirt was well educated, very well read, and not hesitant to voice or argue her opinions. She was the daughter of one of the wealthiest and most respected men in Richmond, Virginia. In an earlier era, William Wirt’s lack of wealth and pedigree would have rendered him an unacceptable suitor. As much as he wanted to achieve the ideal of the companionate marriage, it was not an easy financial or psychological reality for him.

It is quite possible that William was never able to feel financial security, even with all his success. Orphaned at eight, William depleted his patrimony by age fifteen. Luck led him to a good foster home and connections into law. He was admitted to the

⁴⁰¹ Catherine Kerrigan, *Claiming the Pen: Women and Intellectual Life in the Early American South* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 150.

Virginia Bar in 1792 and was married and widowed by 1795. William left the piedmont region of Virginia after the death of his first wife and relocated to Richmond. Americans today would readily recognize William's "type A" personality traits in his "workaholic" tendencies. Fame, fortune, and personal satisfaction are factors worthy of consideration, but he appears galvanized to achieve. His love of country, law, and legal order cannot be questioned. He was committed to the American Republic; otherwise, he could never have maintained friendships with Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and Jefferson's nephew, Dabney Carr, who remained his closest friend for the remainder of his life. Wirt's character, integrity, virtue, honor, were above reproach. He appears to have indulged in youthful, alcohol-induced pranks, but maturity and marriage effectively ended fraternity-style behavior.

Sacrifices were not made solely for the good of the public and country: he was a driven personality and the Republican companionate marriage mode encouraged large families of numerous children. A wife was considered blessed and dutiful if she maintained a high pregnancy rate, and American mothering manuals and magazines stressed the importance of the mother personally breastfeeding. For Elizabeth Wirt, this equates to nearly twenty years of breast-feeding as ten of the twelve children she borne survived infancy. Few females would fail to note that as sacrifice. William, on the other hand, was very conscious of his need to provide for his family. A month after their first child was born, William planned to exert himself "soul and body to the profession for fifteen years" after which he would be able to devote himself to preparing their children

for “the theatre of life.”⁴⁰² It is significant that Elizabeth handled the family finances, informed by William to “consider my money as being perfectly your own.”⁴⁰³ Since he had to earn an income, they were not a couple of independent means. He had to earn an income. Indicating that what is his, is hers too was a big step for most men, especially southern. This was a change in marital perspectives, especially in the south. Again, William’s intention of a companionate marriage appears to have been there, but reality got in the way.

The rearing of children and good parenting became a public duty in the transformational early years of the New Republic. The Wirts had planned to share the responsibility of raising their children. However, whether from preference or necessity, William’s legal practice and judicial circuits kept him away from home for as long as ten months of the year. Although he wrote the children encouraging them toward virtue, insisting on educational excellence, and expounding on the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, the task of education fell squarely on Elizabeth’s shoulders. Education was a civic responsibility. “At the heart of the Revolution lay the assumption that people were not born to be what they might become.”⁴⁰⁴ The epistemology of Locke, which Americans significantly embraced regarding education, argued that a child’s mind was a blank slate. Education was the root of the Republic’s success. “Literature and Liberty go

⁴⁰² William Wirt to Elizabeth Wirt, October 11, 1803, Maryland Historical Society, <http://www.mdhs.org/>.

⁴⁰³ WW to EW, May 22, 1804. MdHS, <http://www.mdhs.org/>.

⁴⁰⁴ Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 470.

hand in hand.”⁴⁰⁵ It became a moral obligation, although not compulsory, to educate the nation’s children, but most often at the parents’ expense. While plans toward public education progressed slowly, private education among the middle classes abounded. As with most couples of the era, the children’s preparatory education and design for formal edification fell to the mother.

William Wirt was not politically driven to seek public office but he was motivated to serve the public and his family. Elizabeth Wirt may have preferred Mercy Otis Warren’s conception of self-sacrifice, but William’s strength of personality forced her to accord with Abigail Adams’ example. It proved not her decision to make. As William Wirt repeatedly informed his wife that his love was not demonstrated in his physical presence but in the fact that he worked so hard to provide, beyond the levels of mere sufficiency, for his wife and children [historian’s paraphrase]. However, income necessity had surpassed mere security and fell toward luxuries, which he still may have viewed as “necessaries.” When the eldest daughters entered Washington society and the marriage market, Wirt assumed they required dresses from Paris to make the best matches. The Revolution entitled men to climb the social ranks, work their way up, but once there, well, little had changed in the upper echelon.

Not much had changed for women either. Elizabeth Wirt conveyed her sense of disappointment in a letter to her eldest, first married daughter, Laura. It illustrates lost confidence in the companionate ideal. She advised her daughter to “find happiness in

⁴⁰⁵ As cited by Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 471.

filling your respective roles, not in love for each other.”⁴⁰⁶ Elizabeth told Laura to “yield to circumstance.”⁴⁰⁷ It suggests that Elizabeth wanted to spare her daughter the pain of failed expectations. There is no mistaking Elizabeth’s dissatisfaction in her letter to William: “Two months of the year -- and not always that either -- is too bad a life to lead.”⁴⁰⁸ Elizabeth was resigned, angry, and emotionally withdrawn from her husband. A Republican marriage was nearly unattainable in an era with so few conveniences.

William Wirt became renowned for his legal skill. In 1807 he was selected as one of the government’s attorneys to prosecute Aaron Burr for treason. He was appointed to the office of Attorney General of the United States by President James Monroe in 1817 and continued to serve in that position until 1829. Arriving in Washington D.C., he discovered he had no physical office, clerks, or the records from previous decisions. This point is quite interesting in itself as 1817 marked the halfway point in Justice John Marshall’s lengthy and prolific career on the Supreme Court. Simply to establish the office of the Attorney General was going to require great skill, energy, and long hours on a public servant’s pay. His salary of \$3,500 (initially \$1,500) was not sufficient to support his wife, ten children, and the five slaves that comprised his household. The concept of “conflict of interest” had not yet entered into the American mainstream. When Wirt accepted the position, it was with the understanding that he was retained by the government as its attorney, and, when not engaged with such duties, he could

⁴⁰⁶ Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic*, 136

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ EW to WW, December 20, 1824, MdHS <http://www.mdhs.org/>.

continue to devote time to his own law practice. As he communicated to Elizabeth, “they [probably Monroe’s inner circle or cabinet] all assure me that there is nothing in the duties of the office to prevent the general practice of my profession ... and attending occasional calls [to represent private cases] to Baltimore, Philad[elphi]a, Annapolis, or Richmond.”⁴⁰⁹ Serving as Attorney General of the United States caused the most sacrifice for the Wirt family emotionally. The office offered bountiful financial rewards, but it nearly cost them their relationship.

William’s semiretirement, forced by ill health, helped to achieve a semblance of Republican marriage and companionate egalitarian measures. The time and opportunity for a full companionate marriage had passed. The children had grown and left home. Love had managed to survive and their respect for one another had never faltered. Elizabeth’s contribution was to manage the household and its economy and William supplied income. However, his public service days were over. Home was happy. And, before the end of his life, William turned to Christianity and escorted his wife to services at the Presbyterian Church. How American was that? Arguably it was more common than egalitarianism was in marriage.

⁴⁰⁹ WW to EW, and reverse, November 13-18, 1817. MdHS <http://www.mdhs.org/>

Martha Laurens Ramsay and Dr. David Ramsay



Figure 19. Martha Laurens at age 17.
By Jonathon Wallaston, it is in a private collection



Figure 20. David Ramsay, M.D.
www.famousamericans.net/davidramsay/

The relationship between Martha Laurens Ramsay (1759-1811) and David Ramsay (1749-1815) is an excellent example of the companionate, Republican marriage in which companionate was a catchphrase for women's greater self-sacrifice and increased responsibility which availed their husbands more time to serve community and country. Their union illustrates the difficulty in achieving a long-term political friendship within a marriage. Continued active patriotism most often meant substantial sacrifices for the female partner. The relationships that aspired to Republican marriages were political partnerships. The couples sought an ideal union which enabled them to

contribute to society and nation. Domestic principles and happiness became central to the concept of instilling public virtue and came to represent Republicanism itself.

The Laurens/Ramsay marriage was sexually and intellectually charged; their mutually shared political precepts were a bonus. David was a political idealist, a revolutionary war hero, and friend and physician to Martha's adored father, Henry Laurens. To Ramsay, creating harmony in marriage was true patriotism and Martha concurred.⁴¹⁰ Henry Laurens had been committed to the American cause. He had served as president of the Continental Congress, served as a diplomat, and had been active in South Carolina government. Laurens had consistently conveyed to his children that citizens were responsible to and for their community. It was ingrained in Martha:

Let all your reading, your study, and your practice make you a wise and virtuous woman, rather than a fine lady ... as the latter is too often found to be deficient both in wisdom and virtue.

Henry Laurens, from Philadelphia, August 18, 1771.

Henry Laurens was a wealthy plantation owner and his children had received excellent educations. Martha was particularly bookish and needed to be reminded to practice her puddings (literally). Regardless of class, most women were destined for domestic employment on some level. As well as domestically adept, Martha was a serious scholar -
- analytical and sophisticated. Her brother John noted that "her mind was superior to the

⁴¹⁰ Joanna Bowen Gillespie, *The Life and Times of Martha Laurens Ramsay, 1759-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 115.

Also see, Joanna Bowen Gillespie, "Filiopietism as Citizenship, 1810: Letters from Martha Laurens Ramsay to David Ramsay," *Early American Literature*, 29:2 (1994): 141-165; Joanna Bowen Gillespie, "1795: Martha Laurens Ramsay's 'Dark Night of the Soul,'" *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 48:1 (January 1999): 68-92; Kierner, *Revolutionary America, 1750-1815: Sources and Interpretations*, (New Jersey: Pearson, 2003), Chapters 8, 12, 13; Kierner, *Southern Women in Revolution*, 6, 36, 150-55, 163-66; Zagarri, *Backlash*, 10.

common accidents of life, and ... of her sex.”⁴¹¹ She excelled at philosophy, biology and botany, English and French languages, Greek and Latin classics, civil history, astronomy, and the Bible. Dr. Ramsay, born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had humble beginnings. He was fortunate to have attended the College of New Jersey (now Princeton) and studied under Dr. Benjamin Rush. He relocated to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1774. David and Martha married in 1787. His antislavery stance did not always endear him to his neighbors. The Laurens family were slaveholders but Martha’s brother John had taken an antislavery position long before his death in the Revolutionary War.

Both Ramsays believed rhetoric and literature improved public virtue and thus served the Republic. David wrote: *History of the Revolution of South Carolina: from British Province to an Independent State* (Charleston, 1785); *History of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia, 1789); *The Life of George Washington* (New York, 1807); *Memoirs of the Life of Martha Laurens Ramsay* (Charleston, 1811); and *History of the Independent or Congregational Church in Charleston* (Philadelphia, 1815). He produced the books concurrent with his medical practice and simultaneous to his public service.

To the Ramsays, “Public was that ‘sacred precept of doing good to others as we would have others do unto us,’ but not just to ourselves -- ‘to society in general.’”⁴¹² It was linked to religion. This was a rational transition for Martha. “Unable to display her

⁴¹¹ David Ramsay, ed., *Memoir of the Life of Martha Laurens Ramsay: with an Appendix, Containing Extracts from Her Diary, Letters, and Other Private Papers; and Also, from Letters Written to Her by Her Father, Henry Laurens, 1771-1776* (Charleston, 1815), 16-17.

⁴¹² Cited from Joanna Gillespie, *The Life and Times of Martha Laurens Ramsay*, 121.

abilities in a civic realm dominated by men, Martha constructed her identity through a personal covenant with God: she pledged to make her contributions to society as a model of virtue and piety” as a teenager.⁴¹³ She pledged the same to her marriage years later. In between, she had experienced the American Revolution. Religion was central to her conception of Republican marriage and paralleled Congregationalism, although she was a southern descendant of French Huguenots and raised in the Anglican, later Episcopal, faith. She attended a Congregationalist Church with her husband after their marriage, but she had established her convictions long before she met David Ramsay, whom she married at age twenty-eight. They maintained committed to these principles throughout their marriage.

Martha was the consummate Republican wife and mother. She was a contributor to the family economy through financial partnership and home management. She assisted Dr. Ramsay’s medical practice in a variety of ways: transcription of notes, comfort of patients, preparing and mailing bills, and researched medical texts. Noting that she read and understood texts “usually put into the hands of medical students,” David thus acknowledged that Martha was his intellectual equal. Ever the scholar, as guardian of her niece, Fanny, and in preparation for motherhood, Martha read *Thoughts on Female Education* by Benjamin Rush. She had eleven children, eight survived to adulthood. Dissatisfied with the texts available she compiled her own curriculum for the children. She instilled all her children with the sense of duty to society and obligations of

⁴¹³ Gregory Massey, *John Laurens and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 53.

citizenship. Martha warned her son, who was attending college at Princeton, far from her watchful eye: “I have seen many young persons, with every possible advantage for cultivating their talents, improving their minds, and becoming estimable members of society, lost to themselves, a disgrace to their friends, plagues to society ... from ... smoking, drinking, an excessive love of finery, of trifling company.”⁴¹⁴ Martha wrote that she “shuddered” to contemplate that her child, who had been raised in virtue, should ever fall short of his duty. “I hope you are doing yourself credit, and preparing yourself for future usefulness in life.”⁴¹⁵ Usefulness in life meant to the common good.

Good Republican wives remained silent in despair and uncomplaining of sacrifice. Martha apparently internalized her anxieties to an unhealthy degree, only revealing them in diaries. She started the diaries in 1791. The journals probably began as solace. One of her babies died in 1790, and she lost another in 1791. David had invested all of Martha’s patrimony, \$25,000 in the Santee Canal Company during 1792. It was for public benefit, a patriotic gesture from which they received no income, but they had not expected a total loss. Financially it ruined them. Martha neither complained of the loss, nor any of the difficulties they encountered, which included a bankruptcy. Her Laurens inheritance was gone. Her sister and newly born nephew died from complications during childbirth in 1794. Fanny, the niece she had raised, eloped to London with an inappropriate man and never returned to the States. Martha spiraled into full-fledged depression, possibly provoked by postpartum despair, in 1795. “In their republican

⁴¹⁴ Ramsay, *Memoirs*, September 11, 1810.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, November 7, 1810.

marriage, her ‘language of submission was not that of subordinate wife; it was a loyal silence about the lowered standard of living to which she, a Laurens though she was, had to accommodate.’”⁴¹⁶ She could not voice her humiliation. She “made her peace with their principled poverty in a year when her mental stability was already under siege.”⁴¹⁷ After a year, she was able to prevail through her “Dark Night of the Soul.”⁴¹⁸ From all available indicators, her family never realized Martha was suffering.

Her memoirs, published after her death, focus on the period of depression and emotional crisis she experienced, which Martha believed she had survived through devout faith. The publication was viewed as an exemplary pattern for young women of the Republic to follow. Kept privately for fourteen years, David did not know of the diaries existence until Martha was dying. She expected her journals to be used similarly to commonplace books: read, discussed, shared -- at least among her family. David decided on publication. He and Martha had always been confident that literature improved public virtue and hence was valuable in forming the Republic. In the editing of *Memoirs of the Life of Martha Laurens Ramsay: With an Appendix, Containing Extracts from Her Diary, Letters, and Other Private Papers; and also from Letters Written to Her by Her Father, Henry Laurens, 1771-1776*,⁴¹⁹ David was an unusual husband in that he let her words and tonal inflection speak for themselves. He consciously decided that the

⁴¹⁶ Gillespie, *Martha Laurens Ramsay*, 117-120.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 118, also see chapter 8, 186.

⁴¹⁸ Joanna B. Gillespie, “1795: Martha Laurens Ramsay’s ‘Dark Night of the Soul,’” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 48:1 (January, 1991): 68-92.

⁴¹⁹ David Ramsay, ed., *Memoirs*, 33.

materials *not* be edited or reconstructed as an extension of his reflections. Ramsay offered a brief biography of Martha as an introduction in *Memoirs*. He praised Martha as the Republican wife and mother ideal. She was. Martha was the epitome of the Republican Superwoman. What comes forth, and was not fully enough recognized at the time, is that she was a brilliant woman trapped by the responsibilities and limitations imposed upon her gender. She has been recognized as a scientist, her renditions of botanical species so accurate they were published, her astrological figures lauded -- yet, the perfect Republican woman of her era was praised for:

Regarding 'equality of the sexes' few females could support their claims to that equality on better grounds than she might advance; but she yielded all pretensions on this score, in conformity to the ... holy writ ... Wives submit yourself unto your own husbands ... for the husband is the head of the wife...⁴²⁰

In every sort of female employment she was very expert, and dispatching a great deal of business in little time. In reading, writing, and working, she was equally expeditious ...⁴²¹

she slept very little, and so lightly ... She was therefore, the first to receive professional messages [medical] in the hours allotted to repose [sleep]. After getting the necessary information, she so arranged matters that these unseasonable [outside regular hours] were attended with the least possible inconvenience to her husband.⁴²²

⁴²⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 35.

⁴²² Ibid.

“Martha’s matrimonial politics, including all the mutual affection and proto-citizenship credits that gleam through her husband’s adoring tribute, encompassed all the patriarchal assumptions and compromises that no women in the New Republic could avoid.”⁴²³ Had she not been inundated privately and publicly with the message of separate spheres, womanly duties, and a woman’s place? With her formidable intellect she might have made contributions academically or politically toward the common good. Indeed, she had at a tender and impressionable age decided that “she would devote herself to the study of religion as her brother would to politics.”⁴²⁴ There was little choice for women, even patriotic ones, outside religious participation. Did she pursue the devotion to religion due to the perimeters of acceptability in elite, southern society? Certainly, but there were many women of her generation who followed the same course. It was their sacrifice to the common good. Witnessed and recalled by their granddaughters, the sacrifices set the stage for the slow, but inevitable, march toward women’s political inclusion.

⁴²³ Gillespie, *Martha Laurens Ramsay*, 123-4.

⁴²⁴ Kerrisan, *Claiming the Pen*, 64.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL PARTNERHIP WITHIN MARRIAGE

Abigail and John Adams

When John Adams was elected as President in 1797 the public got a deal: two for the price of one. He did not serve alone. John and Abigail were a team when it came to politics. He depended on and trusted her more than any other adviser. The political friendship between Abigail Smith Adams and John Adams never waned over the years; it was as intense as their devotion to country and to each other. Abigail Adams was not entirely thrilled when John was elected president in 1797 -- she deplored living in Philadelphia. Eight years during her husband's terms as vice president had been plenty. She was not in a hurry to leave Quincy, less so as the President's Lady, for she "lamented having to 'look at every word before I utter it, and to impose a silence upon myself, when I long to talk.'"⁴²⁵ Abigail had planned to remain in Quincy through the summer, although only two weeks into the presidency John had written, "I never wanted your Advice and assistance more in my Life."⁴²⁶ She had intended to advise him through

⁴²⁵ Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams, A Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 302; Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*; Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brother*, (New York: Vintage, 2002); Thomas Fleming, *The Intimate Lives of the Founding Father* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009); Edith B. Gelles, *Abigail and John: Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Harper, 2009); Gelles, *Abigail Adams: A Writing Life* (New York: Rutledge, 2002); Gelles, *Portia: The World of Abigail Adams* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); George W. Carey, ed., *The Political Writings of John Adams*, (Washington, DC: Regenery, 2000); Joseph J. Ellis, Margaret Hogan, and C. James Taylor, *My Dearest Friend: Letters of Abigail and John Adams* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Random House), 1996.

correspondence, but John sent more messages “intreating her, come ... that you may take off from me every Care of Life but that of my public Duty, assist me with your Councils, and console me with your Conversation.”⁴²⁷ By the end of March Abigail informed him of her arrival within a month. It wasn’t what she had planned, it was not what she wanted, but, just as she had emotionally supported him through the ordeal of election, she would assist him through the presidency.

Abigail and John were true political partners. He held office and she was his closest ally, confidant, and supporter. John Adams had communicated to Abigail, as his second term as vice president was ending in 1796, that in an election between Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, and himself, he might again hold the office of vice president. Abigail, his lifelong political partner, replied firmly: “As to holding the office of V.P. there I will give my opinion, Resign retire. I should be Second under no Man but Washington ... When we see the intrigues the Ambition the Envy the malice and ingratitude of the world, who would not rather, retire and live unnoticed in a country village ...”⁴²⁸ They had sacrificed much for their country. For the common good John Adams should be the next leader of the country, but that choice was not theirs to make. The public would not be served by John occupying “The Most Insignificant Office” again.⁴²⁹ Also notable was her use of the pronoun “I”. Did “I” represent “we”? Or, was she saying “I wouldn’t if I were you?” Regardless, her advice was direct: John, and she,

⁴²⁶ JA to AA, March 22, 1797, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org>.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ellis, *My Dearest Friend*, 400; AA to JA, January 21, 1796.

⁴²⁹ Ellis, *My Dearest Friend*, 353.

should be second to no other man except one so worthy of esteem as George Washington. In other words, enough was enough. If the electors did not appreciate his aptitude, it was time to retire.

One month later, Abigail admitted that her conscience was bothered by her previous comments. She felt she had failed to place concern for country over her personal desires. She had reconsidered: “I think what is Duty to other[s], and what is duty to ourselves.[?] I contemplate unpleasant consequences to our Country if your decision should be the same with the P[resident]s for as you observe, whatever may be the views and designs of Party, the chief of the Electors will do their duty, or I know little of the Country in which I live.” That President Washington was determined to retire, she continued, “This is an event not yet contemplated by the people at large. We must be attentive to their feelings and to their voice. No Successor can expect such support as the P.[resident] has had.” In addition, Abigail agonized that she did not possess the “patience, prudence, or discretion sufficient” to hold the position currently occupied by “so exceptionally” a person as Martha Washington.⁴³⁰ She seriously worried that she might not be able to restrain from freely expressing her political sentiments, which would undoubtedly prove detrimental to John. These private comments illustrate the Adamses’ great devotion to country and the degree to which political participation was, and ever shall be, fraught with personal, emotional, and psychological challenges for the candidate and their family.

⁴³⁰ AA to JA, February 20, 1796, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org>.

John's professed apprehension to Abigail is part and parcel of the politician/campaign advisor relationship: quicksilver emotions felt while awaiting a momentous, life-changing, history-making event:

I laugh at myself twenty times a Day, for my feelings, and meditations and Speculations in which I find myself engaged. Vanity Suffers. Cold feelings of Unpopularity. Humble reflections. Mortifications. Humiliation. Plans of future Life. Economy. Retrenching of expenses. Farming. Returning to the Bar. Drawing Writs, arguing Causes. Taking Clerks, Humiliations of my Country under foreign Bribes, Measures to counteract them. All this miserable Nonsense will come and go like evil into the Thoughts of Gods or Men, approved or unapproved...

He then continued with a commentary that a political wife would understand:

here alone abed, by my fireside nobody to speak to, poreing upon my Disgrace and future Prospects -- this is Ugly.

John expected to know the result of the election on the 16th of February, but at that time he held little hope that he would be "pronounced ... P. of U.S.":

Then for Frugality and Independence. Poverty and Patriotism. Love and a Carrot bed.

Don't show this stuff [to anyone].

John wrote to Abigail from Philadelphia on December 27, 1796:

My Dearest Friend,
... I had no Letter [from you] on Monday. According to present Appearances, Jefferson will be Daddy Vice [Vice President] ... If no irregularity appears to set aside Votes[,] 71 will carry the Point.⁴³¹

⁴³¹ Ellis, *My Dearest Friend*, 420; JA to AA, December 27, 1796, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org>.

Indeed, seventy-one votes did “carry the point.” John Adams was elected as the second President of the United States of America.

Political friends were pairs or groups of complex human beings, little different than the people they served or represented, except, as we realize, alliances among the Founding Generation placed expectations on each other’s quality of character: virtue, honor, passion, and interest of country. While waiting anxiously for election results in December 1796, John remarked that Abigail’s “Anxiety for your Country is amiable and becomes your Character.”⁴³² We modern readers might interpret his words as a rather patronizing compliment. In reality, he was simply stating a fact to a person worthy of his admiration -- and of equality.

Though she tried, Abigail was unable to suppress her opinions as the President’s wife. The Constitution for which she had made so many personal sacrifices to support confirmed her right to free speech. Besides comments directed toward her husband’s detractors, Abigail supported certain rights for women. At the very least, she argued, women had the right to be active in discussions regarding America’s future as it was their future too. She was labeled as thin-skinned, too actively partisan, and too outspoken for her sex. Perhaps over time Abigail will be recognized as an integral part of a political team. John and Abigail Adams were political partners for life, serving side-by-side, or letter-to-letter, but her gender denied her the credit due her contributions.

⁴³² JA to AA, December 16, 1796, MHS, <http://www.masshist.org>.

Dolley and James Madison

A fine portly buxom dame who has a smile and pleasant word for everybody ...but as to Jemmy Madison, ah poor Jemmy -- he is but a withered little applejohn.

Washington Irving⁴³³

The political friendship that existed between the Madisons is easily identifiable. She was, in a very real sense, his political manager, his campaign director, as well as his great love. Madison was seventeen years Dolley's senior, an age difference that is unusual now but not exceptional then. James Madison (1751-1836) was the man most prepared to be President of the United States, but it was Dolley Payne (Todd) Madison (1768-1849) that made his presidential terms successful. James Madison was a political theorist, an important contributor to the Federalist papers, author of the Constitution, Father of the Bill of Rights, Congressman, and Secretary of State for eight years under Thomas Jefferson. Madison had been involved in political service all of his adult life. He was brilliant. He was also small and shy. James was diminutive in stature, standing 5'4" and weighing approximately 100 pounds.⁴³⁴ In small gatherings of friends and acquaintances he was convivial, but in large groups he was uncomfortable and reticent and repeatedly described as "uncharismatic." Dolley was dazzling. She was smart,

⁴³³ As cited by Betty Boyd Caroli, *First Ladies: From Martha Washington to Laura Bush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 14. Also see Dolly Madison, Collected Correspondence, <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/dmde/>; Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996); Ketcham, *The Madisons of Montpelier: Reflections on the Founding Couple* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Dolley Madison, *Memoirs and Letters of Dolley Madison* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1886); David B. Mattern and Holly C. Shulman, eds., *The Selected Letters of Dolley Payne Madison* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003); Gary Wills and Arthur M. Schlesinger, *James Madison* (New York: Holt & Co., 2002).

⁴³⁴ Dolley is reported to have been between 5'7" and 5'8" and several pounds heavier than James.

sociable, vivacious, and lovely. She embodied the casual elegance that came to define the American identity. As a team, they balanced each other -- the strengths of one partner offset the weaknesses of the other.



Figure 21. James Madison by Gilbert Stuart.
http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1812.html



Figure 22. Dolley Madison by Gilbert Stuart.
http://www.whitehousehistory.org/whha_classroom/classroom_documents-1812.html

The Madisons understood the fragility of Republicanism and each devoted their talents toward the nation's success. Their objective was to secure his presidency and protect the very new form of government. No effective political or social models for American etiquette had been established. George and Martha Washington had been reserved, their most familiar example being royalty yet conscious that they did not want to denote nobility. The Adamses were reservedly formal, no doubt influenced by their religious conventions. Jefferson's style was etiquette-shattering egalitarianism. The

Madisons chose to apply the same warm, simple southern hospitality that they incorporated in their personal home. They wanted people to be comfortable in the Nation's house. Evidence suggests that Dolley had a friendly openness about herself that was unusual in the era. She was approachable. Even the public referred to President Madison's wife as "Dolley" -- which would not have been imagined for the former ladies. James called her Dolley, rather than Mrs. Madison which would have been customary, between husbands and wives, in the era. In more formal correspondence Dolley referred to her husband as the President or Mr. Madison; however, in family settings she often identified him simply as "M" which attests to her habit of calling him "Madison" rather than "Mr. Madison." That Americans called the President's wife by her first name was symbolic of their great affection. The public identified with Dolley. She became, and remained, a national treasure.

Dolley was a born politician. "The face-to-face politics that ruled the day was precisely the politics at which Dolley excelled."⁴³⁵ She understood the possibilities of networking, long before it became standard practice. In cultivating political support for her husband, Dolley started with the ladies first. She made a point to be the first person to visit congressional wives newly relocated to Washington, D.C. According to protocol of the era, the fact that she visited first demonstrated "humility in the president's attitude toward legislators."⁴³⁶ She proceeded in the same manner towards clerks' wives and diplomats' spouses. Additionally, Dolley hosted "Dove Dinners" for the wives of cabinet

⁴³⁵ Catherine Allgor, *A Perfect Union*, (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2006), 187.

⁴³⁶ Caroli, *First Ladies*, 16.

members “where information flowed freely.”⁴³⁷ She was, essentially, Madison’s public relations specialist.

To operate most effectively, Dolley needed a socially acceptable means for mingling with the ladies’ husbands. So began the Wednesday evening drawing rooms fetes. Her parties attracted three to five hundred persons each week -- they were soon called “squeezes.”⁴³⁸ They were similar to French salons but the American version was more casual, cross-class, cross-culture, minimally artistic, highly centered on politics and government. Official entertaining was made comfortable by blending hospitality and cordiality. Both manners and style reflected simple, genteel, and classic tastes. Conversation was forthright and direct but expected to be conducted politely and with respect. In the atmosphere of large gatherings American statesmen and foreign dignitaries were able to relax. In small groups politicians had to remain alert, focused on following each conversation. An American form of civility developed in Dolley’s drawing rooms, where she stressed communication over conflict, mediation instead of provocation. The Quaker moderation of her earlier life was fundamental to her personality.

Dolley was politically savvy. She understood human nature, read people’s actions and expressions well. She was egalitarian in her reception of each person. She spoke with everyone, regardless of their station, position, or wealth. She rarely forgot a name or made an inappropriate comment.⁴³⁹ Aware of the controversy resulting from

⁴³⁷ Cokie Roberts, *Ladies of Liberty* (New York: William Morrow, 2008), 189.

⁴³⁸ Fleming, *Intimate Lives*, 389.

⁴³⁹ Caroli, *First Ladies*, 14.

Abigail Adams' partisanship, Dolley worked to consistently appear apolitical. Where Abigail had been sensitive and retaliatory to criticism, Dolley "listened without emotion,"⁴⁴⁰ rarely responding to negativity. She "showered her husband's enemies with the same attention that she gave his friends."⁴⁴¹ Additionally, she steered "conversation with political figures, including their spouses, in a way to reveal their positions on issues facing the Madison administration, or sought to convince them to consider the viewpoint of her husband."⁴⁴² Dolley increased the receptiveness of her husband's politics in a manner he was completely incapable of mastering -- sheer charisma. She psychologically disarmed numerous Madison enemies and intensified support among his allies.

President Madison's first term had been fraught with difficulties, but he desired a second. Dolley reached out to contacts she had already established. She knew the value of making connections and networking. Understanding the influence that most women could exercise on their husbands, Dolley again turned to the ladies first. For years she had been successfully marketing her husband to congressmen, enemies and allies, and could count on many for support. She employed her skills to best assist her husband. They were partners in politics. She made being the President's wife a semi-public office.⁴⁴³ Even her style of clothing was carefully selected to reflect Republican modesty

⁴⁴⁰ Fleming, *Intimate Lives*, 381.

⁴⁴¹ Caroli, *First Ladies*, 14.

⁴⁴² <http://www.firstladies.org/>

⁴⁴³ Fleming, *Intimate Lives*, 384.

and American dignity, never ostentatious, the respectability of pearls instead of the glitz of diamonds. She was the embodiment of responsibility and respectability, a reflection of James Madison's best qualities. The public related to Dolley Madison, and through her to James. New Englanders might not have been swayed, but the rest of the country, especially those in the West, were captivated by the identity being forged. Historians who have studied the Dolley phenomenon note her contribution to his 1812 victory. By 1817 it became apparent that Madison's administration had held the nation together, even at a time of war, and led to a "new era of unity."⁴⁴⁴ In part it was due to James' sterling character, his "philosophic mind, moderate temper, and purity of spirit."⁴⁴⁵ His greatest political achievement was the transcendence of partisanship, probably impossible without his wife. In their political partnership, "Dolley had always taken charge of the psychological and emotional aspects of politics."⁴⁴⁶ Dolley was Madison's greatest political ally.

⁴⁴⁴ Allgor, *A Perfect Union*, 343.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Political friendship was a category of relationship that developed in the eighteenth century Atlantic World, especially among members of the revolutionary founding generation. Political alliances of the era were socially constructed from shared objectives. A commitment to the common good and the expectations of honor, virtue, and attachment to community and country drove revolutionary change. This dissertation has established criteria for identifying a politically motivated category of friendship. It has demonstrated how character combined with personal experiences, and most often education, formed a foundation for study on civically minded alliances. Political friendship is an analytical tool which has only sparingly been employed by historians, when, to the contrary, this approach deserves full incorporation into early American historical interpretation.

Notably, this study focused primarily on those who were, at various points, excluded from the political process due to gender, ethnicity, race, or religion. The selection was neither meant to marginalize the contributions of white Protestant males, or to indicate that they did not share political friendship, for they did. Thomas Jefferson's last letter to James Madison, dated February 17, 1826, epitomized political friendship:

The friendship which has subsisted between us, now half a century, and the harmony of our political principles and pursuits, have been sources of constant happiness to me thro' that long period... it has also been a great

solace to me, to believe that you are engaged in vindicating to posterity the course we have pursued for preserving to them, in all their purity, the blessings of self-government, which we had assisted too in acquiring for them. If ever the earth has beheld a system of administration, conducted with a single and steadfast eye to the general interest and happiness of those committed to it, one which, protected by truth, can never know reproach, it is that to which our lives have been devoted. To myself, you have been a pillar of support thro' life. Take care of me when dead, and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections.⁴⁴⁷

Political friendship shared by active white male participants is easier to identify and substantiate due to the large number of sources they left which laid the groundwork for investigating the phenomenon on women, non-whites, and ethnic others.

Some Alliances Appear to be Political Friendship, however ...

There are also relationships that appear to qualify as political friendship but, upon further review, lack the criteria previously explained. Political friendship could be short-term, life long, or represent a relationship that actually classified as another category of friendship style. Political goals could continue after the death of a participant, exemplified by the Brotherton Movement of Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson. It could cease when a member fell short of personal expectations, as was the case with Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren. Some alliances established as, or that transitioned to, political friendship failed due to circumstances beyond individual control. Failure could be caused by a change of mind, or ended with a broken promise. The possibilities for analysis are innumerable. The following are examples that appear as political friendship on the surface but fall short.

⁴⁴⁷ "Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, February 17, 1826," Library of Congress, last accessed October 15, 2010, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/jeffleg.html>.

George Washington and Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier,
Marquis de Lafayette

The relationship between George Washington and Marquis de Lafayette is illustrative of a quasi-political alliance, not a political friendship. In 1777, George Washington (1732-1799), commander in chief of the Continental Army, took an enthusiastic, Enlightenment-stirred, teenage French nobleman, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), under his wing. Lafayette had slipped from the clutches of his father-in-law and was eager to assist in the great experiment at liberty being fought in North America. It did not take long for Washington to consider the engaging young marquis as part of his family. Their letters, and those of contemporaries, leave no doubt that Washington and Lafayette loved each other as father and son. Lafayette viewed Washington as a father figure, the person he most admired, respected, wanted to emulate, and from whom he sought to learn all he could. Both were committed to the American Revolution but their agendas were completely different. The United States was Washington's country. He believed in the American cause: a struggle of political morality, against abuses of power, and in the creation of a Republic. Lafayette was influenced and inspired to action by the enlightened tirades of Abbe Guillaume Raynal.⁴⁴⁸ Raynal espoused liberty and freedom, from kings and for the enslaved. Lafayette became a wholehearted abolitionist. Washington and Lafayette shared an emotionally deep, close, personal friendship. They were military comrades, mentor and protégé in military matters, fellow soldiers, but they did not share a political friendship. True, they both wanted to win the war, but for

⁴⁴⁸ Abbe Guillaume Raynal, a former priest defrocked by the church for his outspoken radicalism. Instead of the pulpit he spread his message wherever people would listen, especially social clubs and Masonic temples.

contrasting reasons. Certainly they discussed politics and appreciated each other's honorable qualities, but they were never a team and did not strive to achieve a specific political goal.

Thomas Jefferson, Andrzej Tadeusz Bonventura Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull

Agrippa Hull (1759-1848) was a free-born African American raised in Stockton, Massachusetts where, in his youth, the majority of the population was Christianized Native Americans, with many white folk, and very few blacks. He had not suffered under the oppressive racism that existed in most of the colonies. Indignation as an American, adventure, and a little cash led him to enlist in the Continental Army when he was eighteen. Hull was an upstanding fellow. He became an aide, more accurately servant, to Polish-born officer and impoverished member of lower nobility, Andrzej Tadeusz Bonventura Kosciuszko (1746-1817). While studying military engineering in Paris, Kosciuszko, like Lafayette, had been enthralled by Abbe Raynal's vision of Enlightenment. Raynal's message, combined with hardship, military uprising, and oppression from surrounding countries, mainly Russia, prompted the young Pole to seek a better situation with the revolution in America. Despite the difference in their social and military ranks, the two men became close friends. It was not a political friendship, but very likely was the greatest motivating force behind Kosciuszko's attempt at American abolition.

Thomas Jefferson and Tadeusz Kosciuszko entered into political friendship with a promise. They had become good personal friends after the war. When the Alien and Sedition Acts to leave the United States, in 1798, forced his deportation Kosciuszko had

to decide what to do with the money and property he been granted for his service to America. Kosciuszko was an outspoken opponent of slavery and serfdom. Rather than transfer the funds to Europe, Kosciuszko gave Thomas Jefferson power of attorney and named him executor of his will and American estate. The purpose of the action was totally political: to emancipate as many slaves as possible. Jefferson had promised to use Kosciuszko's sizable estate to buy the freedom of as many "Negroes" as possible and to provide for their education and maintenance. Jefferson would be entitled to use the funds to free his own slaves, thus alleviating his mounting debt, and thereby setting an amazing example for other slave owners. Kosciuszko died in 1817; but shortly before his death, however, he wrote to Jefferson and reminded him of their "sacred oath."⁴⁴⁹ Jefferson, for reasons too numerous and complicated to recount here, sought William Wirt's (yes, Elizabeth's husband) assistance.⁴⁵⁰ Ultimately, Jefferson refused to act as executor and requested William Wirt act as trustee for the estate. Is this an example of a political friendship unfulfilled by a broken promise? Yes. Was this promise beyond Jefferson's control to keep due to laws against emancipation in Virginia? Certainly, to an extent. Was Jefferson initially sincere in making the pledge but later changed his mind? Maybe. Perhaps he made the "sacred oath" while caught up in the moment. Thomas Jefferson was human. The answers to these questions lie, waiting, for another study in political friendship.

⁴⁴⁹ Papers of Thomas Jefferson, uva.edu, September 15, 1817.

⁴⁵⁰ Gary B. Nash and Graham Russell Gao Hodges present highly interesting arguments, and a number of scenarios, toward explanation in *Friends of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, and Agrippa Hull: A Tale of Three Patriots, Two Revolutions, and a Tragic Betrayal of Freedom in the New Nation* (New York: Basic Book Publishing, 2008).

Process and Outcome

The structure of this study connects elements of process and outcome. Therefore, this historical account asks: what influenced and motivated these political actors? As queried in the Introduction: How did friendship between political allies enable individuals to pursue their objectives and attempt to secure their political goals? What expectations of success did they harbor? How did their activities fit into historical context? The answers to these questions have decisively shaped this study's conclusions.

Sir William Johnson and Molly Brant are an extraordinary example of an eighteenth century political friendship that crossed gender, race, and ethnicity. Their alliance was independent of religion. They shared friendship and ideology as well as love and marriage. Friendship, in theory, is founded on compatibility, common conceptions, and reciprocity – William and Molly's relationship exemplified these features. Documentation indicates that both were respected for their personal character. Both were well educated, beyond the standards of their era and norms for their races. They shared ideas of civil and natural rights, and both believed in the right of people to live freely on their own land. Johnson, reared as a Catholic in Ireland, where the Native peoples' rights had been revoked and policies had been implemented to extinguish their culture. William was thus able to relate to Molly's people. In Mohawk matrilineal society Molly Brant was a politically powerful woman. Their union was a model for the possibility of cross-cultural diplomacy. It is possible that their united efforts prevented the systematic extermination of the Mohawk nation through biological warfare (smallpox). The education and cross-cultural political training of their protégé, Molly's

brother Joseph Brant, enabled him to negotiate with British officials for territory in Canada more effectively than leaders of other Native nations who had also served the Loyalist cause.

A full-blooded Native American, Joseph Brant was an intellectual, as were Samson Occom and Joseph Johnson. They embraced intellectualism and their ethnicity. All advocated enlightened education and training in the English language for Native American survival. All three men were devout Christians and endorsed Indian conversion. Native American communal culture set community as priority, and quality of character as a political determinant, arguably, predated Western application. The political activism of Occom and Johnson, as ministers and teachers, differed greatly from Chief Brant's, but they shared the desire of racial and political autonomy. Although their objectives were similar, their paths for securing goals differed greatly. Both the Brotherton Movement and Mohawk survival succeeded, but the level of achievement is open to interpretation.

Samson Occom and Phillis Wheatley incorporated their personal talents to pursue kindred goals and united on the basis of intellect and religion. The magnitude of their inspired concepts and unique approaches toward promoting racial equality and abolitionism made considerations of race or gender insignificant in the friendship. They encouraged strength and determination, as well as influenced and inspired one another. Their shared philosophical mind-sets and religious foundation prompted their courage to publically question racial injustice.

I deliberately sought a nontraditional format to present possibilities availed by the study of political friendship during the American Revolution. In part I chose to explore white men banned from political participation on the basis of their religions and women united by their political discussions. All were motivated for social change. Each case study in Part Two addresses process and outcome. Each individual in this study attempted to balance public commitment with personal sacrifice. Some friendships, political as well as other categories, survived the stress of war while others collapsed or the need to unite passed. The outcomes vary as much as the people involved.

The Enlightenment and education were important motivating processes, as was the struggle against political rights based on religious affiliation. Some political friendships formed to break the Anglican choke hold: and sought to eliminate that faith's domination over the structures of social power. Individuals involved in political friendship to promote religious tolerance were instrumental in ensuring that no one religion in the American system could command all the avenues of authority -- government, military, judicial, and economic control -- through the exclusion of nonconformers. The father-son team of the Carrolls, the mentor-protégé relationship of Francis Hutcheson and Francis Alison, and the Sheftall brothers are examples of educated and enlightened men allied for religious freedom.

During the American Revolution some women made their voices heard. All the women in this study stand as examples of breaking traditional barriers. In prerevolutionary America, a woman's name appearing in print could ruin her reputation. Women interested in politics had typically been considered impolite. Uniting with others

in politically motivated friendship provided women the security necessary to publically speak out. Abigail Adams and Mercy Otis Warren are unique examples of politically active women. They allied along gender lines and served as team players with their husbands. Their relationships reflect the complex human framework combined with historical context that is the reality of politics. Abigail and Mercy had everything in common as women, wives, mothers, and patriots, and yet their friendship fractured. They were educated and opinionated women, proponents of Whig philosophies, who adhered to principles of Congregationalism, and were wives of active patriots. They shared a passion for politics, country, and family, but neither completely understood the other's limits, or capacity, for sacrifice. Both understood honor and virtue according to Congregationalist religious standards. Tensions arose in the relationship when the perception of honor and virtue transitioned into public cause and principles of state, and public interest took primacy over private interest. Each realized that their husband's political participation would translate into personal sacrifice. They could not have anticipated the extent of the losses. War extols a heavy price on victors and the defeated alike. For the members of the revolutionary generation in America the loss was often personal: a loved one from duty or death; careers disrupted or destroyed; financial difficulty inflicted; and property loss are just a few cases in point.

Abigail Adams was able to adopt the concept of "country first" and of the Republican marriage tenet of sacrifice to a far greater degree than Mercy, and to an extent few individuals could have managed. Mercy found that she was unable to be separated from her husband, James Warren, for lengthy periods. Abigail Adams, and women like

Elizabeth Wirt, suffered from the sacrifice, but espoused the ideal of country first very literally. Mercy's unwillingness to sacrifice for the good of the country, yet comment that Abigail should, ripped an irreparable hole in the relationship between the two women. In Abigail's view, Mercy's behavior reflected a lack of virtue, honor, and interest according to the definitions of Republican principles and expectations of political friendship. Mercy felt greater passion for her husband than to her country. Abigail loved John Adams with the same intensity, but her fervent patriotism was beyond that which Mercy could understand or adopt. The political friendship could not recover, its fracture splintered across the categories of friendship their relationship had embraced to the point that they were unable to regain even a pleasantly personal association.

Playing an active part in building a Republic required enormous personal sacrifice. Political friendship could last a lifetime, through a marriage, it could achieve an objective and be disbanded, or be perpetually renewed. It was, in fact, political friendship – for example, between Dolley and James Madison, and shared by James Madison and Thomas Jefferson -- that yielded enormous legacies of government, statecraft, diplomacy, education, and social and cultural identity to Americans and the United States. The category is well worth studying.

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