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RESPONSE TO REVOLUTION: QUEENS COUNTY, NEW YORK,
DURING THE ERA OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

by

JOSEPH S. TIEDEMANN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in History in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University
of New York.

1976

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. O.	Audit Office
C. O.	Colonial Office
E. H. F. L.	East Hampton Free Library
Hav. R. R.	Society of Friends Haviland Record Room, New York City
L. I. H. S.	The Long Island Historical Society
N. Y. H. S.	The New-York Historical Society
N. Y. P. L.	The New York Public Library
P. R. O.	Public Record Office
Q. B. P. L.	Queens Borough Public Library
S. P. G.	The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

INTRODUCTION

The history of the province and state of New York during the American Revolution remains to be written.¹ Although a study of Queens County during the war years can contribute to any overall synthesis, it should not be assumed that the county's experiences were necessarily typical. Queens had much in common with the rest of New York, but it was also unique. Various factors--the county's proximity and commercial ties to New York City, the large number of crown officials living within the county, its strategic importance to Great Britain, the residents' independent political outlook, and the British occupation of Queens from 1776 to 1783--combined to make the inhabitants' perception of the Revolution and their experiences during it different from that of other people in New York. There was also diversity within Queens. Not one of its five towns was typical of all the other county communities during this period.

At the same time, events within the county help to illuminate important aspects of New York's history during these years. What role did political factionalism play in the people's perception of the Revolution? Was the War for Independence also a struggle to determine who should rule at home? Why were New Yorkers so reluctant to rebel and

declare their independence? Who were the Tories and what was the character of loyalism? What impact did the British occupation of southern New York have on the people? Why did the mother country lose the war? How did a state, torn in half by war, reunite so quickly in support of the American experiment in republicanism?

In seeking to answer these questions and define the county's response to the Revolution, this study has been based on church records, court minutes, family manuscripts and bible records, land conveyances and mortgages, military records, newspapers, tax lists, town records, voting returns, wills, and administrations of estates to develop a collective biography of the county's adult male inhabitants. While these sources have not answered all the questions one might have anticipated, they have provided insights that would not otherwise have been available. To make the text more readable, the discussion concerning methodology and the limitations of the data has been placed in Appendix A. One further fact should be mentioned. Although much of the study does not rely on quantification, the knowledge gained by use of this approach has informed the interpretation and perception of the non-statistical material.

FOOTNOTE

¹For the best general histories of the Revolution in New York, see: Alexander Flick, The American Revolution in New York: Its Political, Social, and Economic Significance (Albany, 1926); Carl Becker, The History of Political Parties in the Province of New York, 1760-1776 (Madison, Wisc., 1906); also important is Bernard Mason, The Road to Independence: The Revolutionary Movement in New York, 1773-1777 (Lexington, Ky., 1966); for studies of local communities outside of New York City: Alice P. Kenney, "The Albany Dutch: Loyalists and Patriots," New York History, XLII (Oct. 1961), pp. 331-50; Staughton Lynd, Anti-Federalism in Dutchess County, New York (Chicago, 1962); for a general bibliography of New York during this period: Milton M. Klein, New York in the American Revolution: A Bibliography (Albany, 1974).

CHAPTER I

THE TRIUMPH OF THE LOYALISTS: 1775

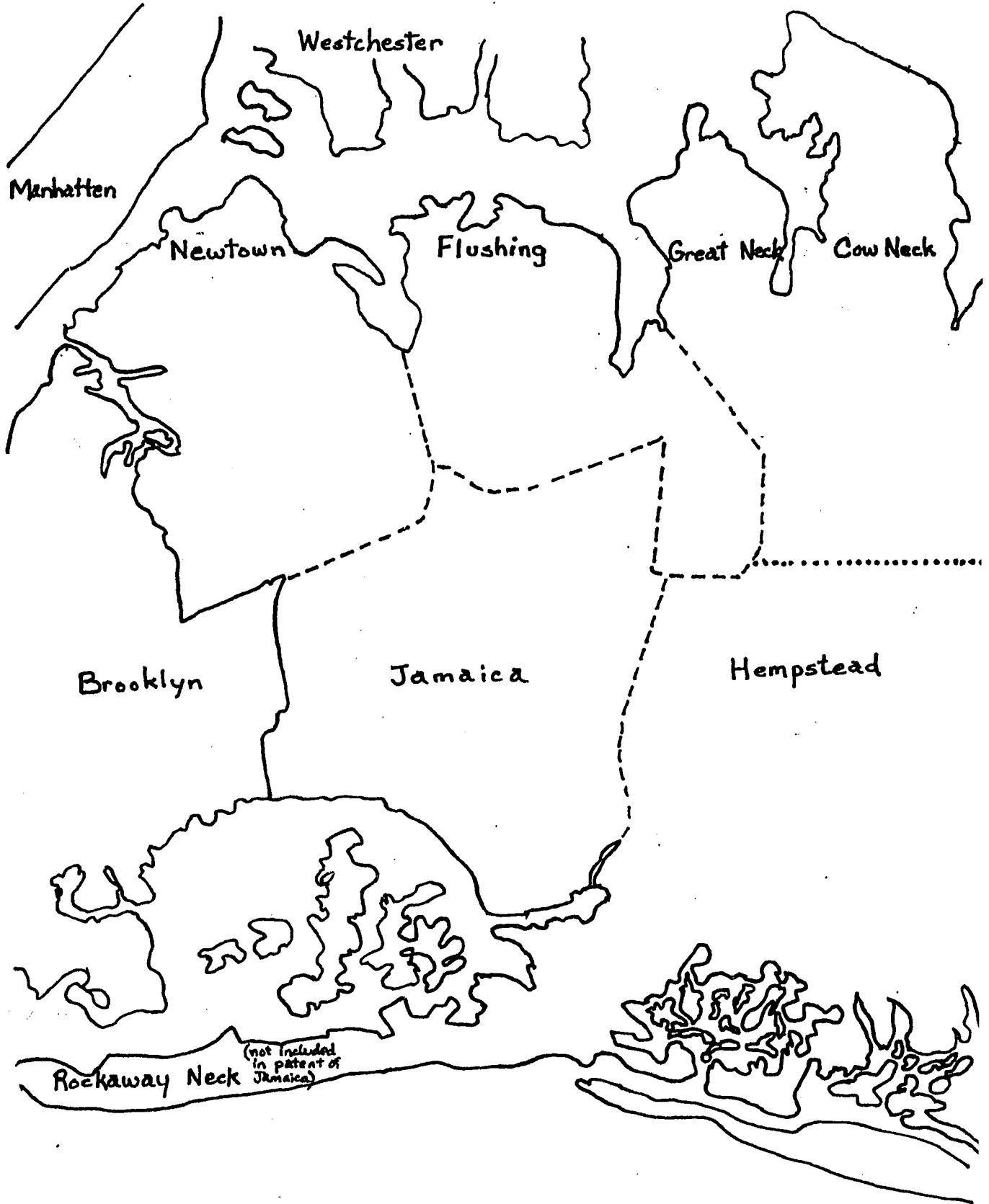
During the Revolutionary period Queens County constituted what is today the Borough of Queens in New York City and the adjacent County of Nassau. The census of 1771 placed the population at 10,980 people.¹ Organized in 1683, the county contained 410 square miles on the western end of Long Island and extended the full width of the island, bordering both upon the Atlantic Ocean and the Long Island Sound. Suffolk County lay to the east, and Kings County and the East River to the west. Across the river was Manhattan Island.²

The county, which was settled largely by New Englanders and was under the authority of the Dutch government at New Amsterdam, consisted of five towns. Newtown, patented in 1652 by Governor Peter Stuyvesant, was located in the northwest corner of Long Island and included North and South Brother, Rikers, and Berriens Islands. The town's 16,800 acres encompassed present-day Elmhurst, Long Island City, Forest Hills, and Astoria. To the east, across Flushing Bay and Creek, was the town of Flushing which Governor William Kieft in 1645 had granted to a group of English settlers. Bordered on the north by the Sound, Flushing's

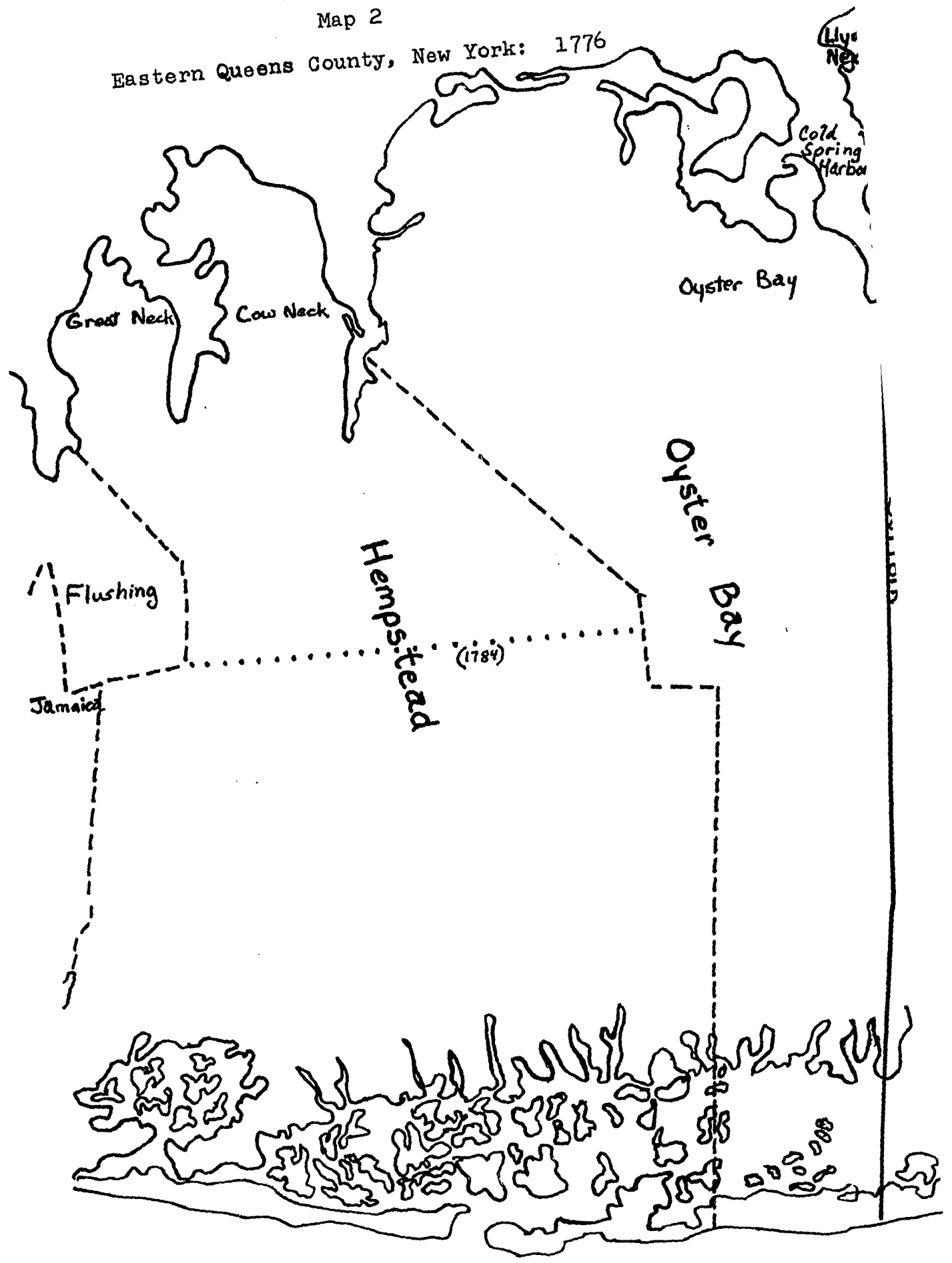
twenty-five square mile terrain gently sloped downward until it reached a low range of sand hills which formed the town's southern limits. On the other side of these foothills and east of Kings County was Jamaica, which in 1656 became the home of settlers who had originally migrated from Watertown, Massachusetts. The town's fifty-seven square miles was bounded on the south by Jamaica Bay and included the present communities of Jamaica, Hillside, Queens Village, and St. Albans.³

East of Jamaica and Flushing was Hempstead, which had been founded in 1644 and was the county's largest community. In 1760 its population was approximately six thousand people. Extending the entire width of the island, Hempstead contained 185 square miles. Its southern coast extended for more than twenty miles and included Rockaway Beach, a narrow sand bar which formed the southeast boundary of Jamaica Bay and is now part of the Borough of Queens. In 1784 the New York Legislature divided Hempstead into the towns of North and South Hempstead. Lying between colonial Hempstead and Suffolk County was Oyster Bay which, unlike the other towns, had been claimed both by New Netherland and the colonies of New England. The first permanent English settlement was made in 1653 on land purchased from the Indians, and Governor Richard Nicholls granted the town a patent in 1667. Oyster Bay combined with the two Hempsteads in 1898 to form the County of Nassau when Newtown, Jamaica, and Flushing became part of New York City as the Borough of Queens.⁴

Western Queens County, New York: 1776



Map 2
Eastern Queens County, New York: 1776



Colonial Queens was a commercial farming district whose products were traded as far away as the West Indies. The Hempstead Plains, a grassland about sixteen miles in length and four miles wide, ran through the middle of the county and was the basis of a profitable livestock industry. In 1776 there were more than seven thousand horned cattle, about the same number of sheep, and one thousand horses in the county. Agricultural abundance made the area valuable to both the British and the American armies. The economy had also begun to show signs of diversification. The Prince family had established a successful nursery business in Flushing, and in 1773 a group of entrepreneurs built a paper mill on the north shore at Hempstead Harbor which was supplying the needs of Hugh Gaine's New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury. But agriculture remained the common bond among county people, giving them a conservative but stubbornly independent outlook on public affairs.⁵

The prosperity of the county impressed outsiders. One man commented in 1776 on the "great number of meadows, orchards, and fruit trees of all descriptions, and fine houses." The people were "rich and well to do." A German officer in the same year nostalgically compared the county to "the Westphalian farming districts where the people live[d] on scattered farms." Homes were well cared for and furnished in better taste than he was accustomed to seeing in Germany. Close by were the cabins of "slaves who cultivate the fertile land, herd the cattle and do all the rough

housework." Everywhere there was "real quality and abundance. Nothing useless or old, certainly nothing dilapidated." The women, "beautiful and delicately brought up," dressed in the latest European fashions--Indian calicoes, white cotton goods, and silk crepes. "There is not a single housewife who does not have an elegant coach and pair."⁶

Economically, the county was divided by a line running from east to west. The last glacial advance had left in the northern part of the island a soil which was a compound of clay, sand, and granite. Although this "glacial till" was stony, it was very fertile, and the farms in Newtown, Flushing, Hempstead's northern necks, and some Oyster Bay areas were "wonderfully prolific." The soil in the south was sandy and had better drainage but was never as productive. The Hempstead Plains and the extensive tracts of salt meadow and marshes on the south shore were economically significant, but since this resource was available for the most part to people of all areas, it did not improve the south's position vis-a-vis the north. Table 1 illustrates the disparity in the per capita wealth of the various areas of the county. The north shore communities--Newtown, Flushing, and North Hempstead--were significantly more prosperous than Jamaica and South Hempstead. Oyster Bay included inhabitants from both areas, but a comparison with data for Hempstead (calculated by combining those for North and South Hempstead) indicates that Oyster Bay experienced a similar division.⁷

The original settlers of Queens brought with them the

TABLE 1
 PER CAPITA WEALTH OF INHABITANTS BY TOWN: 1784

Town	Per Capita Wealth ^a	
	All Taxpayers	Survey Members
Flushing	£546	£683
North Hempstead	488	544
Newtown	426	488
Oyster Bay	367	408
(Hempstead) ^b	347	379
Jamaica	277	292
South Hempstead	265	283

Source: These estimates were obtained from the tax rolls for 1784; see Appendix A, note 7.

^aTo the nearest pound.

^bEstimates for Hempstead were obtained by combining data from the North and South Hempstead tax rolls.

characteristic political institution of New England--the town meeting. Throughout the seventeenth century town government was an important locus of authority for inhabitants, and few things escaped a meeting's attention. It established a church, distributed land, regulated internal affairs, debated and protested actions of the provincial government, and at times deliberately disobeyed the law. On the eve of the Revolution town meetings still played a central role. Towns- men elected local officials and collectively determined the allocation of rights in the common pasturage, the day on which salt hay could be gathered, and when the flocks would be parted. The town was also a testing ground for aspiring politicians who had to serve a successful apprenticeship before they could rise to more prestigious positions.⁸

But the town meetings did not have the vigor in 1776 that they had had a century earlier. They had ceased to vote on provincial affairs, and some matters of local administration had passed beyond their jurisdiction. For example, Jamaica which held an average of 4.87 meetings per year before 1700, held only one per year between 1760 and 1776, and the agenda was usually limited to electing town officials. Town records are almost completely silent on the events of the Revolution. Several factors were responsible for this change. Once the daily business of the towns had been routinized, lethargy had set in. In early years the chief preoccupation of town politics had been land, but as the supply was exhausted, interest in local affairs diminished.⁹

From the beginning the people had been careless in fulfilling their lawful responsibilities, and of necessity the provincial government became more directly involved in parochial affairs. Its tendency to legislate solutions which bypassed locally elected officials hastened the towns' decline as governing units.¹⁰

In 1683 the Provincial Assembly created the County of Queens and over the years made it responsible for maintaining the militia, levying and collecting provincial and county taxes, registering land deeds, overseeing the loan office, and paying various salaries and fees. In addition the county became a judicial unit of New York's court system.¹¹ In 1693, after the towns had shown themselves unable or unwilling to support ministers, the Assembly divided the county into two parishes which eventually became Anglican in faith. The first included the three western towns, while Hempstead and Oyster Bay comprised the second.¹² The office of justice of the peace, instituted in 1665, rapidly increased in power during the next century. Whenever a problem emerged, the Assembly invariably solved it by expanding the authority of the local justices who were appointed by and responsible to the governor. By the Revolution these officials had a lengthy list of responsibilities: confirming the oath of constables, packers, and gaugers; overseeing highway commissioners, and nominating the county sheriff. The Judiciary Act of 1691 abolished town courts and gave justices of the peace authority to determine cases of debt and trespass to the value of forty

shillings. Eventually, the justices' authority extended over the town meeting. They issued summons for all but the annual meeting in April, filled vacancies in elective town offices, and disbanded disorderly meetings. In 1775 and 1776 justices of the peace often played a more decisive role than town meetings in determining how townsmen responded to the Revolution. When the British occupied Long Island between 1776 and 1783, they largely ignored town government and relied on the justices.¹³

Despite political and commercial contacts with New York City, county residents remained parochial in their activities and attitudes. Most farmers spent their entire lives in the familiar and reassuring surroundings of their own hamlet. The currents of change and diversity that were common in an urban environment like New York hardly touched inhabitants of Queens. Mail arrived infrequently, and villagers occasionally visited local inns to hear the latest news and discuss political events. More often than not they simply reconfirmed their long-held convictions. Their independence in judgment and refusal to abide by actions of the Provincial and Continental Congresses in 1774, 1775, and 1776 gave the county a widespread reputation for loyalty to the crown. But the British, who confronted the same stubbornness between 1776 and 1783, at times questioned where the people's allegiance rested.¹⁴

In the decade preceding the Declaration of Independence, Queens County residents displayed only a sporadic

interest in the issues that increasingly divided Great Britain and its North American colonies. In 1766 the county's Sons of Liberty had organized to protest the Stamp Act and had sent to their fellow sympathizers in New York a petition against taxation without representation, for the right of trial by jury, and in support of the province-wide effort opposing the act. It was not, however, until late in 1774 that county residents again turned to questions of imperial control.¹⁵ Despite this outward calm, divisiveness was increasing. At the annual town elections of April 1774 partisans, who would soon style themselves as pro-colonial associators or pro-British non-associators, were successfully running for office against men who wished to stand aloof from the controversy. Othniel Smith, the Sheriff of Jamaica, testified under oath that he was aware in 1774 of the view taken by just about every townsman on the disputes with the mother country.¹⁶

County inhabitants spent the same year refusing to make a public commitment concerning the Continental Congress which was to convene at Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. Thomas Jones, a Justice of the Supreme Court and resident of Queens, noted that there had been "little or no opposition" in New York to calling the First Continental Congress for "all parties, denominations, and religions" acknowledged that the colonies were suffering under just grievances.¹⁷ Zebulon Seaman of Oyster Bay, a representative in the General Assembly, was a member of that body's Standing Committee of

Correspondence and Inquiry. Still the people of Queens acted as if they were oblivious to the commotions about them and never formally considered whether they should give or withhold their approval to the slate of delegates chosen to represent New York in the Congress at Philadelphia. On September 19, 1774 New York's Committee of Correspondence made an urgent appeal to the county that it take a stand on a matter so crucial to its liberties. There was no reply. Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden, who had a summer residence at Flushing, wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth that not even six people had gathered to support the Congress or to choose delegates for it. The residents had remained "firm in their Resolution" in spite of the attempts of New York's patriots at coercion.¹⁸

In December 1774 county Whigs began to mobilize support for the American cause. Patriot enthusiasts at Jamaica, angered that the town supervisor had not passed on communications from the committee in New York, gathered at the tavern of Increase Carpenter which was about a mile east of the village of Jamaica. They requested the constable to issue a summons for a town meeting to be held on December 6, 1774. When the inhabitants met, they passed resolutions in support of the king but in opposition to taxation without representation and to other actions which they deemed as unconstitutional infringements of their rights. After expressing sympathy for the suffering patriots in Boston and giving thanks to the Continental Congress for its efforts,

the townsmen elected their own Committee of Correspondence and Observation.¹⁹

Jamaica loyalists later argued that the resolutions were the work of three or four malcontents and did not express the majority viewpoint. They also maintained that the meeting was not legal, for the warrant had not been issued by a justice of the peace or the supervisor; a few conspirators had gathered and made a collection for the constable who then deliberately neglected to notify many of the most respectable inhabitants of the plans for December 6. The Whigs then allegedly invited some friends from Hempstead to give the impression that their party's strength was more substantial than it actually was. The Tories also contended that many who voted for the resolutions were intimidated by a patriot rumor that unless Jamaica chose a committee, it would be excluded from the New York market. Jamaica, the loyalists believed, remained firm in its resolve not to participate in the growing lawlessness and planned to await action by the General Assembly which alone could bring a "redress of grievances in a constitutional way."²⁰

The patriots denied that they had gathered clandestinely since Carpenter's Tavern was a place where people generally assembled for such meetings. The constable, for his part, testified that he had been careful to inform all inhabitants about the December 6 meeting and had overlooked only two or three individuals, one of whom lived opposite from where everyone was to meet. A warrant was not necessary,

according to the Whigs, and the person who suggested that it was was unfamiliar with town traditions and possibly not a townsman. As for the accusation that people from another town were present at the meeting, the Whigs demanded that evidence be produced, for the allegation was groundless. From the patriots' point of view their fellow townsmen had gathered at a legal and public meeting where attendance was larger than normal, and the people had declared themselves firmly in the ranks of those who were concerned about the nature and direction of British policy.²¹

Although the town clerk never recorded the election of the Committee of Correspondence in the book of minutes, leaving the legal authority of that body in doubt, its members began to act almost at once on behalf of the town. It remained for either side to demonstrate that it reflected the sentiments of the townsmen. While the associators contented themselves with the outcome of the town meeting, supporters of the king canvassed the neighborhood and published a list of ninety-one freeholders and forty-five "respectable" inhabitants who declared they had not given their consent to be represented by an extralegal body. Patriots scrutinized the declaration and found that, despite the exertions made to collect signatures, only a minority of freeholders agreed to sign. The non-associators had been forced to print the names of a few minors and a substantial number of the poorest people. The latter had been told that the Whig committee claimed the right to break and enter into

homes in search of tea and that those who refused to become signatories were self-proclaimed enemies of government whose lives and property would be forfeited. The Tories, according to the Whigs, had led the illiterate to believe the petition was in support of the committee or in favor of any cause which might win their assent. The king's supporters never replied, and resolution of the conflict would have to come at a later date. In the meantime, the mounting tensions were expressed not only in politics but in fears that a slave insurrection was impending. Only after a few blacks were imprisoned in March 1775 was the hysteria proved groundless. Then, in August, another rumor surfaced; a few slaves had allegedly planned to set fire to the houses of the Whigs, murdering them while they escaped the flames.²²

In Newtown the Whigs asserted their authority with dispatch and decisiveness. The town supervisor, unlike his counterpart in Jamaica, responded swiftly to the solicitations from New York and summoned the townsmen to meet on December 10. The meeting appointed a committee which did not begin to function at once since the family of the newly-elected chairman was quarantined with the smallpox. The resolutions, when finally published on December 29, were more spirited than those of Jamaica.²³ The loyalists responded in January 1776 but made no claims except to state that the fifty-six subscribers to the letter had not supported the formation or activities of the committee and "acknowledged no representatives but members of the General Assembly of the

province of New York."²⁴ The patriots had little difficulty answering this protest--some had signed under false pretense; a large number, including the individual who organized the protest, were not freeholders; and many were "poor ignorant people who scarce had an idea of political propriety" and were easily misled; the Tory leaders in their support for the General Assembly "pretend a mighty veneration for the Forms of government, while they use those very forms to destroy the substance of it."²⁵

Nowhere else in the county were the Whigs so successful. In Oyster Bay a number of freeholders met on December 30 "to take into consideration the resolves of the Continental Congress."²⁶ The town clerk was moderator, but the number attending was so small that the meeting was adjourned until the annual town meeting in April. "A Spectator" wrote that the postponement came after "there appeared such a number of friends to our happy, regular, established government . . . that no business could be properly done." The resolutions of the Continental Congress had been read, but a justice of the peace argued in "so masterly a manner" the illegality of all such meetings that the patriots had to accept defeat. In Flushing about twenty-five associators met after a funeral and "immediately dubbed" a dozen of their number committeemen. The twelve wanted to proceed at once to writing appropriate resolves but were "constrained" by a member of the group who was also a "Friend to Order and good Government." In Hempstead the patriot movement

never got this far. The king's friends held a tight rein on political affairs and prevented any demonstrations of support for the American cause.²⁷

The efforts to establish local Committees of Correspondence had produced only disappointment. Few people were concerned about the crisis confronting the colonies, and the support that did exist came mainly from the western areas of the county. Hempstead and Oyster Bay, the largest and most populated towns, had rejected all proposals for taking part in the resistance to the mother country. Almost everywhere loyalists had adroitly outmaneuvered their adversaries, and patriots could claim victory only in Newtown. For the most part, Whig leaders were not rabid partisans, but men closely tied to and keenly aware of their place within the community. Although they remained loyal to the colonial cause, they probably would have declined to continue the struggle if the quickening tempo of events had not pushed them on.

In late March 1775 the Whig committee in New York requested that each town choose deputies to attend a Provincial Congress which was to meet on April 20 to select delegates to the Second Continental Congress. If Queens County Whigs were hesitant to renew the struggle, the opposition was eager. The government in England wanted the slates of representatives defeated, and Queens was one place where success seemed likely. The annual town meetings held in April became the forum for the second stage of the debate. Newtown, triumphantly publishing a list of one hundred

freeholders who had voted in the affirmative, elected a delegate. Flushing also agreed to be represented, and the town clerk reported that the motion was approved by a "great majority." In a hard-fought contest at Jamaica the patriots lost ninety-four to eighty-two. The count was closer than it might have been, for twenty freeholders who were absent later sided with King George. In Oyster Bay the loyalists won by a margin of two hundred and five to forty-two.²⁸

Undaunted, Joseph Robinson, who had been favored by the minority in Jamaica, and Zebulon Williams, the Oyster Bay candidate, appeared before the Provincial Congress with the elected delegates of Newtown and Flushing. The Congress faced a dilemma--to seat the county delegation would violate the principles they espoused; refusal would be a rebuff to their supporters and further weaken an already flaccid position in the county. Williams, a member of the last General Assembly and a noted exponent of the colonial cause, would make a welcome addition. The decision was finally reached to seat all the members from Queens and to "take into consideration any advice they may offer," but to deny them the right to vote. At the end of the session the delegation gave its "assent to, and approbation of" the proceedings of the body.²⁹

Hempstead never voted on the question of being represented in the Provincial Convention, and at the annual town meeting it passed a series of resolutions which were essentially a restatement of arguments already advanced by

the county's Tory faction. A letter in Gaines' New York Gazette outlined the tactics employed by the majority to insure success. The warrant calling the meeting indicated only that the town's ordinary business would be transacted, and the resolutions were introduced late in the day after many had left thinking deliberations were at an end. The opposition never had a sufficient opportunity to state its objections. Since the town extended the entire width of the island, a distance of twenty-two miles, it is conceivable that many, who would have disapproved of the measures taken, had either failed to attend the meeting or had already begun their journey home. Whig strength was greatest on the northern necks of the town. While the disgruntled writer demonstrated to his supporters that the meeting had acted neither justly nor unanimously, the letter indicated that the patriot cause in Hempstead was disorganized and in disarray.³⁰

When news of the Battle of Lexington reached New York on the day after the Convention had adjourned, the city's Whigs sent out another circular requesting that each county choose deputies to attend a Provincial Congress which was to meet on May 24 to "deliberate on and direct such measures as may be expedient for our common safety." County patriots, anxious to avoid fresh rejections by the various town meetings, issued a call for a meeting of all county freeholders to be held at Jamaica on May 22. While this step was an admission of weakness, the organizers hoped to avoid a

repetition of the embarrassing episode over the right of their representatives to be seated. The Jamaica meeting proceeded as expected until three "gentlemen" from Hempstead informed those assembled that the freeholders of that town, having met a few days earlier, had resolved that they did not wish to be represented and that no one should be elected in their name. Again there was the problem of delegates without a constituency. The people pressed around the three, and, after much cajoling, one of them, Thomas Hicks, consented to his own election if he could subsequently win the approval of the people of Hempstead. Tensions eased, and the pre-arranged slate was nominated and elected. The citizens of Hempstead were dissatisfied with the unexpected turn of events, and a few leading townsmen quickly disabused Hicks of any ideas he had of going to New York. When Congress met, Hicks declined to take his seat.³¹

Hempstead was soon confronted by a more serious challenge to its authority. The April 1775 town meeting had not only denied patriots the chance to state their case but had ousted them from the important town offices. The May letter in the New York Gazette, protesting the methods employed at the town meeting, was the first public indication of Whig dissatisfaction. In August the Provincial Congress ordered "every county, city, manor, town, precinct, and district" under its jurisdiction to divide into "districts or beats," each of which was to form its own militia company. The farmers on Hempstead's northern necks, meeting on

September 23, declared their inability "to pursue proper measures for . . . [their] common safety" as long as they remained part of the town of Hempstead. They resolved that for the duration of the controversy they would consider themselves a separate political entity and, as such, appointed a committee and formed a militia company. In October the New York Congress granted its approval to the actions taken.³²

The Provincial Congress had little cause to rejoice. From the outset it had been aware of its lack of control over the five towns and was concerned when its resolutions of May 1775--that town and county committees be formed--had been largely ignored. On June 21 Congress ordered that "the state of Queens County be taken into consideration tomorrow" and the next day requested the elected county deputies who had not attended either to take their seats or state the reasons for their absence. Thomas Hicks declined after recounting his misunderstanding with the freeholders of Hempstead, and Joseph French of Jamaica refused because he was convinced that the majority in his community was opposed to participation. The other county representatives then reported on the recalcitrance of the population. The Provincial Congress responded with a declaration that it had been appointed by the inhabitants of the colony to take the steps necessary for the defense of the province; the dissent of any county was of no avail when placed against the common good. Absentee members were to take their seats "notwithstanding such dissent" as they had previously given. This

order did little to strengthen the authority of the body and made it impossible to maintain the secrecy necessary to the conduct of war, for part of the membership did not share the goals and ideals of the Revolution.³³

On September 16 Congress, unable to arm the troops it had recruited, directed that every person within the colony who had not signed the association was to be disarmed and that the third provincial battalion, which was in Suffolk County, was to enforce the decree in Queens. On September 25 Abraham Skinner informed the Committee of Safety that the individuals sent to Jamaica to collect arms had had little success and that several Tories had been mustering in arms. He feared a clash was inevitable. The committee dispatched Egbert Benson to investigate and urged Colonel John Lasher to follow with troops "as soon as possible." Benson reported that it was impossible to disarm the non-associators without a strong display of military force. People were concealing their weapons, claiming to know nothing of Congresses, and refusing to obey the commands of an extralegal assembly. Some were parading in military formations, and the Lieutenant Governor had sent his personal servant to a few local leaders urging them to organize the loyalists. The situation was most critical in Hempstead where a defiant Captain Richard Hewlett had volunteered that he had had his company together on the previous Sunday and, if a Whig battalion had appeared, he was prepared to do battle. Benson met with some of the town leaders who were willing to call a town meeting to consult on

the situation, but Benson feared they were seeking to gain time to complete their preparations.³⁴

The committee was unprepared to take any step that appeared coercive. Provincial troops stationed on Long Island were hard pressed preparing fortifications in anticipation of an imminent landing by the British who were about to depart from Boston. It was decided to order the agents collecting weapons to send in what they had secured and to return to the city within two days. A committee of five was appointed to attend the meeting at Hempstead, but no record has been found of what action was taken. What is clear, however, is that the Tories remained armed.³⁵

The situation deteriorated further in November when it was again necessary to elect deputies to the Provincial Congress. Although the evidence is fragmentary, it appears that before the May election Tory leaders advised their followers to remain at home. Hempstead had held its own meeting, and three justices of the peace from Oyster Bay notified inhabitants to "pay no regard" to anonymous advertisements for the election. Delegates were elected, and the loyalists did not repeat their error. The November poll lasted five days, and when it was over the patriots had suffered their most resounding defeat. The vote was 778 to 221. The members of the defeated slate made no effort to be seated in the Congress, and the county was unrepresented in that body.³⁶

The vote was not the only indication of the Whigs'

TABLE 2
OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: LOYALTY OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (1771-1777)^a

Year	Count Row Total	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncommitted	
1771		10 38.5	9 34.6	0 0.0	7 26.9	26 13.8
1772		10 38.5	9 34.6	0 0.0	7 26.9	26 13.8
1773		12 46.2	8 30.8	1 3.8	5 19.2	26 13.8
1774 ^b		9 45.0	9 45.0	0 0.0	2 10.0	20 10.6
1775		10 32.3	15 48.4	0 0.0	6 19.4	31 16.4
1776		11 36.7	9 30.0	0 0.0	10 33.3	30 15.9
1777		1 3.3	23 76.7	0 0.0	6 20.0	30 15.9
Column Total		63 33.3	82 43.4	1 0.5	43 22.8	189 100.0

^aInformation on office holding in this and all following tables concerning office-holding patterns was derived from the town records: John Cox, Jr., ed., Oyster Bay Town Records, 1653-1878 (8 vols., New York, 1916-1940), VII; Leland Fielder, ed., Records of the Town of Jamaica, Works Progress Administration, Project No. 165-97-6999(6115), IV (Jamaica, N.Y., 1939); Benjamin Hicks, ed., Records of the Town of North and South Hempstead, Long Island, New York (8 vols., Jamaica, N.Y., 1896-1904), IV, V, VI; Manuscript Records of the Town of Hempstead, V, Hempstead Town Clerk;

WE, Freeholders and Inhabitants of Queen's County, feeling in common with our Fellow Subjects, the deepest Anxiety and Distress, from the most unhappy State of Affairs between Great-Britain and the American Colonies; and beholding with Horror every Appearance of being involved in any the least unfriendly Contention with our Neighbours, Countrymen, and Fellow-Subjects, have resolved to take every Step in our Power to prevent so destructive an Event—an Event, which if permitted to take Place, will introduce Misery and Distress, and open Wounds that many Years cannot heal. Impressed with these Ideas, and the most friendly Disposition towards all our Fellow-Subjects, we make this public Declaration of our Sentiments and Intentions, by which we hope to remove any Jealousy that may be entertained of us, and to obtain the Approbation of every real Friend to Liberty.

We declare that we have not the most distant Design or Inclination to injure or offend any of our Fellow-Subjects; but if in exercising the essential Privilege of Freemen, we unfortunately differed with our Brethren, as to the Mode of bringing the present Troubles to a happy Conclusion, we have carefully avoided every ostentatious Display of that Difference in Sentiment, and every irritating Measure; we wish only to remain in Peace, nor have we done ought to interrupt the Quiet of others: So far have we been from harbouring a Wish to offer Violence to any, that we remained a long Time destitute of the ordinary Means of Self-defence.—We trusted that as we meant to injure no Man, so no one would attempt to injure us. At length, however, we found too much Reason to be apprehensive for the Safety of ourselves, our Families, and our Property. Reports have been circulated, and Messages delivered to us, importing that we are to be disarmed, and some of our principal People taken into Custody; that we are in short to be treated as Enemies to our Country. We call upon every Man who values himself upon the Inheritance of an Englishman, to say what he would do in such a Case? Would he suffer himself to be disarmed, and tamely confess himself an abject SLAVE? Certainly, no. Can any one then who feels the Spirit of Liberty, impose that on us, which he had rather die than submit to himself? Can he blame us for doing that which he most surely would do, was he in our Situation? Impelled by the most powerful Argument of Self-defence; we have at last been driven to procure a Supply of those Means for protecting ourselves, of which we have been, till now, almost totally destitute: But we solemnly declare, we have procured them for the sole Purpose of defending ourselves from Insults and Injuries.

And as many Reports have been propagated, tending to excite the Resentment of our Countrymen against us, and to represent us as intirely inimical to them; we take this Opportunity to declare, that all such Reports are wicked Intentions, and void of Truth.

To remain peaceable and quiet, we again repeat, is our earnest Desire; and breathing the most friendly Disposition towards our Neighbours, Countrymen and Fellow-Subjects, we intreat them to behold in us those endearing Connections, and not suffer a Difference in Opinion, or mischievous and groundless Reports, to hurry them into Acts of Violence against us, which the Laws of God and Man will justify us in resisting.

The above Declaration is published as containing the Sentiments and Intentions of a large Majority of the Inhabitants of the County.

Queen's County, December 6, 1775.

Fig. 1

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York City

declining strength. In 1773 they controlled 46.2 percent of all major town offices in Queens, but in 1775 they won only 32.3 percent. Loyalists now held 48.4 percent, and, for the first time, controlled county affairs. Uncommitted inhabitants held the remaining positions. On December 6, 1775 a Declaration of the Inhabitants of Queens notified the province that "if, in exercising the essential Privilege of Freeman, we unfortunately differed with our Brethren, as to the Mode of bringing the present Troubles to a happy Conclusion, we have carefully avoided every ostentatious Display of that Difference in Sentiment, and every irritating Measure." County residents wanted "only to remain in Peace" and had done nothing "to interrupt the Quiet of others." Despite this fact, the Provincial Congress was threatening to disarm inhabitants of Queens and treating them "as Enemies of our Country." To meet the challenge county residents had armed themselves and were prepared to resist any "Acts of Violence" directed against them.³⁷

The December declaration marked the collapse of the patriot movement in Queens County, and the Provincial Congress appeared unable to alter the situation. The ideology of the Revolution had won few supporters. In retrospect, this development appeared inevitable, and no one has challenged the assumption that from the beginning the county was a citadel of loyalism. But the outward progression of events conceals the complexity of the struggle and inadequately conveys the perception most inhabitants had of the crisis.

FOOTNOTES

¹Of the entire population, 3,033 (or 27.6%) were white males over 16 years of age, and 2,236 (or 20.5%) were blacks; E. B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (15 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1856-1887), VIII, p. 457, hereafter cited as New York Colonial Documents; Oscar G. Darlington, "Long Island Census of 1781," in Paul Bailey, ed., Long Island: A History of Two Great Counties (3 vols., New York, 1949), II, pp. 314-15.

²J. H. French, Gazetter of the State of New York Embracing a Comprehensive View of the Geography, Geology, and General History of the State of New York and a Complete History and Description of Every County, City, Town, Village and Locality (Syracuse, N.Y., 1860), p. 544.

³Ibid., pp. 546, 547-49; Jessica Kross Ehrlich, "A Town Study in Colonial New York: Newtown, Queens County (1642-1790)" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1974), pp. 1-2; Jean Peyer, "Jamaica, Long Island, 1656-1776: A Study of the Roots of American Urbanism" (Ph.D. Diss., The City University of New York, 1974), pp. 33, n. 47.

⁴French, Gazetter, pp. 546-47, 548-51; Nassau County Planning Commission, Nassau County, New York, Data Book (n.p., 1974), p. 2; North Hempstead is 51 square miles, Hempstead is 135 square miles, and Oyster Bay 111 square miles.

⁵Ehrlich, "Newtown," pp. 88-89, 123-30, 138-41, 143-47; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 3, 120-22, 127-30, 132-33, 136, 139, 145, 153, 164, 178, 191-92, 204-205; Samuel McKee, Jr., Labor in Colonial New York, 1664-1774 (New York, 1935), p. 24; Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Evolution of Long Island: A Story of Land and Sea (Port Washington, N.Y., 1960), pp. 33, 54; French, Gazetter, p. 547, n.2; New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, Oct. 12, 1772, hereafter cited as New York Gazette; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., ed., Queens County in Olden Times: Being a Supplement to the Several Histories Thereof (Jamaica, N.Y., 1865), p. 47; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., Roslyn and North Hempstead in Olden Times (Jamaica, N.Y., 1879), p. 2; Daniel Denton, A Brief Description of New York Formerly New Netherlands with the Places Thereunto Adjoining (New York,

1845), pp. 18-19; Percy W. Bidwell and John I. Falconer, History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860 (New York, 1941), pp. 89, 139; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., "An Historical Sketch of Ancient Agricultural, Stock Breeding, and Manufactures in Hempstead," The Journal of Long Island History, III (Spring, 1963), pp. 34-54; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., "Farming in Olden Times in Queens County," The Journal of Long Island History, V (Winter, 1965), pp. 1-17; Bernice (Shultz) Marshall, Colonial Hempstead: Long Island Life Under the Dutch and English, 2nd ed. (Port Washington, N.Y., 1962), pp. 123-24, 149-50, 169-70.

⁶William L. Stone, trans., Letters of Brunswick and Hessian Officers during the American Revolution (Albany, N.Y., 1891), pp. 195-96, 199; Bernhard A. Uhlendorf, trans., Revolution in America: Confidential Letters and Journals, 1776-1784, of Adjutant General Major Baurmeister of the Hessian Forces (New Brunswick, N.J., 1957), p. 45.

⁷Myron L. Fuller, The Geology of Long Island, New York, United States Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, Professional Paper 82 (Washington, D.C., 1914), pp. 22, 114-16, 158-76; Benjamin F. Thompson, History of Long Island from Its Discovery and Settlement to the Present Time, 3rd ed. (3 vols., New York, 1918), I, pp. 11-13; Ehrlich, "Newtown," p. 2; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 265; Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England and New York (4 vols., New Haven, Conn., 1821-1822), III, p. 322.

⁸Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 160-61, 163-64; Ehrlich, "Newtown," pp. 17-18, 21, 22, 23, 27-29, 37-40; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 79-112.

⁹Ehrlich, "Newtown," pp. 16-68, 76-77, 88-89; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 47-51, 62, 81-84, 112; Leland Fielder, ed., Records of the Town of Jamaica, Works Progress Administration, Project No. 165-97-6999(6115), IV (Jamaica, N.Y., 1939), pp. 170-87; for the early laws concerning town government, see The Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution (5 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1894), I, pp. 8, 14, 17, 27, 29-30, 55, 63-64, 71; Hempstead and Oyster Bay were still distributing land as late as the seventeen-forties and seventeen-fifties; Benjamin Hicks, ed., Records of the Town of North and South Hempstead, Long Island, New York (8 vols., Jamaica, N.Y., 1896-1904), IV, pp. 143-44; John Cox, Jr., ed., Oyster Bay Town Records, 1653-1878 (8 vols., New York, 1916-1940), VI, pp. 348, 368, 374, 377; Records of the Sub-division of Mayo's Purchase, Nassau County, 1749/50, As Recorded by Samuel Willis, N.Y.P.L.; Hempstead sold its last tract of common land in 1869 to A. T. Stewart for the building of Garden City.

¹⁰William Smith, Jr., The History of the Province of New York, ed. Michael Kamen (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1972), I, p. 259; for examples of this type of legislation, see: Colonial Laws of New York, I, pp. 616-17, 811-12, II, pp. 95, 337-38, 641-43, III, pp. 199-203, IV, pp. 688-89, V, pp. 299-300, 659-61.

¹¹Colonial Laws of New York, I, pp. 30-81, 121-23, 267-68.

¹²Ibid., p. 328; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 214-52; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 176-215.

¹³Ehrlich, "Newtown," pp. 26, 39-40; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 47-51, 62; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 176-215.

¹⁴Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 160-61, 163-64; Alexander C. Flick, The American Revolution in New York (Port Washington, N.Y., 1967), p. 217.

¹⁵New York Journal or General Advertiser, Mar. 6, 1766, hereafter cited as New York Journal; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp., Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents of Queens County (New York, 1846), pp. 13-14, hereafter cited as Onderdonk, Documents; Margaret M. Kennedy, "Jamaica, Long Island, during the Colonial and Revolutionary Eras, 1655-1789," (Master's Essay, Columbia University, 1934), p. 85.

¹⁶New York Journal, Jan. 19, 1775.

¹⁷Thomas Jones, History of New York during the Revolutionary War and of the Leading Events in Other Colonies at That Period, ed. Edward Floyd DeLancey (2 vols., New York, 1879), I, p. 34, hereafter cited as Jones, History.

¹⁸Peter Force, ed., American Archives . . . A Documentary History of . . . the North American Colonies, 4th Ser. (6 vols., Washington, D.C., 1837-1846), I, pp. 306, 308, 326, 518, 519, 896; New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, Jan. 24, 1774, hereafter cited as New York Gazette; Worthington C. Ford, et al., eds., The Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 (34 vols., Washington, D.C., 1904-1937), I, p. 19, hereafter cited as Journals of the Continental Congress.

¹⁹Journals of the Continental Congress, I, p. 1027; New York Gazette, Dec. 19, 1774; New York Journal, Jan. 19, 1775; Henry Phelps Johnston, The Campaign of 1776 around New York and Brooklyn in Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, III (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1878), pp. 2-3.

²⁰New York Gazette, Jan. 30, 1775; Rivington's New York Gazette, Dec. 22, 1774, hereafter cited as Rivington's; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 17.

²¹New York Journal, Jan. 19, 1775, Feb. 9, 1775; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, pp. 1191-92.

²²Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 1166; New York Journal, Jan. 19, 1775; Rivington's, Feb. 9, 1775; New York Gazette, Feb. 13, 1775, Feb. 20, 1775, Mar. 6, 1775; [New York] Constitutional Gazette, Aug. 23, 1775; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 16-17; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 48.

²³New York Journal, Dec. 15, 1774, Jan. 5, 1775; New York Gazette, Dec. 19, 1774, Jan. 9, 1775; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 1035; James Riker, The Annals of Newtown in Queens County, New York (New York, 1852), pp. 176-77.

²⁴Rivington's, Jan. 19, 1775; New York Gazette, Jan. 16, 1775.

²⁵New York Journal, Mar. 9, 1775.

²⁶Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VII, p. 55; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 20-21.

²⁷Rivington's, Jan. 5, 1775, Jan. 19, 1775.

²⁸New York Journal, Mar. 23, 1775; Kennedy, "Jamaica, Long Island," p. 86; The Letters and Papers of Cadwallader Colden (New York Historical Society, Collections, L-LVI [New York, 1917-1923]), VII, p. 259, hereafter cited as Colden Papers; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser. II, pp. 251, 838-39; Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, Relating to the War of the Revolution in the Office of the Secretary of State, Albany, New York (2 vols., Albany, 1868), I, pp. 39-41, hereafter cited as Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 25-26; Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VII, p. 55, VIII, p. 341.

²⁹Johnston, Campaign of 1776, p. 12; Journals of the Provincial Congress, Provincial Convention, Committee of Safety and Council of Safety of the State of New York, 1775-1776-1777 (2 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1842), I, p. 4; Journals of the Continental Congress, II, p. 15.

³⁰Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 38-39; New York Gazette, May 8, 1775.

³¹Jones, History, I, p. 39; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., II, pp. 428, 838, 1114; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 3-4, 90; Johnston, Campaign of 1776, p. 17.

³²Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 114, 173, II, p. 87; New York Gazette, Aug. 14, 1775, Oct. 2, 1775; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 37-39; New York Journal, Oct. 26, 1775; Rivington's, Oct. 30, 1775; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, pp. 1282-83.

³³Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., II, pp. 1262, 1312; New York Gazette, June 5, 1775; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 18, 21, 50, 56, 58.

³⁴Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 149, 156, 157; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, pp. 795, 896, 911, 914; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 31-32, 33-34; "Hempstead Town," in Bailey, Long Island, I, p. 415.

³⁵Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 157; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, p. 911.

³⁶Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp., Documents and Letters Intended to Illustrate the Revolutionary Incidents in Queens County, Second Series (Hempstead, N.Y., 1884), p. 5, hereafter cited as Onderdonk, Documents, Second Series; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, pp. 48-49; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, p. 1389; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 186-89; Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VII, pp. 53, 55, 58, 60-61.

³⁷Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, pp. 200-201; New York Journal, Dec. 14, 1775; for the statistics on office holding, see Table 2.

CHAPTER II

LOCAL ISSUES AND THE REVOLUTION: 1775

While events in 1775 convinced contemporaries that Queens County was a loyalist stronghold, the facts do not appear to sustain this interpretation. Every adult male inhabitant had the opportunity--at least once in 1775--to state publicly whether he was a patriot or a loyalist. As expected, only a small minority of the population, about 12 percent, supported the War for Independence, and only in Newtown did the Whigs outnumber the opposition. What has not been appreciated is that the loyalists were also a minority. While they were twice as numerous as the patriots, they were less than 27 percent of the population. A clear majority, 60.3 percent, remained uncommitted to either side. People in the western and eastern areas of the county sided with the patriot or loyalist cause for different reasons. Local issues, rather than the dispute with the mother country, were the basis for the Revolutionary division in Queens.¹

In western Queens religion was the most significant factor determining an individual's loyalty. The correlation was most pronounced in Jamaica where 62 percent of the Presbyterians were Whigs, and 65 percent of the Anglicans were Tories. Only 5 percent from the latter church became

patriots, while 12 percent from the former were loyalists. The Church of England received a notable degree of support from individuals of Reformed Dutch persuasion. About 60 percent of the Dutch were Tories, and about 11 percent were Whigs.²

The same pattern was present in Newtown, but it was not as explicit. Antagonism between rival faiths had not been as severe and had appreciably diminished as time passed. On the eve of the Revolution local offices were shared more equitably by members of the different creeds in Newtown than was the case in Jamaica.³ Although patriot strength was about equal in both communities--28.3 percent in Jamaica and 26.1 percent in Newtown--support for the king was significantly less in the second town--17.5 percent of the population as compared with 42.3 percent in Jamaica. In Newtown a larger segment of the population remained passive and did not oppose the actions of their patriot townsmen. The controversy was between a particular group within the population and the Established Church. Almost 47 percent of the Presbyterians were Whigs, while 6.0 percent were Tories, and 45.7 percent were undecided. For the Reformed Dutch the percentages, in the same order, were 10.8, 39.8, and 48.2; and the Anglicans, 19, 23.8, 54.8.⁴

In Flushing, the smallest of the three towns, the situation was somewhat different. Since Presbyterians constituted about 9 percent of those of known religion, an element of contentiousness was missing. The Quakers were

the largest group, and their pacifism set the tone for a community where more than three-quarters of the population remained uncommitted. Less than one-tenth of the Flushing residents favored the American cause, and about 13 percent sided with Great Britain. Forty-seven percent of those of known religion who supported the king were Anglicans. Although this group was numerically small, it provided a significant proportion of the county's Tory leadership--17.1 percent of the leadership whose religion could be ascertained.⁵

While the situation was not identical in each town, the trend for the three is clear. About one-half of the inhabitants (49.3 percent) remained neutral, hoping that the county would not become involved in the conflict. The Presbyterians were the most partisan--52 percent were Whigs, 9.0 percent were Tories, and 37.1 percent were uncommitted. Although 33.2 percent of the individuals surveyed of known religion were Presbyterian, 72.3 percent of the patriots of known religion and 62.2 percent of the Whig leadership of known religion were Presbyterian.⁶ Their adversary was the Established Church. The controversy was most bitter in Jamaica where the two sides had been in dispute for a century. Although many loyalists were Reformed Dutch, this fact does not alter the nature of the conflict. The Dutch were a foreign-speaking cultural minority who had sought since the British conquest of New York in 1664 to maintain their separate identity by promoting favorable ties with the

Anglican Church.⁷ S.P.G. missionaries in Queens have documented the cordial attitude of the Dutch toward the Established Church.⁸ The behavior of these people in the seventeen-seventies was nothing more than a continuation of their existing practice. Support for the colonial cause was more common among economically successful Dutchmen, and about 24 percent of the Queens County Whig leadership was Reformed Dutch although only 16.0 percent of the Whigs were of this religion. Significantly, the Dutch held a few leadership positions in the king's cause. Although 18.9 percent of all loyalists in Queens were Reformed Dutch, 3.6 percent of the Tory leaders were of this religion.⁹

The religious strife in western Queens began in 1693 with passage of "An Act for Settling a Ministry and Raising a Maintenance for Them in the City of New York, Richmond, Westchester, and Queens County." The law levied a yearly tax on all freeholders to support a Protestant clergyman and gave the governor power to approve and induct ministers appointed under the act. Jamaica, Newtown, and Flushing were combined into a single parish.¹⁰ Although the Assembly which passed the bill was composed almost entirely of dissenters, Governor Benjamin Fletcher believed the legislation had established the Church of England. If Fletcher was correct, the minister's salary, the church, and the parsonage at Jamaica could be held only by an Anglican; if not, the parish could choose a Presbyterian clergyman.¹¹

The 1693 law touched the sensibilities of Presbyterians

throughout the parish. Newtown held special meetings, raised contributions, and petitioned the General Assembly. Jamaica persisted in the struggle until the Revolution. The towns acted in concert through the new parish vestry whose members were dissenters. In November 1700 the vestry appointed the Reverend John Hubbard, a Presbyterian, but in 1703 Governor Edward Cornbury revoked Hubbard's right to preach and in 1704 ordered the Presbyterian to vacate the parsonage house and land. When the vestry refused to pay the new Anglican minister his salary, the Assembly empowered justices of the peace to collect the tax and gave the governor authority to appoint future ministers. In 1710 a Presbyterian minister, George McNish, successfully claimed the parsonage and the minister's salary, but failed in his attempt to gain the church. The Supreme Court ruled in 1719 that the salary belonged to the Anglican, Thomas Poyer, but the vestry refused to pay. Poyer then sued to regain the parsonage and church lands, but the Supreme Court unexpectedly ruled in favor of the Presbyterians. In 1728 the dissenters regained the church. The governor inducted the Reverend Thomas Colgan, an Anglican, in 1733, and following a judgment in the Court of Sessions, Colgan collected the minister's salary until his death in 1755. The vestry nominated the Reverend Simon Horton, a Presbyterian, as the new minister, but the governor appointed Samuel Seabury, Jr., an S.P.G. missionary. In 1769 there was another dispute over the minister's salary. The Anglican minister, Joshua Bloomer,

brought suit in the Court of Chancery, and Governor William Tryon in May 1772 ruled in favor of the plaintiff.¹²

The dispute was more than a local matter. Participants within and without the parish saw it as part of the struggle to determine the role of the Anglican Church in America. Royal instructions made the various governors concerned parties. When Poyer expressed reluctance to resort to the courts, Governor Robert Hunter promised to pay the costs of the case. The S.P.G. subsidized its missionaries and advanced their interests in London. While locally assigned Anglican ministers were understandably interested in collecting their salary, they were cognizant of the impact favorable court decisions would have on the legal standing of their church, and when they had the opportunity, they called for the establishment of an American bishopric.¹³

Although it is difficult to trace their involvement, New York City Presbyterians followed the disputes of the seventeen-fifties and alerted other dissenters to the alleged Anglican plot. In the seventeen-seventies Abraham Ketteltas, a Presbyterian clergyman, became inextricably involved in Jamaica's troubles. He first settled there in 1761 and ministered to the Presbyterians in Hempstead for about a year. Afterwards he preached to the Dutch congregations in Newtown, Hempstead, and Oyster Bay. Between May 1767 and April 1776 he worked chiefly with the French Reformed Church in New York City. In December 1774 Ketteltas was elected chairman of the Jamaica Committee of Correspondence. At

times his activities were debated more heatedly than the issues of the Revolution, and he fled to the American lines after the Battle of Long Island.¹⁴

Although he was not Jamaica's Presbyterian minister, he did work with the people, and a few chroniclers have referred to him as Jamaica's minister. He was probably friendly with the radical dissenters, while the regular minister, Matthias Burnett, a loyalist, was influential with individuals who took a more moderate stand. Approximately 24 percent of the Jamaica Presbyterians were uncommitted in the Revolution. Ketteltas was married to a sister of William Smith, Jr., who with William Livingston and John Morin Scott was a member of New York's Whig "triumvirate." After the clergyman had fled Long Island, he remarked to an acquaintance, "I have been governed by his [Smith's] advice, and by his advice I have been ruined. Had it not been for him I should never have taken the part I have done." Since the intensity of sentiment in western Queens over the Revolution was directly related to feelings aroused by the religious controversy, it is possible the Whig triumvirate deliberately sought to intensify the discord. In doing so they not only increased support for their own cause but also for the opposition. In Flushing where Presbyterianism was weakest, the population was overwhelmingly uncommitted.¹⁵

In the eastern part of the county religion was not a cause of discord. An Episcopal missionary wrote in 1768

TABLE 3
LOYALTY IN QUEENS COUNTY (1775)

Loyalty ^a	Number	Percent ^b
Whig	368	12.0
Tory	824	26.8
Mixed	27	0.9
Uncommitted	<u>1,855</u>	<u>60.3</u>
Total	3,074	100.0

^aFor definition of all loyalty groups, see Appendix A.

^bPercentages in this and all following tables have been rounded to the nearest one-tenth of a percent.

TABLE 4
LOYALTY BY TOWN (1775)

Town	Loyalty					
	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncom- mitted	Row Total
Newtown		103 26.1 28.0	69 17.5 8.4	7 1.8 25.9	215 54.6 11.6	394 12.8
Flushing		23 9.3 6.3	33 13.4 4.0	2 0.8 7.4	188 76.4 10.1	246 8.0
Jamaica		115 28.3 31.3	172 42.3 20.9	6 1.5 22.2	114 28.0 6.1	407 13.2
Hempstead		62 6.6 16.8	328 35.0 39.8	9 1.0 33.3	536 57.3 28.9	935 30.4
North		58 15.2 15.8	53 13.9 6.4	9 2.4 33.3	262 68.6 14.1	382 12.4
South		4 0.9 1.1	227 52.9 27.5	0 0 0	198 46.2 10.7	429 14.0
Unknown ^a		0 0 0	48 38.7 5.8	0 0 0	76 61.3 4.1	124 4.0
Oyster Bay		56 8.5 15.2	113 17.1 13.7	3 0.5 11.1	488 74.0 26.3	660 21.5
Non-Residents		0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	4 100.0 0.2	4 0.1

TABLE 4 -- Continued

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Loyalty				Uncom- mitted	Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed			
Residence		9	109	0	310	428	
Unknown		2.1	25.5	0	72.4	13.9	
		2.4	13.2	0	16.7		
Column Total		368	824	27	1855	3074	
		12.0	26.8	0.9	60.3	100.0	

^aResidence within Hempstead unknown.

TABLE 5

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: QUEENS COUNTY (1775)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
Whig		45	59	117	19	1	127	368
		12.2	16.0	31.8	5.2	0.3	34.5	12.0
		7.0	12.5	44.3	4.5	7.1	10.1	
Tory		264	156	39	38	3	324	824
		32.0	18.9	4.7	4.6	0.4	39.3	26.8
		41.1	33.0	14.8	9.0	21.4	25.8	
Mixed		8	4	4	1	0	10	27
		29.6	14.8	14.8	3.7	0.0	37.0	0.9
		1.2	0.8	1.5	0.2	0.0	0.8	
Uncommitted		326	254	104	366	10	795	1855
		17.6	13.7	5.6	19.7	0.5	42.9	60.3
		50.7	53.7	39.4	86.3	71.4	63.3	
Column Total		643	473	264	424	14	1256	3074
		20.9	15.4	8.6	13.8	0.5	40.9	100.0

TABLE 6

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: NEWTOWN (1775)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
Whig	8	9	54	4	0	28	103	
	7.8	8.7	52.4	3.9	0.0	27.2	26.1	
	19.0	10.8	46.6	20.0	0.0	21.1		
Tory	10	33	7	2	0	17	69	
	14.5	47.8	10.1	2.9	0.0	24.6	17.5	
	23.8	39.8	6.0	10.0	0.0	12.8		
Mixed	1	1	2	0	0	3	7	
	14.3	14.3	28.6	0.0	0.0	42.9	1.8	
	2.4	1.2	1.7	0.0	0.0	2.3		
Uncommitted	23	40	53	14	0	85	215	
	10.7	18.6	24.7	6.5	0.0	39.5	54.6	
	54.8	48.2	45.7	70.0	0.0	63.9		
Column Total	42	83	116	20	0	133	394	
	10.7	21.1	29.4	5.1	0.0	33.8	100.0	

TABLE 7

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: FLUSHING (1775)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	
Whig	5 21.7 9.6	3 13.0 10.3	4 17.4 30.8	2 8.7 3.3	0 0.0 0.0	9 39.1 9.8	23 9.3
Tory	11 33.3 21.2	8 24.2 27.6	2 6.1 15.4	2 6.1 3.3	0 0.0 0.0	10 30.3 10.9	33 13.4
Mixed	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 1.7	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 1.1	2 0.8
Uncommitted	36 19.1 69.2	18 9.6 62.1	7 3.7 53.8	55 29.3 91.7	0 0.0 0.0	72 38.3 78.3	188 76.4
Column Total	52 21.1	29 11.8	13 5.3	60 24.4	0 0.0	92 37.4	246 100.0

TABLE 8
LOYALTY BY RELIGION: JAMAICA (1775)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	
Whig	3	10	57	0	0	45	115
	2.6	8.7	49.6	0.0	0.0	39.1	28.3
	5.0	10.9	62.0	0.0	0.0	28.7	
Tory	39	55	11	5	0	62	172
	22.7	32.0	6.4	2.9	0.0	36.0	42.3
	65.0	59.8	12.0	83.3	0.0	39.5	
Mixed	2	0	2	0	0	2	6
	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	33.3	1.5
	3.3	0.0	2.2	0.0	0.0	1.3	
Uncommitted	16	27	22	1	0	48	114
	14.0	23.7	19.3	0.9	0.0	42.1	28.0
	26.7	29.3	23.9	16.7	0.0	30.6	
Column Total	60	92	92	6	0	157	407
	14.7	22.6	22.6	1.5	0.0	38.6	100.0

TABLE 9

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: HEMPSTEAD (1775)

Loyalty	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Pct	Col Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
Whig			21	15	2	7	0	17	62
			33.9	24.2	3.2	11.3	0.0	27.4	6.6
			5.9	18.8	6.3	6.3	0.0	4.8	
Tory			161	27	16	17	0	107	328
			49.1	8.2	4.9	5.2	0.0	32.6	35.1
			45.2	33.8	50.0	15.2	0.0	30.2	
Mixed			4	1	0	0	0	4	9
			44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	1.0
			1.1	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	
Uncommitted			170	37	14	88	1	226	536
			31.7	6.9	2.6	16.4	0.2	42.2	57.3
			47.8	46.3	43.8	78.6	100.0	63.8	
Column Total			356	80	32	112	1	354	935
			38.1	8.6	3.4	12.0	0.1	37.7	100.0

TABLE 10

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: NORTH HEMPSTEAD (1775)

Loyalty	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Col	Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
Whig			20	14	1	7	0	16	58
			34.5	24.1	1.7	12.1	0.0	27.6	15.2
			15.2	33.3	20.0	10.4	0.0	11.9	
Tory			29	7	0	4	0	13	53
			54.7	13.2	0.0	7.5	0.0	24.5	13.9
			22.0	16.7	0.0	6.0	0.0	9.6	
Mixed			4	1	0	0	0	4	9
			44.4	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	2.4
			3.0	2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	
Uncommitted			79	20	4	56	1	102	262
			30.2	7.6	1.5	21.4	0.4	38.9	68.6
			59.8	47.6	80.0	83.6	100.0	75.6	
Column Total			132	42	5	67	1	135	382
			34.6	11.0	1.3	17.5	0.3	35.3	100.0

TABLE 11

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: SOUTH HEMPSTEAD (1775)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
Whig	1 25.0 0.6	1 25.0 0.6	1 25.0 3.3	1 25.0 4.5	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	1 25.0 0.6	4 0.9
Tory	107 47.1 61.1	19 8.4 63.3	13 5.7 59.1	12 5.3 28.6	0 0.0 0.0	76 33.5 47.5	227 52.9	
Mixed	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0	0 0.0
Uncommitted	67 33.8 38.3	10 5.1 33.3	8 4.0 36.4	30 15.2 71.4	0 0.0 0.0	83 41.9 51.9	198 46.2	
Column Total	175 40.8	30 7.0	22 5.1	42 9.8	0 0.0	160 37.3	429 100.0	

TABLE 12

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: OYSTER BAY (1775)

Loyalty	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Col	Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
Whig			7	20	0	6	1	22	56
			12.5	35.7	0.0	10.7	1.8	39.3	8.5
			8.4	12.2	0.0	4.0	7.7	8.9	
Tory			20	28	1	10	3	51	113
			17.7	24.8	0.9	8.8	2.7	45.1	17.1
			24.1	17.1	33.3	6.7	23.1	20.6	
Mixed			1	2	0	0	0	0	3
			33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5
			1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Uncommitted			55	114	2	134	9	174	488
			11.3	23.4	0.4	27.5	1.8	35.7	73.9
			66.3	69.5	66.7	89.3	69.2	70.4	
Column Total			83	164	3	150	13	247	660
			12.6	24.8	0.5	22.7	2.0	37.4	100.0

TABLE 13
LOYALTY BY AGE (JANUARY 1776)

Age	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncommitted	
16 to 19	5	6	0	72	83	
	6.0	7.2	0.0	86.7	2.7	
	1.4	0.7	0.0	3.9		
20 to 29	27	74	2	244	347	
	7.8	21.3	0.6	70.3	11.3	
	7.3	9.0	7.4	13.2		
30 to 39	47	72	2	186	307	
	15.3	23.5	0.7	60.6	10.0	
	12.8	8.7	7.4	10.0		
40 to 49	53	80	4	122	259	
	20.5	30.9	1.5	47.1	8.4	
	14.4	9.7	14.8	6.6		
50 to 59	29	52	1	68	150	
	19.3	34.7	0.7	45.3	4.9	
	7.9	6.3	3.7	3.7		
60 and Over	15	43	1	73	132	
	11.4	32.6	0.8	55.3	4.3	
	4.1	5.2	3.7	3.9		
Unknown	192	497	17	1090	1796	
	10.7	27.7	0.9	60.7	58.4	
	52.2	60.3	63.0	58.8		
Column Total	368	824	27	1855	3074	
	12.0	26.8	0.9	60.3	100.0	

TABLE 14
LOYALTY BY WEALTH: QUEENS COUNTY

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth				Unknown Wealth	Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above		
Whig	37	74	41	20	196	368	
	10.1	20.1	11.1	5.4	53.3	12.0	
	8.2	14.1	18.6	11.2	11.5		
Tory	132	147	72	64	409	824	
	16.0	17.8	8.7	7.8	49.6	26.8	
	29.3	28.1	32.6	35.8	24.1		
Mixed	5	5	2	6	9	27	
	18.5	18.5	7.4	22.2	33.3	0.9	
	1.1	1.0	0.9	3.4	0.5		
Uncommitted	277	298	106	89	1085	1855	
	14.9	16.1	5.7	4.8	58.5	60.3	
	61.4	56.9	48.0	49.7	63.9		
Column Total	451	524	221	179	1699	3074	
	14.7	17.0	7.2	5.8	55.3	100.0	

TABLE 15
LOYALTY BY WEALTH: NEWTOWN

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig	8 7.8 18.6	12 11.7 26.1	11 10.7 36.7	3 2.9 10.7	69 67.0 27.9	103 26.1	
Tory	5 7.2 11.6	7 10.1 15.2	8 11.6 26.7	13 18.8 46.4	36 52.2 14.6	69 17.5	
Mixed	0 0.0 0.0	1 14.3 2.2	0 0.0 0.0	1 14.3 3.6	5 71.4 2.0	7 1.8	
Uncommitted	30 14.0 69.8	26 12.1 56.5	11 5.1 36.7	11 5.1 39.3	137 63.7 55.5	215 54.6	
Column Total	43 10.9	46 11.7	30 7.6	28 7.1	247 62.7	394 100.0	

TABLE 16
LOYALTY BY WEALTH: FLUSHING

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig	3 13.0 10.7	4 17.4 7.8	4 17.4 14.8	1 4.3 3.2	11 47.8 10.1	23 9.3	
Tory	2 6.1 7.1	3 9.1 5.9	7 21.2 25.9	8 24.2 25.8	13 39.4 11.9	33 13.4	
Mixed	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 3.2	1 50.0 0.9	2 0.8	
Uncommitted	23 12.2 82.1	44 23.4 86.3	16 8.5 59.3	21 11.2 67.7	84 44.7 77.1	188 76.4	
Column Total	28 11.4	51 20.7	27 11.0	31 12.6	109 44.3	246 100.0	

TABLE 17
LOYALTY BY WEALTH: JAMAICA

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig		15	21	9	1	69	115
		13.0	18.3	7.8	0.9	60.0	28.3
		20.0	30.4	25.0	9.1	31.9	
Tory		27	33	18	10	84	172
		15.7	19.2	10.5	5.8	48.8	42.3
		36.0	47.8	50.0	90.9	38.9	
Mixed		4	0	0	0	2	6
		66.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	1.5
		5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	
Uncommitted		29	15	9	0	61	114
		25.4	13.2	7.9	0.0	53.5	28.0
		38.7	21.7	25.0	0.0	28.2	
Column Total		75	69	36	11	216	407
		18.4	17.0	8.8	2.7	53.1	100.0

TABLE 18

LOYALTY BY WEALTH: HEMPSTEAD

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig	4 6.5 2.4	14 22.6 7.4	12 19.4 14.8	12 19.4 17.6	20 32.3 4.7	62 6.6	
Tory	68 20.7 40.5	78 23.8 41.1	31 9.5 38.3	23 7.0 33.8	128 39.0 29.9	328 35.1	
Mixed	1 11.1 0.6	3 33.3 1.6	2 22.2 2.5	2 22.2 2.9	1 11.1 0.2	9 1.0	
Uncommitted	95 17.7 56.5	95 17.7 50.0	36 6.7 44.4	31 5.8 45.6	279 52.1 65.2	536 57.3	
Column Total	168 18.0	190 20.3	81 8.7	68 7.3	428 45.8	935 100.0	

TABLE 19

LOYALTY BY WEALTH: NORTH HEMPSTEAD

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig		3	13	11	12	19	58
		5.2	22.4	19.0	20.7	32.8	15.2
		5.9	18.1	26.8	24.5	11.2	
Tory		6	16	6	11	14	53
		11.3	30.2	11.3	20.8	26.4	13.9
		11.8	22.2	14.6	22.4	8.3	
Mixed		1	3	2	2	1	9
		11.1	33.3	22.2	22.2	11.1	2.4
		2.0	4.2	4.9	4.1	0.6	
Uncommitted		41	40	22	24	135	262
		15.6	15.3	8.4	9.2	51.5	68.6
		80.4	55.6	53.7	49.0	79.9	
Column Total		51	72	41	49	169	382
		13.4	18.8	10.7	12.8	44.2	100.0

TABLE 20

LOYALTY BY WEALTH: SOUTH HEMPSTEAD

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1000 and Above	Unknown	
Whig	1 25.0 0.9	1 25.0 0.9	1 25.0 0.9	1 25.0 2.5	0 0.0 0.0	1 25.0 0.7	4 0.9
Tory	61 26.9 52.6	60 26.4 52.2	25 11.0 62.5	10 4.4 58.8	71 31.3 50.4	227 52.9	
Mixed	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0
Uncommitted	54 27.3 46.6	54 27.3 47.0	14 7.1 35.0	7 3.5 41.2	69 34.8 48.9	198 46.2	
Column Total	116 27.0	115 26.8	40 9.3	17 4.0	141 32.9	429 100.0	

TABLE 21
LOYALTY BY WEALTH: OYSTER BAY

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Wealth					Row Total
		£0-100	£101-500	£501-1000	£1001 and Above	Unknown	
Whig		7 12.5 5.3	23 41.1 13.9	5 8.9 10.9	3 5.4 7.5	18 32.1 6.5	56 8.5
Tory		30 26.5 22.9	25 22.1 15.2	8 7.1 17.4	10 8.8 25.0	40 35.4 14.4	113 17.1
Mixed		0 0.0 0.0	1 33.3 0.6	0 0.0 0.0	2 66.7 5.0	0 0.0 0.0	3 0.5
Uncommitted		94 19.3 71.6	116 23.8 70.3	33 6.8 71.7	25 5.1 62.5	220 45.1 79.1	488 73.9
Column Total		131 19.8	165 25.0	46 7.0	40 6.1	278 42.1	660 100.0

TABLE 22

PRE-WAR OFFICE HOLDING IN NEWTOWN: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
OF MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS

Year	Count Row Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Unknown	
1770		1 20.0	2 40.0	1 20.0	0 0.0	1 20.0	5 12.5
1771		1 16.7	1 16.7	3 50.0	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 15.0
1772		1 16.7	3 50.0	1 16.7	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 15.0
1773		1 16.7	3 50.0	1 16.7	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 15.0
1774		1 20.0	1 20.0	1 20.0	0 0.0	2 40.0	5 12.5
1775		1 16.7	3 50.0	1 16.7	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 15.0
1776		1 16.7	3 50.0	1 16.7	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 15.0
Column Total		7 17.5	16 40.0	9 22.5	0 0.0	8 20.0	40 100.0

TABLE 23

PRE-WAR OFFICE HOLDING IN JAMAICA: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
OF MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS

Year	Count Row Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Unknown	
1770		2 66.7	0 0.0	1 33.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	3 9.1
1771		2 66.7	0 0.0	1 33.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	3 9.1
1772		3 66.7	0 0.0	1 33.3	0 0.0	0 0.0	4 12.1
1773		2 33.3	0 0.0	3 50.0	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 18.2
1774		1 16.7	1 16.7	3 50.0	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 18.2
1775		1 16.7	1 16.7	3 50.0	0 0.0	1 16.7	6 18.2
1776		0 0.0	1 20.0	3 60.0	0 0.0	1 20.0	5 15.2
Column Total		11 33.3	3 9.1	15 45.5	0 0.0	4 12.1	33 100.0

TABLE 24
OFFICE HOLDING IN HEMPSTEAD: THE RESIDENCE
OF MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (1769-1776)

Year	Count Row Pct	Geographic Area			Row Total
		North	South	Unknown	
1769		7 46.7	8 53.3	0 0.0	15 16.9
1770		7 53.8	6 46.2	0 0.0	13 14.6
1771		5 41.7	7 58.3	0 0.0	12 13.5
1772		5 50.0	5 50.0	0 0.0	10 11.2
1773		3 37.5	5 62.5	0 0.0	8 9.0
1774		3 33.3	6 66.7	0 0.0	9 10.1
1775		2 15.4	10 76.9	1 7.7	13 14.6
1776		3 33.3	6 66.7	0 0.0	9 10.1
Column Total		35 39.3	53 59.6	1 1.1	89 100.0

TABLE 25

OFFICE HOLDING IN HEMPSTEAD: THE LOYALTY OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (1769-1776)

Year	Count Row Pct	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whigs ^a	Tories ^b	Mixed	Uncom- mitted	
1769		3 20.0	8 53.3	1 6.7	3 20.0	15 16.9
1770		3 23.1	6 46.2	0 0.0	4 30.8	13 14.6
1771		3 25.0	6 50.0	0 0.0	3 25.0	12 13.5
1772		3 30.0	5 50.0	0 0.0	2 20.0	10 11.2
1773		3 37.5	5 62.5	0 0.0	0 0.0	8 9.0
1774		3 33.3	6 66.7	0 0.0	0 0.0	9 10.1
1775		1 7.7	11 84.6	0 0.0	1 7.7	13 14.6
1776		1 11.1	6 66.7	0 0.0	2 22.2	9 10.1
Column Total		20 22.5	53 59.6	1 1.1	15 16.9	89 100.0

^aAll 20 Whigs were residents of North Hempstead.

^bExcept for one Tory in 1775 whose residence is unknown, all the Tories lived in south Hempstead.

TABLE 25--Continued

"Records of the Town of Newtown, 289," Queens College Historical Documents Collection; there are no extant records for the town of Flushing and Flushing office holders are not included in this and all following tables concerning office holders.

^bNo records are available for Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 26

PRE-WAR WHIG LEADERSHIP: WEALTH BY RELIGION

Wealth	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
£0-100	1	2	0	0	0	3	6	
	16.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	7.1	
	7.7	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0		
£101-500	0	9	3	0	0	4	16	
	0.0	56.3	18.8	0.0	0.0	25.0	19.0	
	0.0	45.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	17.4		
£501-1000	3	3	4	2	0	0	12	
	25.0	25.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	14.3	
	23.1	15.0	16.7	50.0	0.0	0.0		
£1001 and Above	1	2	2	0	0	3	8	
	12.5	25.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	37.5	9.5	
	7.7	10.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	13.0		
Unknown	8	4	15	2	0	13	42	
	19.0	9.5	35.7	4.8	0.0	31.0	50.0	
	61.5	20.0	62.5	50.0	0.0	56.5		
Column Total	13	20	24	4	0	23	84	
	15.5	23.8	28.6	4.8	0.0	27.4	100.0	

TABLE 27

PRE-WAR TORY LEADERSHIP: WEALTH BY RELIGION

Wealth	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
£0-100	1		1	0	0	0	3	5
	20.0		20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	8.9
	2.8		50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	
£101-500	3		0	0	1	0	3	7
	42.9		0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	42.9	12.5
	8.3		0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	20.0	
£501-1000	2		0	0	1	0	0	3
	66.7		0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	5.4
	5.6		0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	
£1001 and Above	16		1	0	0	0	3	20
	80.0		5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	35.7
	44.4		50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	
Unknown	14		0	0	1	0	6	21
	66.7		0.0	0.0	4.8	0.0	28.6	37.5
	38.9		0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	40.0	
Column Total	36		2	0	3	0	15	56
	64.3		3.6	0.0	5.4	0.0	26.8	100.0

TABLE 28

PRE-WAR WHIG LEADERSHIP: TOWN BY RELIGION

Town	Religion							Row Total
	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
Newtown	2	4	10	1	0	6	23	
	8.7	17.4	43.5	4.3	0.0	26.1	27.4	
	15.4	20.0	41.7	25.0	0.0	26.1		
Jamaica	1	1	13	0	0	4	19	
	5.3	5.3	68.4	0.0	0.0	21.1	22.6	
	7.7	5.0	54.2	0.0	0.0	17.4		
Flushing	2	1	0	2	0	3	8	
	25.0	12.5	0.0	25.0	0.0	37.5	9.5	
	15.4	5.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	13.0		
Hempstead	5	5	1	0	0	6	17	
	29.4	29.4	5.9	0.0	0.0	35.3	20.2	
	38.5	25.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	26.1		
North	4	5	1	0	0	5	15	
	26.7	33.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	17.9	
	30.8	25.0	4.2	0.0	0.0	21.7		
South	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	
	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	2.4	
	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3		

TABLE 28--Continued

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Unknown	Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist		
Hempstead								
Unknown		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oyster Bay		3	9	0	1	0	4	17
		17.6	52.9	0.0	5.9	0.0	23.5	20.2
		23.1	45.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	17.4	
Non-Residents		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Residence Unknown		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Column Total		13	20	24	4	0	23	84
		15.5	23.8	28.6	4.8	0.0	27.4	100.0

TABLE 29

PRE-WAR TORY LEADERSHIP: TOWN BY RELIGION

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	
Newtown	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9
	13.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Jamaica	4	1	0	0	0	3	8
	50.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.5	14.3
	11.1	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	
Flushing	7	0	0	1	0	0	8
	87.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	14.3
	19.4	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	0.0	
Hempstead	17	0	0	1	0	6	24
	70.8	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.0	25.0	42.9
	47.2	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	40.0	
North	5	0	0	1	0	1	7
	71.4	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	12.5
	13.9	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	6.7	
South	11	0	0	0	0	4	15
	73.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	26.8
	30.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	

TABLE 29--Continued

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total	
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
Hempstead								
Unknown	1 50.0 2.8	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 6.7	2 3.6
Oyster Bay	3 33.3 8.3	1 11.1 50.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	5 55.6 33.3	9 16.1
Non-Residents	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0
Residence Unknown	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 33.3	0 0.0 0.0	1 50.0 6.7	2 3.6
Column Total	36 64.3	2 3.6	0 0.0	0 0.0	3 5.4	0 0.0	15 26.8	56 100.0

TABLE 30
OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: LOYALTY OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (Nov. 1783-1788)

Year	Count Row Pct	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncom- mitted	
1783 (Nov.)		21 51.2	2 4.9	0 0.0	18 43.9	41 12.3
1784		28 42.4	8 12.1	0 0.0	30 45.5	66 19.8
1785		21 38.2	7 12.7	1 1.8	26 47.2	55 16.5
1786		20 35.1	12 21.1	1 1.8	24 42.1	57 17.1
1787		17 30.9	13 23.6	1 1.8	24 43.6	55 16.5
1788		20 33.9	13 22.0	2 3.4	24 40.7	59 17.7
Column Total		127 38.1	55 16.5	5 1.5	146 43.8	333 100.0

TABLE 31
 OFFICE HOLDING IN SOUTH HEMPSTEAD: LOYALTY
 OF MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (1784-1788)

Year	Count Row Pct	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncom- mitted	
1784		0	5	0	8	13
		0	38.5	0	61.5	21.7
1785		0	2	0	5	7
		0	28.6	0	71.4	11.7
1786		0	6	0	5	11
		0	54.5	0	45.5	18.3
1787		0	8	0	5	13
		0	61.5	0	38.5	21.7
1788		0	10	0	6	16
		0	62.5	0	37.6	26.7
Column Total		0	31	0	29	60
		0	51.7	0	48.3	100.0

that the Dutch always expressed "their regard for our established Church." By the outbreak of the Revolution only a few inhabitants were Presbyterian and they were "no friends to Religious Animosity." They conducted themselves as "kind and obliging neighbors." Since they could not support a minister of their own, they attended the Episcopal Church in a "devout and attentive manner." The Anglican Church was usually filled on Sunday with people of all denominations.¹⁶

The Revolution divided Hempstead into its northern and southern halves. Ninety-three percent of the town's patriots lived in the north, while 16.2 percent of their adversaries were from the same area. As in the western towns, the Whigs were a small minority in the area of their greatest strength--15.2 percent of the northern population. Although the Tories were almost as strong (13.9 percent), the majority of people (68.6 percent) were uncommitted. Of those of known religion, less than 3 percent of the patriots living on the Long Island Sound were Presbyterians, but one-third were Reformed Dutch and almost one-half were Anglican. Forty percent of north Hempstead's Whig leadership of known religion came from the Episcopal Church, and 50 percent from the Reformed Dutch Church. The loyalists were also of the same religious denominations, although a greater percentage of Anglicans sided with the king while the opposite was true for the Dutch church. Possibly the tie between the king and his Established Church was a factor.¹⁷

Support for Great Britain was greater in the southern

part of the town than in any other area of the county. Scarcely a person declared himself in favor of the patriot platform. Tory militia units openly mustered with arms supplied by royal officials and disarmed suspected Whigs despite the resolutions of the Provincial Congress. Emotions ran so deeply, and the royal position appeared so strong that many, who under different circumstances would have remained neutral, joined the movement. The loyalists even outnumbered the uncommitted. Although there were vast discrepancies in the real and personal wealth of town inhabitants, there is no evidence of a class struggle. While in the south both rich and poor were loyalists, in the north patriotism and loyalism drew roughly equal support from all classes.¹⁸

The history of seventeenth-century Hempstead had been characterized by disputes over politics and land between residents of the northern necks and inhabitants of other districts of the town. Although there is no evidence the Revolutionary generation remembered the earlier disagreements or harbored any resentments, the same underlying factors divided the town in the seventeen-seventies. Geographic size was part of the problem. In 1691 the inhabitants of Cow Neck and Madnam's (or Great) Neck which were on the Long Island Sound petitioned the governor to be set off from Hempstead, since it was a great hardship to carry on affairs with that "inland place."¹⁹ The town was approximately twenty-two miles wide, sixteen miles in length, and had a land area of 125,686 acres. Size alone was sufficient to

generate the centrifugal forces which had led to the division of some early New England towns. East-west roads appear to have been better than those going north-south. The legislative act of 1784 which divided the town stated that the township was "so situated as to render the transacting of business at their annual town meetings and the discharge of the duties of the town officers very inconvenient."²⁰

Economically the two sections had also developed along dissimilar lines. By the Revolution the north had become a thriving commercial agricultural region supplying the growing needs of the New York market and utilizing the Long Island Sound as a quick and relatively inexpensive mode of transportation. The south never experienced the same degree of prosperity. An S.P.G. missionary wrote in 1768 that "to the South of Hempstead for several Miles, are great numbers of Inhabitants, in general in very indigent Circumstances, they say they can not procure Conveniences, to come so far to Church." As often as possible, the minister visited the people to catechize them, and although he found large numbers of them willing to learn, they were "totally illiterate." He attempted to establish a school in the area, and the society made annual contributions to support his efforts, but the plan failed. It was difficult to find a teacher, and one left unexpectedly to take a better position in the northern part of the town among "some Wealthy Farmers." When there was a teacher, there were never enough students. The people were too poor to provide their children with

proper clothing, particularly in the winter. Data on the per capita wealth of the inhabitants of North and South Hempstead confirm the economic disparity between the two areas of the town.²¹

Politics was another source of friction. In the early seventeen-seventies, northerners held a disproportionately large share of important town offices. But because the south had a larger population, the north enjoyed political power only as long as its views accorded with those of the rest of the town. If unanimity broke down, as it did during the Revolution, the north's influence over town government waned. By 1775 the number of northern Whigs holding major offices had drastically declined, and the area had lost its voice in decisions made by the town meeting. Although one historian has stated that the April 1775 resolutions passed by the town were the result of a unanimity of opinion which lasted until September 1775, this interpretation ignores the patriot protest of May 1775 which attacked both the position taken by the town and the tactics employed by the majority.²²

In the course of Hempstead's history two separate communities had emerged. Distinct in their economic and political outlook, they were united by outdated and overlarge boundary lines which did not reflect the needs of the people. The conflict in 1775 between north and south was not simply the result of the struggle between Great Britain and her colonies. If it had been, the actions taken by the northern

Whigs in September 1775 would have been only temporary. The division of Hempstead at the end of the war left the south under the political control of former loyalists who had no interest in enforcing punitive legislation against Tories. Between 1784 and 1788 individuals who had supported the king during the war held 51.7 percent of all major offices in South Hempstead.²³

Hempstead's eastern neighbor, Oyster Bay, was not the victim of the same spirit of divisiveness. Although the town spanned the width of Long Island and had an area of 111 square miles, it lacked a history of such discord and its population was smaller. Oyster Bay was also free from the religious factionalism which plagued the three western communities. There were few Presbyterians, and Anglicans divided on the Revolution in roughly the same manner as the town as a whole. As in Flushing, there was a large body of Quakers whose pacifism was a force for moderation. The people of Oyster Bay, in all likelihood, responded to the Revolution in the manner the county might have reacted if the other towns had not had so many internal conflicts. The community had Whigs and Tories--8.5 percent and 17.1 percent, respectively. Neither group was as large as it was in the county as a whole--in the same order, 12 percent and 26.8 percent. Most townsmen (73.9 percent) remained uninvolved. In April 1775 the town voted 205 to 42 against sending deputies to the Provincial Congress. The next month three justices of the peace had the town clerk record the April

vote and their objections to the upcoming May election of delegates to Congress. The April 1776 town meeting voted 10 to 4 that the justices' protest "Against Chuseing Deputies . . . Should be Erassed out of the Book." In April 1777 with British soldiers stationed on Long Island Oyster Bay voted to re-record the protest. Expediency rather than principle was the basis of most townsmen's actions.²⁴

The Revolutionary War brought to the surface and exacerbated long standing community problems. It was as much a civil war as a war for independence. Data on the five towns do not support a common belief that it was a continuing New England influence which led inhabitants of the northern necks to become Whigs. There were not enough patriots in Oyster Bay to demonstrate the validity of such a relationship, and associators in Hempstead were not looking across Long Island Sound but away from their southern neighbors. The theory also fails to explain why Jamaica, a south shore community, had a larger percentage of Whigs than Flushing which was to the north. Although events in Massachusetts and Connecticut influenced Suffolk County, some of whose residents still crossed the Sound to attend religious services on Sunday, that tradition had ended in eastern Queens with the decline of Presbyterianism. In the western part of the county, where the dissenting tradition still survived, people looked to New York City for guidance.²⁵

It has also been argued that friends of liberty

were an inconsequential segment of the population--frustrated office seekers, persons of little or no family, and characters of desperate fortune who used the conflict for their personal advancement. The exact opposite appears to be the case. Whigs were not only influential, but their power far exceeded their numbers. Approximately three times as many important officeholders on the town level espoused the American position than did the population as a whole. While 12 percent of the inhabitants became patriots, 38.5 percent of the 1771 important town officeholders did so; the same was true in 1772; in 1773 it was 46.2 percent; in 1774, 45 percent; in 1775, 32.3 percent; and in 1776, 36.7 percent. The same pattern continued after the war: 38.2 percent in 1785; 35.1 percent in 1786; 30.9 percent in 1787; and 33.9 percent in 1788.²⁶

Almost 20 percent of all known inhabitants who held a political position at the county or province level between the years 1763 and 1776 sided with the Continental Congress. Although the trend was not as pronounced as with town officeholders, the percentage of patriots among county and province officeholders was still greater than that in the population as a whole. The discrepancy between the two types of officeholders was in part due to the fact that those who held a county or province position felt a strong obligation to the oath they had sworn to the king. They were also predominantly Anglican (55.2 percent), and of these 74.3 percent sided with Great Britain. Rather than being misfits, the patriots were men of proven talent, and their loss of political office

after 1776 had a disruptive effect on the traditional patterns of influence within the county and consequently hindered the British war effort.

Data on the wealth of county's inhabitants also refute the contention that the patriot cause attracted the more disreputable members of the community. An individual's economic standing did not have a bearing on his actions during the Revolution. While the wealth distribution among Tories and the uncommitted fairly accurately mirrored that for the population as a whole, the patriots, who were a little underrepresented among the poorer people, drew slightly more support from the middling sort. This deviation is not strong enough to support an economic interpretation, and the evidence, taken as a whole, demonstrates that economically the Whigs were no different from other members of the community.²⁷

Age can also be eliminated as a determinant of an individual's loyalty. Although data of this nature exist for more than 40 percent of those surveyed, there is no discernible pattern linking time of birth to loyalty. This conclusion is strengthened by a comparison of the loyalty of fathers and their sons. While 549 such relationships were discovered, in only eight cases was one a patriot and the other a loyalist. In five instances, the son lived in another town, and in four of the eight he was of a different religious faith. If age had been a factor, one has a right to expect there would have been more examples of a father

and son choosing opposite sides in the debate.²⁸

Although 1775 was filled with the struggle between Whigs and Tories, the central fact was that a majority of county residents were uncommitted. If these people perceived by the end of the year that their interests were best served by tacitly aligning with the Tories, it did not follow that this understanding was inevitable. In northern Hempstead supporters of the Continental Congress constituted about 15 percent of the population, but after September 1775, they effectively dominated the political structure of the area. The crucial development was that loyalists were able to do in the entire county what the patriots had accomplished in north Hempstead. This success was possible because the Tories understood and took advantage of the outlook of the uncommitted.

FOOTNOTES

¹See Table 3; Table 4 studies loyalty by town.

²See Table 8; data on religion for Queens: Table 5.

³See Tables 22 and 23.

⁴See Table 6.

⁵See Tables 7 and 29.

⁶See Table 28.

⁷William H. Nelson, The American Tory (Boston, 1961), p. 89; the same was not as true for the Dutch in north Hempstead where some appear to have been more commercial minded and a few, like Hendrick Onderdonk, were converting to Anglicanism: Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 265.

⁸American Material from the Records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Letter Ser. B, II, p. 470, Columbia University, Microfilm Division, hereafter cited as S.P.G., Letter Ser. B; History of Queens County, New York, p. 32; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., Antiquities of the Parish Church, Hempstead (including Oyster Bay and the Churches in Suffolk County), Illustrated from Letters of the Missionaries (Hempstead, N.Y., 1880), pp. 13, 24.

⁹See Tables 26 and 29.

¹⁰Colonial Laws of New York, I, pp. 328-31; see also "An Act to Explain and put into execution the Act for Settling a Ministry of 1693" passed in 1704, ibid., pp. 576-79; the two acts were repealed in 1784, Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Sessions of the Legislature, 7th session, Apr. 20, 1784, Chapter 38, hereafter cited as Laws.

¹¹Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 235, 238; Ehrlich, "Newtown," pp. 28-29; Jones, History, I, pp. 7-8; Horatio Ladd, The Origin and History of Grace Church, Jamaica, New York (New York, 1914), pp. 68-77; George Winans, First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica, New York (Jamaica, N.Y., 1943), pp. 22-27, 28-29.

¹²Transcript of Papers relating to the Established Church in Jamaica, 1704-1779, from the Records of the S.P.G., Jamaica Box, N.Y.H.S.; S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, p. 580, III, pp. 226, 227, 229; New York Colonial Documents, V, pp. 311, 313-15, 322-24, VI, pp. 1-4; E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., The Documentary History of the State of New York (4 vols., Albany, 1849), III, pp. 118, 201, 340; Hugh Hastings, ed., Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York (5 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1910-1916), III, pp. 1518, 1570-71, 1575, 1585, 1589-93, 1609-15, 1711, 1809, 1883, 1899-1903, 1905-06, 1909-15, 1919-24, V, pp. 3749-50, 3799, VI, pp. 4180-81, 4231-33; History of Queens County, pp. 232-33, 238-42; Winans, First Presbyterian Church, pp. 21-49; Ladd, History of Grace Church, pp. 50-56, 62-66, 67-89, 92-92, 95-97; Peyer, "Jamaica," pp. 235, 238-39, 242-50; Ehrlich, "Newtown," p. 29; Henry Onderdonk, Jr., Antiquities of the Parish Church, Jamaica (including Newtown and Flushing) Illustrated from Letters of the Missionaries, and Other Authentic Documents, with a Continuation of the History of Grace Church, to the Present Time (Jamaica, N.Y., 1880), pp. 68-69; the Great Awakening contributed to anti-Anglican sentiment in Jamaica: Oscar T. Barck, Jr., New York during the War for Independence (New York, 1931), p. 15; O'Callaghan, Documentary History of New York, III, pp. 327-28.

¹³S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, p. 478; Transcript of Papers relating to the Established Church in Jamaica, Jamaica Box, N.Y.H.S.; Riker, Annals of Newtown, p. 248; Peyer, "Jamaica," p. 293; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 190-91.

¹⁴New York Mercury, June 2, 1755; Draft with Corrections and Fair Copy of Watch Tower Essay No. XXVIII, printed in the New York Mercury, June 2, 1755, MISC MSS, "Watch Tower," N.Y.H.S.; Frederic Mather, The Refugees of 1776 from Long Island to Connecticut (Albany, N.Y., 1913), p. 434; Jones, History, I, p. 648; Winans, First Presbyterian Church, pp. 68-69; Hastings, Ecclesiastical Records, III, p. 1711.

¹⁵Jones, History, I, p. 149; Winans, First Presbyterian Church, p. 149; the 1693 Ministry Act was repealed in 1784: Laws, 7th session, Apr. 20, 1784, Chapter 38.

¹⁶S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, pp. 470, 474; Onderdonk, Antiquities of the Parish Church, Hempstead, pp. 13, 24; O'Callaghan, Documentary History, III, pp. 338-39, 1053.

¹⁷The Presbyterians were possibly more numerous than has been documented; in 1762 they were of sufficient strength to build a new church, and during the seventeen-sixties the

Rev. Abraham Kettelstas appears to have occasionally ministered to their needs, but by the Revolution they were again without a minister and there is a question whether they formed a distinct group in 1776: Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 189, 263; of those who can be identified as Presbyterians, 20 percent were Whigs and 80 percent uncommitted, see Tables 10 and 28; S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, p. 470; Mildred G. Morgenstein, "The Early History of Great Neck, New York," (M.A. thesis, Queens College, 1957), p. 80; Rev. William Henry Moore, History of St. George's Church, Hempstead (New York, 1881), p. 133; Onderdonk, Antiquities of the Parish Church, Hempstead, p. 13; see Tables 9 through 11.

¹⁸See Tables 11, 18, 19, and 20.

¹⁹For the disputes between the different sections of the town, see: Hicks, Records of North and South Hempstead, pp. 305, 378, 382-83, 384, 386, 419, II, pp. 16-17, 24, 100-101, 264, 277, IV, pp. 73-75; Onderdonk, Antiquities of the Parish Church, Hempstead, p. 32.

²⁰Nassau County Planning Commission, Nassau County Data Book, p. 2; Kenneth A. Lockridge, A New England Town, The First Hundred Years: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736 (New York, 1970), p. 173; Laws, 7th Session, Apr. 6, 1784, Chapter 21.

²¹S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, pp. 474, 482, 486, 490, 494, 498, 502; see Table 1.

²²See Tables 24 and 25; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 266; New York Gazette, May 8, 1775; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 114; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 37-39.

²³See Table 31; South Hempstead, for its part, did not want a division of the town: Manuscript Records of the Town of Hempstead, V, p. 404, Hempstead Town Clerk.

²⁴See Table 12; Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VII, pp. 53, 55, 58, 60-61.

²⁵See, for example, Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 265.

²⁶Ibid., p. 260; see Tables 2 and 30.

²⁷See Table 14; Tables 15 to 21 study wealth by town.

²⁸See Table 13.

CHAPTER III

THE UNCOMMITTED AND TORY INTRIGUES: 1775

Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden spoke for the uncommitted majority when he wrote in November 1774 that they were "averse to all violent and irritating measures." The farmers, he added, "will not bear the Non Exportation" of goods, and "they abhor the thoughts of a civil war, and desire nothing so much as to have an end put to this unhappy dispute with the mother country."¹ They "would rejoice in any prudent plan of restoring harmony and security."² Two groups of county residents were uncommitted: one for political reasons and the other, the Quakers, for religious reasons.

Politically unaligned farmers saw little in 1775 that was attractive in either the Whig or Tory positions. With each passing day the slogan of liberty appeared less a demand for legitimate rights and more an excuse for violence. As word spread how Isaac Sears in April of that year had paraded the rabble, flags flying and drums beating, up and down the city streets inviting all mankind to take up arms in defense of the "injured rights and liberties of America," New York appeared to be on the edge of anarchy.³ Whatever happened, unaligned inhabitants of Queens wanted to insure

that such disorders did not spread to their own communities. The cry of loyalists for the intervention of the British army provoked fears that the county's farms would become battlefields and its harvests the spoils of war. Supporters of the king promised confiscation of property and death to those who took up arms against the royal cause, while rebels threatened the loss of the New York market to any individual whose patriotism was doubted.⁴

Such circumstances convinced a majority of men to seek refuge in neutrality, a stand not based on indecision but on the desperate hope that both alternatives could be avoided. Sir William Howe believed that "many wish for peace, but are indifferent [to] which side prevails."⁵ If Dutch, the inhabitant sought safety in the language barrier; if poor or illiterate, he pleaded his ignorance of the affairs of state. After the British retook Long Island in August 1776, many people's "submission" to the crown, according to Howe, "preceded from no other motive, than that of [the army's] success."⁶ Throughout 1774 and 1775 the uncommitted man always advocated a wait-and-see policy, and this fact gave the king the advantage.

The patriots, engaged in rebellion, had to insure that their movement had at least the appearance of mass support: petitions had to be signed, committees formed, and armies raised. Evidence of indecision or temporizing by any segment of the population was detrimental to the triumph of the American cause. Each individual had to be canvassed, and

if his response was not satisfactory, he had to be coerced by threats or actual physical harm. In contrast, supporters of the king had only to counsel inaction and wait for the rebellion to collapse through indifference. British ships stationed off the coast were a sufficient display of force to demonstrate the inevitability of England's eventual triumph. Because neutrality was the preferred position of so many inhabitants, it made the British overconfident of their support and the Whigs certain that Queens County was a citadel of Toryism.⁷

The revolutionists tried to awaken uncommitted inhabitants to the dangers facing them. Whig propaganda told of the corruption that was "predominant" in England and recounted the list of illegalities allegedly committed against the colonists. Tyranny was threatening America. "The enemies of our devoted Constitution," according to an anonymous Newtown Whig, "have long considered it as an obstacle to their design of establishing an arbitrary government, over the whole British Empire, the first essay of which they are now attempting in the colonies." The only alternative was to stand united in defense of the people's natural rights. Failure to act, the patriot wrote, would be a "breach, or a neglect of duty, which will in its consequences entail destruction upon yourself and your offsprings;" the arguments in favor of moderation were a device used by selfish men to "lull you by their singing, to rest upon your oars, in a tempestuous ocean" at a time "when you might escape shipwreck

TO THE

FREE-HOLDERS

OF

NEW-TOWN.

My Friends and Fellow-Townsmen!

WE are now called upon to oppose the encroachments, which, for some time past, have been made upon our rights and liberty. The question before us, is, whether or not we shall elect a Deputy, to represent us in our Provincial Convention, to be held at New-York, (on the 20th instant) with the Deputies from the different towns and counties in this colony, for the purpose of appointing Delegates, to meet on the 10th of May next, at Philadelphia, in another Continental Congress, as recommended by the last—and adopt such constitutional measures, as they shall judge most efficacious, to frustrate the tyrannical and wicked designs of a corrupt and arbitrary ministry.

But if we join those hirelings and tools of state, who aim at preventing the choice of Delegates to the Congress, our conduct may rivet the chains, not only upon ourselves, but on our posterity, to whom we should strive, if possible, to leave a better inheritance than that we received from our ancestors. Let us give generations yet unborn, no just cause to curse the transactions of this day.

My dear Fellow-Townsmen, Think, and act for yourselves.—Be not led away by designing men; beware of the delusive arguments of that base menacious writer, who styles himself, A QUEEN'S COUNTY FREEHOLDER, and with the treachery of the *old Serpent*, endeavours, by false hopes of imaginary advantages, to tempt you into a breach, or neglect of duty, which will in its consequences, entail destruction upon yourselves and your offspring. Let not the fair speeches and specious pretences of an insidious enemy, in the disguise of a friend, amuse you to neglect the present opportunity of preserving yourselves and your country,—or, as it was fabled of the Syrens of old, lull you by their singing, to rest upon your oars, in a tempestuous ocean, and listen to their voices, at the only time, when you might escape shipwreck and death:

" Tho' Syren's musick charms the sailor's ear,
" Yet, he is ruin'd if he stop to hear."

This pretended *Freeholder's* attachment to that party, who are in fact mere tools to the Ministry, induced him to avoid touching on the merits of the cause; but to dissuade you from adopting the measures recommended by the late General Congress, was not ashamed to have recourse to those arts, the slimy texture of which has often been exposed: He tells you, our General Assembly have petitioned his Majesty. But, my abused countrymen, do you know what they have petitioned for? Surely, he cannot mean that they have petitioned for the redress of American grievances, felt to be such, by every British colony, and so voted unanimously, by the Continental Congress?

My dear Fellow-Townsmen, The enemies of our devoted *Constitution*, have long considered it as an obstacle to their design of establishing an arbitrary government, over the whole British empire, the first essay of which they are now attempting in the Colonies.

Bribery and corruption are become so predominant, that every Patriot ought to be always on his guard, lest seducers should, in this grand conflict against the iron hand of tyranny, find means to mislead him.

It is not attempted here, to brand with opprobrious epithets, and to name the few individuals, who, deluded by selfish motives, have raised their cry against the generous Assertors of our Rights; those men are left to the justice of the great disposer of events; but we anxiously look for that time, when a test of distinction will be drawn between the Friends to the Hanoverian line of British Kings, and the tools of state, who would, by one single stroke, destroy our Liberty, and deprive us of our Property.

Newtown, April 3d, 1775.

A New-Town Free-holder.

Fig. 2

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society

and death." The people, according to another Whig propagandist, had tried every peaceable method of obtaining relief, but "the return has invariably been a repetition of injuries, aggravated by the most intolerable results." Although the royalists had attempted to persuade the people that "all who oppose the ministry, are declared enemies to the king; nothing can be further from the truth. The House of Hanover was set upon the throne to defend and protect the liberty of the subject." There was a distinction between true friends of the Hanoverian line and "Jacobites" or royalists "who would by one stroke, destroy our liberty and deprive us of our property."⁸ Although the Whigs argued with force, they never understood the temper of the county, and their propaganda failed to elicit the expected response. Patriots saw the neutrality of the people as an "unmanly design" rather than as a different perception of the crisis.⁹

The Tories took a position throughout 1775 that was more compatible with the interests of the uncommitted. Minimizing the dispute over issues, loyalists conceded that there were honest grievances which needed to be corrected. All factions, for example, recognized that taxation without representation was a violation of the people's rights. The real question, according to the Tories, was over the means to be used in gaining relief. The existing political system, through the right of petition, provided the only proper constitutional remedy. Since the New York Assembly had already petitioned the king in March 1775, the prudent course was to

give him the opportunity to reply. This policy, the Tories argued, was favored by "a great majority of the people, and of men of the best fortunes," but opposed by "a set of violent Spirits of the lowest Rank, and desperate fortunes, countenanced by a few of superior condition, who lay hold of every occasion to rouse Mob and excite Sedition."¹⁰ The inhabitants were suffering from tyranny in 1775, but it was Whig not royal tyranny, for the patriots had abused the county's elected representatives to the Assembly and foisted illegal committees on the people. The undeniable right of each town to vote against the measures of the various congresses had been abridged, and unelected delegates were pretending to speak for the county. Armed bands were confiscating the property of loyal subjects, while self-appointed enthusiasts were denying farmers access to the New York market. Unaligned inhabitants, recognizing the oppression loyalists were describing, believed the British army would soon reassert the crown's authority and refused to accept the rhetoric of rebellion.¹¹

Numbered among the uncommitted were the Quakers who were, of course, pacifists. Many believed throughout the period of the Revolution, however, that the Quakers were loyalists. Sir Guy Carleton wrote in 1783 that "from principle as well as policy, [the Quakers] will ever attach themselves to the English interest."¹² But the Friends' support for the government of England was very limited; in return for religious toleration, they had traditionally given

their civil obedience to the crown (inasmuch as the law of God allowed). Joining the Whigs in challenging the king's authority threatened their religious freedom and their peaceable principles. Pacifism enjoined not only overt aggression, but any act, including a non-violent one, which tended to promote civil strife. A Quaker could not be a "non-violent" patriot. If religious doctrine under these circumstances was anti-Whig, it could also work against the government. Friends later found it necessary to disobey commands which British officials saw as essential to the effective prosecution of the war. It was as wrong to put down a rebellion as to support one.¹³

Although it was not difficult to formulate in general terms the conduct demanded by the Quakers' religious beliefs, the Revolution was an arduous and continuing struggle to define their application in concrete situations. In 1774 the Society's New York Meeting for Sufferings investigated the participation of Quakers in the colonial debate and determined that, since membership on Whig committees strengthened a cause that was becoming violent, Friends must be prohibited from any such involvement. The Westbury Monthly Meeting successfully insisted on the return of a sum of Continental money that Quakers had contributed in an area controlled by the Whigs. Privateering and the selling of goods acquired in this manner were prohibited even if an individual were unaware of their origin when he purchased them. When a young Quaker from Queens decided to become a

merchant in New York, other Friends cautioned him against going because of the temptations involved. When he refused to take their advice, they anxiously checked upon all his transactions. Although members of the Society could not prevent either side from taking their private property for use in the war, they refused to participate in the collection of the material requisitioned and did not accept payment for what they believed had been unjustly confiscated from them. If a freedman were taken by either army, concerned Friends searched after him to make certain he was not forced to bear arms or to return to slavery.¹⁴

Discipline at times was difficult for the Quakers to enforce, but there was no vindictiveness toward those who faltered, even if they had borne arms. Often the person at fault, having previously failed to attend meetings for a long period of time, refused to meet with Quakers sent to reason with him, but they always returned. With an individual who was receptive, they would "labor" for months, and if after much effort they failed and decided the individual must be "disowned," someone invariably offered to make one last attempt with the man. When an individual enlisted in the army, the monthly meeting would write to Friends in the area where he had been sent requesting that they help him to see the light. The very nature of their religion forced Quakers to make difficult choices. When must charity for a fallen member cease and concern for the reputation of the Society begin? Should they continue to call a man a Friend who had

long since departed to fight in the war, but with whom they had not had an opportunity to labor? The decision was always difficult, particularly for members of the person's family, but disownment was never irreversible.¹⁵

Quakers continued to strictly adhere to their beliefs after the British re-occupied Long Island. Monthly meetings attempted to record each suffering not only to instill courage but to bear witness to the inner light. The extent of their monetary losses alone demonstrate that their loyalty was to their principles, not to King George. With the advent of peace the Society of Friends at first refused to recognize the new government or pay a state tax levied on the county because it had been within British lines during the war. It was not that they remained faithful to an irretrievable past, but that they found it excruciatingly difficult to recognize the outcome of the violence they had abhorred and which had caused them so much suffering.¹⁶

Because of the Quaker debate over slavery before the war, the Society of Friends came out of the Revolution in a stronger position than other denominations in the county. What had begun as a matter of conscience to some members soon grew into a genuine emancipation movement. First, the buying and selling of another human being was prohibited, and later the institution of slavery itself. Concern did not end at this point. Friends saw that each freedman's papers were in order so that his new status could not be challenged, and most former slaves entrusted their certificates

to the Society for safekeeping. A fear remained among Friends that justice had not been done and that there was still recompense to be made for years of forced labor. Committees were appointed with power to determine whether each freedman was properly cared for, that he could make a living, that the aged had not been abandoned, and that all received an education. There had been opposition within the Society to each step in the movement toward equality, but recalcitrant members were made to see the justice of the situation or they were disowned. While the struggle had been painful, it had purified and strengthened the Society, demanding that Friends examine and reaffirm their religious convictions. An affirmative commitment could not be made lightly since it often entailed a heavy economic cost. The bonds formed in this crisis sustained the Quakers throughout the revolutionary period.¹⁷

The Friends in Queens were not an anomaly, but an integral part of the group which saw itself as uncommitted on the issues dividing Whig and Tory. Missionaries for the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts often explained their own failures in terms of the perverse influence Friends had on the population. Many inhabitants, although they never became Quakers, accepted some of their beliefs. While the Society of Friends was religiously motivated in its stand, all of the uncommitted were one in their quest for neutrality and their aversion to violence.¹⁸

TABLE 32

SUFFERINGS OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS AS A
RESULT OF THE WAR (1775-1786)

	Amount
<u>Westbury Monthly Meeting</u>	
1775-1776	£ ----- ^a
1776-1777	277.13.1 ^a
1777-1778	199.14.5
1778-1779	74.5.0
1779-1780	167.7.0
1780-1781	31.0.6
1781-1782	259.8.1
1782-1783	49.4.9
1783-1784	0
1784-1785	384.6.4 ^b
1785-1786	225.7.0 ^b
Total	£1668.6.2
<u>Flushing Monthly Meeting</u>	
1775-1782	£194.11.10
1782-1783	0
Total	£194.11.10

Source: "N.Y.Y.M., Minutes," pp. 99, 101, 109, 137, 154, 181, 199, 211; "Minutes of the Westbury Monthly Meeting," 111 (1767-1778), p. 192, IV (1778-1782), pp. 28, 51, 102, 156; "Minutes of the Flushing Monthly Meeting," VIII (1781-1784), pp. 70-82.

^aThe amount given for the years 1776-1777 represents the amount of sufferings for the period 1775-1777.

^bThe sufferings were based on the forced payment of a tax passed by the New York State Legislature in "An Act for raising £100,000 within the several counties therein mentioned, see Laws, 7th Session, May 6, 1784, Chapter 58.

TABLE 33

THE UNCOMMITTED: TOWN BY RELIGION (1775)

Town	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Col	Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
Newtown			23	40	53	14	0	85	215
			10.7	18.6	24.7	6.5	0.0	39.5	11.6
			7.1	15.7	51.0	3.8	0.0	10.7	
Jamaica			16	27	22	1	0	48	114
			14.0	23.7	19.3	0.9	0.0	42.1	6.1
			4.9	10.6	21.2	0.3	0.0	6.0	
Flushing			36	18	7	55	0	72	188
			19.1	9.6	3.7	29.3	0.0	38.3	10.1
			11.0	7.1	6.7	15.0	0.0	9.1	
Hempstead			170	37	14	88	1	226	536
			31.7	6.9	2.6	16.4	0.2	42.2	28.9
			52.1	14.6	13.5	24.0	10.0	28.4	
North			79	20	4	56	1	102	262
			30.2	7.6	1.5	21.4	0.4	38.9	14.1
			24.2	7.9	3.8	15.3	10.0	12.8	
South			67	10	8	30	0	83	198
			33.8	5.1	4.0	15.2	0.0	41.9	10.7
			20.6	3.9	7.7	8.2	0.0	10.4	

TABLE 33--Continued

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reformed	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	
Hempstead							
Unknown	24 31.6 7.4	7 9.2 2.6	2 2.6 1.9	2 2.6 0.5	0 0.0 0.0	41 53.9 5.2	76 4.1
Oyster Bay	55 11.3 16.9	114 23.4 44.9	2 0.4 1.9	134 27.5 36.6	9 1.8 90.0	174 35.7 21.9	488 26.3
Non-Residents	1 25.0 0.3	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	2 50.0 0.5	0 0.0 0.0	1 25.0 0.1	4 0.2
Residents Unknown	25 8.1 7.7	18 5.8 7.1	6 1.9 5.8	72 23.2 19.7	0 0.0 0.0	189 61.0 23.8	310 16.7
Column Total	326 17.6	254 13.7	104 5.6	366 19.7	10 0.5	795 42.9	1855 100.0

Quaker religious principles and loyalist propaganda were insufficient to hold the uncommitted in line and prevent a patriot takeover of the county. The fact that royal government did not disintegrate in Queens can be attributed to the way in which the Tories demonstrated that the king's rule remained viable. Patriots were aware of the intrigues of their enemies but were powerless to counteract them. At one point, when the Provincial Congress requested information on Tory activities within the county, a local committeeman, apologizing for the paucity of the material collected, replied that "their meetings were confined to their own party, their conclusions kept as secret as possible."¹⁹ While this was true, the general outline of their Tory actions is clear.

The English government, aware of New York's importance as a centrally located naval and supply base, urged Governor William Tryon and Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden to stem the Whig advances in the province. In July 1774, the Secretary of State, Lord Dartmouth, requested "that persons of Credit and character" be encouraged to "exert their influence to put a stop to that licentious spirit, which had led to measures so disgraceful to the City of New York."²⁰ In December 1774 Dartmouth wrote that "even now if your good Friends at New York would step forward to resist the violence and Intemperance of other Colonies," they could "adopt and promote a more prudent and dispassionate line of Conduct." Tryon, who was in England at the time, forwarded the letter to Colden, asking him to pursue the

matter with the "utmost zeal."²¹ In New York, Colden was keeping the ministry posted on American developments, including the meeting of the First Continental Congress which, before it adjourned, had resolved that there should be another meeting in May 1775. Whitehall responded with a circular directing all governors to use their "utmost endeavours to prevent any such appointment of deputies" within their own province.²²

The lieutenant governor did his best to organize the opposition. In September 1775, while the New York Provincial Congress was making its first serious effort to disarm the loyalists, Colden dispatched his personal servant to leading people in the county requesting them to resist the patriots with arms. Militarily he was more adventuresome than even the ministry, and at times he had to be restrained. His son, David, was also involved, and the two became the recognized leaders of the Tory cabal in Queens. Tryon, writing to Dartmouth, noted that the Colden family had "much merit in promoting this laudable spirit of opposition to the Measures of Committees and Congress in Queens County."²³ A Justice of the Supreme Court, George D. Ludlow, who lived in Hempstead, testified under oath that David Colden had done all in his power to keep the inhabitants loyal to the crown and had contributed greatly to preventing delegates from being sent to the Congress. He also supported the testimony of others that David was the head of the party within the county.²⁴

Colden's task was made easier because of the assistance which he received from royal officials residing in the county. George Ludlow reported that "he also exerted himself to the extent of his personal influence and Ability to allay the ferment. The disturbances forced him to retire from the city and to conceal himself many times from the furious rebels," but he "held Communnⁿ: with the Loyalists in the County and with the King's troops."²⁵ His brother, Gabriel G. Ludlow, Colonel of the Queens County Militia, swore on three separate occasions that through "his influence and the assistance of other Gentlemen in the County he preserved the Inhabitants in their allegiance and support" and successfully encouraged the people "in a rejection of all applications made on the part of Congress." He and other leaders "framed and signed" resolutions "declaring that they would not agree to the proceedings of the Congress." Governor Tryon supported these claims.²⁶

Thomas Jones, another Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote that he had "resisted the measures of the Americans and supported the King's Government."²⁷ His deceased father had been a close friend of the governor, and the family mansion at Fort Neck, Oyster Bay was named "Tryon Hall." Jones was as impetuous as the lieutenant governor, and during the disturbances in New York following the news of the Battle of Lexington he "boldly proposed" to the Governor's Council "that the militia should be called out, the riot act read, and if the mob did not thereupon disperse, to apprehend and

imprison the ringleaders, and by such coercive means to secure the peace of the city." The plan was not accepted, but his house at Fort Neck became a Tory meeting place, and his extensive land holdings in Oyster Bay served as a loyalist hiding place during Whig military incursions into the county. Small boats, presumed to be from the British ships in the Atlantic, frequently landed near his home at night.²⁸

Richard Hewlett, an officer in the French and Indian War and second in command of the county's militia, organized local Tories into a credible military force which on more than one occasion Whigs declined to engage in battle. The Provincial Congress was aware of Hewlett's contacts with the British fleet but was powerless to stop him. Daniel Kissam, a representative in the New York Assembly from 1764 to 1775 and a member of the DeLancey faction in the Assembly, had voted against approving the proceedings of the First Continental Congress. A leader of the Tories in Queens, he wrote much of their propoganda. The Martin family, related to the royal governor of North Carolina, communicated Governor Tryon's orders to concerned parties within the county. Whitehead Hicks, born in Flushing and mayor of New York City, also maintained contact with the king's supporters in Queens.²⁹

An influx of politically active Tories into Long Island from nearby counties and provinces strengthened the hand of royal officials in Queens and made the patriot position much more vulnerable. Thomas Jones noted that most of these exiles came to the county to join the British army; in

the meantime they were actively plotting conspiracies. While local Whig committees sought to minimize the danger by demanding that every non-resident produce a letter from the committee in his own area attesting to his patriotism, the order was never effectively enforced. Provincial and continental authorities sporadically intervened with troops to put down the loyalist threat, but patriots invariably discovered that their plans had been found out in advance. Tory leaders had temporarily disappeared, and their followers had already concealed their weapons. Governor Tryon had a spy system which kept the Tories in Queens forewarned.³⁰

The activities of Joseph French, a justice of the peace in Jamaica, indicate that the loyalists in Queens also passed information to the governor. French had not committed himself to either side during the early months of the struggle in Jamaica. In December 1774, he was elected to the town's Committee of Correspondence and Observation, but later, recalling the pre-war period, he stated that from the first he had worked to persuade the people in his neighborhood and in Hempstead to remain loyal to the crown.³¹ He may have been an opportunist or an undecided moderate, but the Whigs saw him as a man who, if won over, could add stature to their cause. In May 1775 they elected him to the Provincial Congress. French refused to serve, maintaining that a majority of the freeholders in Jamaica did not want to be represented. When Congress ordered him to take his seat, he obeyed, appearing on July 5, and he attended regularly until September 2

when the last roll call vote was taken before Congress adjourned. After readjournalment in October, votes were recorded by county, not by name, making it impossible to tell if he continued to attend. At least three men from the county were present during this session, and there is no reason to believe that French was not one of them.³²

On October 6, 1775 the Provincial Congress began deliberating behind closed doors on a secret resolution of the Continental Congress urging the arrest of anyone who was a danger to the liberty of America. Soon afterwards the newspapers printed a letter of the governor to the mayor of New York City, Whitehead Hicks. Governor Tryon, after noting that the Congress in Philadelphia had recommended that officers of the British government be arrested, asked whether he could continue to reside safely within the city. Judging Hicks' assurances unsatisfactory, he fled New York on October 19 and established headquarters on a British vessel in the harbor. The Continental Congress, concerned by this breach of its security, requested on November 2 the full details of what had happened. The governor was evidently informed by a few people that he was in danger. Thomas Jones wrote how Egbert Dumond, a member of the New York Congress and a former sheriff, had passed the information to the governor in the hope of political advantage.³³ Although Jones believed Dumond to have been the original informer, Tryon stated twice that it was French who first brought him the news of his impending arrest. The two men continued to correspond, and

other intelligence passed between them. After the Battle of Long Island, French benefited politically and pecuniarily from his association with the governor.³⁴

The Tories utilized a number of different channels to keep abreast of Whig maneuvers and coordinate their own strategy. Before his self-imposed exile Governor Tryon had visited his supporters on Long Island, and royal officials who lived in Queens traveled back and forth between the city and their homes. David Matthews, who succeeded Whitehead Hicks as mayor of New York, later moved to Brooklyn, opening up another avenue of communication. Once Tryon had established his headquarters at sea, small boats, sailing between the south shore and the British fleet, united the loyalist effort. There is ample evidence to support the governor's boast that "Friends of Government freely come to me." Although the Whigs tried to put an end to this traffic and at one point collected every boat along a seven-mile stretch of the beach, their efforts were unsuccessful.³⁵

In August 1776 the Howe brothers issued a declaration of pardon to all who would renew their allegiance to the crown. Posters announcing the proclamation immediately appeared throughout Queens County. With a British landing expected imminently, the patriots arrested Thomas Willett who had posted the proclamation under his authority as county sheriff. Other arrests quickly followed, but when the Provincial Congress sought to determine how the sheriff had come into possession of the document, no one knew how it had got from

a British vessel to Long Island. Only after Congress threatened to jail Elizabeth Hicks, one of those implicated, did the full story come out--a member of the Martin family had given the proclamation to her, requesting that she forward it to Nathaniel Mills; she gave it with the same instructions to Joshua Mills, who entrusted it to Caleb Mills; Caleb gave the letter to Nathaniel Mills who already knew that it was for the sheriff. The local school master acted as scribe, and before long inhabitants were aware that they did not have to fear retribution by the British after the patriots were defeated.³⁶

The impunity with which the Tories operated in this and other instances negated the pressures Whigs were able to exert on the county's uncommitted inhabitants. While royal government disintegrated rapidly in most colonies, the activities of provincial officials prevented such a loss of obedience in Queens. The loyalists were ubiquitous. On countless occasions, "gentlemen," acting alone or in groups, at town meetings or secret gatherings, successfully countered patriot efforts to increase Whig strength or influence within the county.³⁷ Other men slipped off to the British fleet where they provided information on the nature and extent of patriot defense preparations. When the British landed, soldiers knew whom to arrest and where these people were likely to be found. It is possible that lists naming the leading Whigs were prepared by loyalists who joined Howe during his two month stay on Staten Island and who then acted

as guides for the advancing army.³⁸

The most daring of the Tory exploits was the Asia affair. In response to the Golden family's descriptions of the sufferings endured by loyalists in New York, Vice Admiral Samuel Graves in Boston ordered the Asia, a ship of sixty guns, to sail to New York to protect the property and persons of the king's subjects, "to assist and cooperate with Lieutenant-Governor against the designs of those who are acting in open Violation of the Laws," and to participate "in all things for the good of his Majesty's Service."³⁹ After Governor Tryon returned to New York in June 1775, he took charge of the effort to provide the Tories with military protection.⁴⁰ He requested that Howe send him British regulars, but if this was not feasible, the governor wanted authority to raise two or three thousand provincials. The friends of government had been demanding help "as the enemies to government [were] daily insulting and disarming them." At the very least Howe should put three thousand stand of arms and one hundred thousand musket balls on board one of the king's ships subject to the governor's orders. A demonstration of British resolve was essential to prevent a serious erosion of the king's influence within the colony.⁴¹ The next month Tryon wrote Dartmouth for the power to raise "regiments out of and giving employment and protection to the well affected." The king's loyal subjects were "oppressed beyond all measure and without arms and ammunition" and "incessantly wait upon me with the strongest assurances that

they look upon their king for protection, and most ardently wish for the speedy restoration of the powers of his Majesty's Government."⁴²

Although General Howe rejected Tryon's request for arms, Captain George Vandeput of the Asia did not. James Robertson, writing from Boston, had assured David Colden that he would "find Cap^t Vandeput willing and able to apply the force in his hand to the best advantage for the Support of Government."⁴³ How many arms shipments were secretly sent to Queens is unknown, but there were more than one. In November 1775 Samuel Nostran and Isaac Lossie informed the Provincial Congress that a lieutenant and other officers from the Asia had supplied Captain Richard Hewlett with powder, ball, small arms, a cannon, and a gunner to work the cannon. When the arms were distributed to loyalists, they were told that five thousand British regulars were about to land at Rockaway on the county's south shore. Farmers stopped marketing their cattle in expectation of a rise in prices once the English landed. On December 18 Vandeput wrote that the people of Queens had signed an association to defend themselves if attacked by the Whigs and that fifteen hundred men were armed and half of these were ready to march on short notice. At the governor's request the captain had supplied these men with "two Barrels of powder, some flints, and 300 Weight of Musket Balls." Tryon also sent arms to Dow Ditmas who lived in the western part of the county. Ditmas distributed the weapons to people in that area with instructions on the

preparations to be made in advance of the British landing.⁴⁴

The governor's exact plans remain unknown. Both Richard Hewlett in September 1775 and the loyalist declaration of December stated that the Tories would resist any patriot military units sent into the county. In January 1776, with Connecticut soldiers expected to attack at any moment, loyalists set up an elaborate warning system to provide prompt notice of such a landing.⁴⁵ Although these incidents never led to a full scale battle, Tryon forced the Whigs to commit more troops to the county than the patriots wished to spare. In May 1776 George Washington informed the Provincial Congress that "a scheme of a junction is forming between the disaffected in Connecticut and Long Island, in order to join the Ministerial army."⁴⁶ The next day John Hendrickson of Queens appeared before Congress and gave a rambling account of the situation in the county. The loyalists, meeting secretly, were planning to assist the British in the conquest of Long Island.⁴⁷ Congress set up a Committee to Detect Conspiracies which on meeting stumbled across the Hickey Plot. Although it is difficult to determine the truth of the various allegations made, the scheme in its broadest outline was an attempt on the life of General Washington. Witnesses implicated the loyalists of Queens who, at the least, were involved with the part of the plan which anticipated a general uprising when royal troops landed on Long Island.⁴⁸

This development was the most dangerous aspect of

the Asia affair for the Whigs. Continental troops would have to repel a British landing while a hostile force was at the American rear. Only the speed of Howe's victory prevented envelopment from becoming a reality. Gabriel G. and George D. Ludlow were leading seven hundred county militiamen to the battlefield when they met an advance detachment of British regulars under Brigadier-General William Erskine which had just reached Jamaica.⁴⁹ Erskine arrived there on August 28, the day after the Battle of Long Island. Washington did not evacuate Long Island until the night of August 29. Significantly, the Ludlows were leading approximately the same number of men Captain Vandeput of the Asia had said was on alert. Word also reached the Provincial Congress that seven hundred inhabitants had joined arms with the British.⁵⁰

Although troops from Queens did not fight on the British side in the Battle of Long Island, the existence of such a force influenced the course of events within the county. Despite efforts by provincial and continental authorities, the Whigs were unable to disarm the loyalists. Royal government remained a viable alternative, and this fact convinced uncommitted inhabitants that the British would defeat the opposition. In the struggle for Queens, the British had enjoyed definite advantages--an independently-minded population which was disturbed by Whig violence; politically astute royal officials who were willing to cooperate on the king's behalf; and a geographic situation which permitted the intervention of the royal navy. Without

these factors local Tories would have experienced little more success than their opponents had.

FOOTNOTES

¹Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 958; for a discussion of loyalists and neutrals in New York State, see Esmond Wright, "The New York Loyalists: A Cross-section of Colonial Society," in Robert A. East and Jacob Judd, eds., The Loyalist Americans: A Focus on Greater New York (Tarrytown, N.Y., 1975), pp. 74-94.

²Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 669.

³Jones, History, I, p. 39.

⁴Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 1030; Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, 1643-1783, the Greater Part Dealing with the Period of the Stamp Act and the Revolution (13 vols.), V, p. 615, N.Y.P.L.; Peter Ross, A History of Long Island from Its Earliest Settlement to the Present (3 vols., New York, 1902), I, p. 198; New York Colonial Documents, VII, p. 571-72; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 262.

⁵Sir William Howe, The Narrative of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe in a Committee of the House of Commons on 29 April, 1779 Relative to His Conduct During His Late Command of the King's Troops in North America: To Which Are Added, Some Observations Upon A Pamphlet Entitled, Letters to a Nobleman (London, 1780), p. 39.

⁶Ibid., p. 44; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 603, 645; Great Britain, P.R.O., C.O. 5/92, pp. 339-41; James Riker Collection, Box 15, folder 1, N.Y.P.L.; New York Gazette, Dec. 11, 1775; Jones, History, I, p. 104; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 518; "A Few Remarks on the Conduct of many of the People of Queens County," n.d., Peter Force Collection, Ser. IX, Box 14, Library of Congress; Myron Luke, "The American Revolution on Long Island," Nassau County Historical Society Journal, XXXII (1972), p. 23; John Reynolds, Long Island Behind the British Lines During the Revolution (Setauket, N.Y., 1960), p. 5.

⁷C.O. 5/93, p. 39; Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, VII, p. 197, N.Y.P.L.; Transcript of Papers relating to the Established Church, Jamaica Box, N.Y.H.S.; New York

Gazette, Dec. 25, 1775; Onderdonk, Antiquities of the Parish Church, Jamaica, p. 73; Thomas W. Field, The Battle of Long Island with Preceding and Subsequent Events in Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, II (Brooklyn, 1869), pp. 17-18.

⁸For the best example of Whig propaganda in Queens, see: A Newtown Freeholder to Friends and Fellow Townsmen, April 3, 1775, Broadside Collection, N.Y.H.S.; for the same document also see: James Riker Collection, Box 18, N.Y.P.L., and James Riker, Historical Notes of Newtown (4 vols., Jamaica, N.Y., 1941), III, pp. 600-601; [New York] Constitutional Gazette, Nov. 29, 1775, Dec. 2, 1775; see also New York Journal, Dec. 21, 1775; Luke, "American Revolution," p. 23.

⁹Journals of the Continental Congress, IV, p. 25; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, p. 1630; Daniel M. Tredwell, Personal Reminiscences of Men and Things on Long Island (2 vols., Brooklyn, 1912), II, p. 314.

¹⁰W. B. Clark and W. J. Morgan, eds., Naval Documents of the American Revolution (6 vols., Washington, D.C., 1964-1972), I, pp. 100-101, hereafter cited as Naval Documents of the American Revolution.

¹¹For Tory propaganda and comments on it: Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 819, II, p. 275, IV, pp. 203-204; Rivington's, Apr. 6, 1775, June 3, 1778; New York Gazette, Jan. 9, 1775, Jan. 16, 1775, Jan. 23, 1775, Jan. 30, 1775; Record Group 360, Papers of the Continental Congress (204 Reels of Microfilm, Washington, D.C., 1961), Reel 88, Item 75, pp. 125-31, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; New York Journal, Dec. 14, 1775; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 200-201; Jones, History, I, pp. 34, 57; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 21-22; Riker, Annals of Newtown, p. 175; Mary Beth Norton, The British Americans: The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774-1789 (Boston, 1972), p. 20; Martha B. Flint, Long Island Before the Revolution: A Colonial Study (Port Washington, N.Y., 1967), p. 347.

¹²Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, XI, p. 4, N.Y.P.L.

¹³Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, pp. 380-81; "New York Yearly Meeting for Sufferings, Minutes, Ninth Month, 1758 to Sixth Month, 1796," MS, pp. 15-19, 24-25, 26-27, 29-30, 36, 41, 42-43, 49, 52, 59, 65, 73-76, 77, 78-79, 83-84, 101-102, 121-22, Hav. R.R., hereafter cited as "Sufferings Minutes"; Arthur J. Mekeel, "New York Quakers in the Revolution," Bulletin of Friends Historical Society, XXIX

(Spring 1940), p. 52; "New York Yearly Meeting, Minutes, 1746-1800," MS, pp. 77, 81-82, Hav. R.R., hereafter cited as "N.Y.Y.M., Minutes"; Elias Hicks Papers including Journals and Letters, p. 19, Hav. R.R.

¹⁴"Sufferings Minutes," pp. 15-19, 24-25, 26, 29-30, 59, 65; "N.Y.Y.M., Minutes," pp. 92-93, 103, 104, 105, 109, 154; records of the Society of Friends are vastly more voluminous than for any other religious organization in Queens County; additional documentation for this and the next three paragraphs can be found in the following manuscript volumes at the Hav. R.R.: "Minutes of the Flushing Monthly Meeting," VI, VII, VIII, IX, X; "Minutes of the Westbury Monthly Meeting," III, IV, V; "Minutes of Bethpage Preparatory Meeting," I, II.

¹⁵N.Y.Y.M., Minutes," p. 118; "The Book of Discipline Belonging to the [Westbury] Monthly Meeting of Friends on Long Island, Copied . . . 1763 (Including changes to 1777)," MS, Hav. R.R.; "Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends for the State of New York and Parts Adjacent Agreed on by Said Meeting, Held in New York, in the Fifth Month, 1783," MS, Hav. R.R.; for examples of the enforcement of discipline, see, in particular, the minutes of the monthly and preparatory meetings.

¹⁶"Sufferings Minutes," pp. 101-102, 119-20, 121-22, 133-34; "N.Y.Y.M., Minutes," pp. 105, 189, 211, 263; the Quakers willingly participated on the town level in the new government: between 1770-1776, Quakers held 4.3% of all major town offices; between 1777-Apr. 1783, 9.1% of such offices, and between Nov. 1783-1788, 13.5%; see Table 32.

¹⁷"N.Y.Y.M., Minutes," pp. 64, 79, 81-82, 83, 87, 94-95, 118, 129, 137; "Sufferings Minutes," p. 21; "A Record of the Discharges of the Negroes Set at Liberty by Friends of the Westbury Monthly Meeting (1776-1790)," MS, Hav. R.R.; Packet of Old Manumission Papers, 1776-1790, Hav. R.R.

¹⁸"Sufferings Minutes," p. 21; S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, pp. 438, 458, 517, 520, 524, 555, 558, 572.

¹⁹Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 48-50; see also: Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, p. 482; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, p. 258.

²⁰Golden Papers, VII, p. 228; C.O. 5/92, pp. 196-201; British Headquarters Papers, 1775-1783 (40 Boxes, 4 Packages), Document No. 34, N.Y.P.L.

²¹Governor William Tryon to Lieutenant-Governor Cadwallader Colden, Jan. 2, 1775, Van Schaack Family Papers, Columbia University, N.Y.

²²Colden Papers, VII, p. 259; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, pp. 518, 958; Barck, New York City during the War for Independence, p. 38; Kennedy, "Jamaica, Long Island," p. 87.

²³New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 645; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 34-35; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, p. 1164; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 157.

²⁴Transcript of the Manuscript Books and Papers of the Commission of Inquiry into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists Held Under Acts of Parliament of 23, 25, 26, 28, 29 of George III (60 vols., transcribed for the New York Public Library, 1899), XIX, pp. 437, 449-50, N.Y.P.L., hereafter cited as Loyalist Transcripts.

²⁵Great Britain, P.R.O., A.O. 13/65, pp. 147-48; Loyalist Transcripts, XLI, pp. 499, 505.

²⁶A.O. 13/65, pp. 150, 152; Loyalist Transcripts, XIX, pp. 405, 411.

²⁷Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, p. 355.

²⁸Jones, History, I, pp. 39-41; Israel Putnam to George Washington, May 31, 1776, George Washington Papers (124 reels of microfilm, Washington, D.C., 1961), XXXVI, Library of Congress; "Wars with England," in Bailey, Long Island, I, p. 85; Frances Irvin and H. P. Hurton, "The Town of Oyster Bay," in ibid., p. 457.

²⁹Richard Hewlett, "Orderly Book of French and Indian War (May-December 1758), and a Few Later Entries," MS, Q.B. P.L.; Jones, History, I, pp. 36-37; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., I, p. 1290; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 590; Flint, Long Island Before the Revolution, p. 499.

³⁰Barck, New York City during the War for Independence, p. 42; Kennedy, "Jamaica, Long Island," p. 91; New York Gazette, May 27, 1776; New York Packet, Mar. 28, 1776; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 75; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 273; for the problem of loyalist refugees in Queens: Jones, History, I, pp. 83-84; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, pp. 455, 725, 1055; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 144, II, p. 114; Lorenzo Sabine, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution (2 vols.,

Boston, 1864), I, p. 227; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, V, pp. 104, 1010; for instances of British private intelligence relating to Queens County: Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, VII, pp. 217, 225, N.Y.P.L.; C.O. 5/1107, Part I, pp. 255-57.

³¹New York Gazette, Dec. 19, 1775; Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, p. 661; A.O. 13/114, p. 46.

³²Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 31-32; Calendar of New York Revolutionary War Manuscripts, I, p. 90; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 50, 56, 58, 132, 166, 176.

³³Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 172, 188; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, p. 1052; Wilbur C. Abbott, New York in the American Revolution (New York, 1929), p. 160; Jones, History, I, pp. 61-62.

³⁴For French's statement that he informed Tryon of the plot: Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, p. 661; Tryon's statements that French informed him first: A.O. 13/90, p. 415; A.O. 13/114, p. 46; evidence of their continued correspondence: A.O. 13/114, pp. 19-20, 22, 25, 65-66; for the benefits French enjoyed because of the relationship: Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, pp. 661, 667; A.O. 13/114, p. 40; Transcript of Various Papers relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists and to His Majesty's Provincial Forces during the War of American Independence, Preserved Amongst the American Manuscripts in the Royal Institute of Great Britain, London, 1777-1783 (8 vols., transcribed for the New York Public Library, 1903), VIII, p. 569.

³⁵New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 631-32, 643; Lord Stirling to Colonel Ward, Mar. 8, 1776, Alexander Papers, N.Y.H.S.; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 418, II, pp. 280, 334; History of Queens County, New York, p. 33; Barck, New York City during the War for Independence, p. 42.

³⁶Peter Force, ed., American Archives . . . A Documentary History of . . . the North American Colonies, 5th Ser. (3 vols., Washington, D.C., 1848-1853), I, pp. 1503, 1507-1508; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 558, 561-62, 570, 572, II, p. 287.

³⁷There are examples throughout the first four chapters of activities of this nature to which can be added: Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, p. 1506; Rivington's, Jan. 5, 1775; Nathanael Greene to George Washington, July 27, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 69-70.

³⁸Examination of Daniel Redfold of Killingsworth in the New York Committee of Safety, Aug. 29, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVIII, Library of Congress; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 601; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, p. 105; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, V, pp. 937, 1028, 1262; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 80-81; C.O. 5/93, p. 214; A.O. 13/13, pp. 148-49; Great Britain, British Museum, Additional Mss., 21/680, pp. 141-44; Troyer Anderson, The Command of the Howe Brothers during the American Revolution (New York, 1936), p. 145.

³⁹Naval Documents of the American Revolution, I, pp. 47, 123-24, 157-58, 255, 542; Golden Papers, VII, pp. 290, 297; Rivington's, June 1, 1775.

⁴⁰New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 643-44.

⁴¹Jones, History, I, p. 55; Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, VII, p. 197, N.Y.P.L.; C.O., 5/93, p. 39.

⁴²Governor Tryon to Lord Dartmouth, Jan. 3, 1776, Peter Force Collection, Ser. VII E, Box 4, Library of Congress.

⁴³Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, VII, p. 233, N.Y.P.L.; Golden Papers, VII, p. 290.

⁴⁴Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, pp. 405-406; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 215-16, 404, 480; New York Gazette, Dec. 23, 1775; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, III, pp. 157-58; C.O., 13/24, pp. 120-21; arms from the Asia were also distributed to loyalists in New Jersey: Lord Stirling to John Hancock, Dec. 16, 1775, Alexander Papers, I, N.Y.H.S.

⁴⁵Augustus Stoutenburgh, A Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, Queens County, Island of Nassau, Now Long Island (2 vols., New York, 1902-1907), II, p. 422; Examination of William Ash, July 8, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress; also see: C.O. 5/93, p. 35.

⁴⁶Journals of the Continental Congress, I, pp. 453-54; Calendar of New York Revolutionary War Manuscripts, I, pp. 338-42.

⁴⁷Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 454, 476-77, 504; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, p. 895, VI, pp. 1320-22; George Washington to Israel Putnam, May 21, 1776 and Washington to President of the Continental Congress, June 28, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVI, Library of Congress.

⁴⁸The original minutes of the Committee for Detecting Conspiracies were destroyed; there is a complete handwritten copy made by Berthold Fernow: "1776 - Proceedings in New York in Relation to Disaffected Persons," New York City MISC MSS, XI, no. 9, N.Y.H.S.; there also are incomplete accounts (with occasional mistakes in dates): Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, pp. 1153-83; Calendar of New York Revolutionary War Manuscripts, I, pp. 340-72.

⁴⁹Loyalist Transcripts, XIX, p. 411.

⁵⁰Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 52; Diary of Frederick Mackenzie Giving a Daily Narrative of His Military Service As an Officer . . . during 1775-1781 in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1930), I, p. 37; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, p. 622; Extracts from the Manuscript Diary of Ezra Stiles Which Relate to the Battle of Long Island . . ., p. 3, L.I. H.S.; Minutes of the Brookhaven, New York Committee of Safety, 1775-1776, p. 37, N.Y.P.L.

CHAPTER IV

1776: "UNDER THE TERROR OF THE REBELS"

Although the uncommitted had been correct in foreseeing that the rebels could not hold New York against the British army, nevertheless county residents had to face the military intervention of the Continental Congress from January to August 1776. The ordeal did not break the alliance between the uncommitted and the loyalists. Instead, the bonds between the two groups grew stronger. British triumph, if later than had been anticipated, still seemed inevitable. But the inhabitants experienced the disorder and lawlessness which the unaligned had feared in 1775 and which had prompted them to favor the Tories.

When news of the Asia's arms shipments to Queens County reached New York in December 1775, the Provincial Congress ordered the suspected conspirators to appear before it, but on the appointed day not one of them attended. Congress then published the names of county residents who had voted in November 1775 against electing deputies to Congress and declared these inhabitants "guilty of a breach of the General Association" and "entirely put out of the protection of this Congress." The resolutions prohibited

"all friendly commerce and intercourse with the said persons."¹ Connecticut Whigs described the proceedings as "two or three fruitless messages to the armed Tories."² The Provincial Congress could not enforce its will in Queens and turned the matter over to the Continental Congress.

The situation in the county now changed drastically. The Continental Congress acted swiftly in January 1776 to assert its authority in Queens. After approving the resolutions passed by the New York Provincial Congress, it prohibited those who had been declared disloyal from traveling outside the county without the approval of Whig authorities in New York. Attorneys were forbidden "to commence, prosecute, or defend any action at law, or of any kind, for any of" those under interdict. Congress ordered Colonel Nathaniel Heard to march with five hundred New Jersey militiamen through the western part of the county while Colonel David Waterbury of Connecticut with a like number of men was to begin at Oyster Bay and proceed westward. The soldiers were to disarm those who had been proscribed and force them to sign an oath stating that they would remain unarmed. The militiamen were ordered to arrest the Tory leaders who had not obeyed the summons of the Provincial Congress, anyone found carrying arms, and those opposing the resolutions of Congress.³

Because Congress did not want to send a divided force into hostile territory, it decided not to use Connecticut troops in Queens. Instead, three companies from Lord Stirling's detachment at New York were to join the New Jersey

IN PROVINCIAL CONGRESS,

NEW-YORK, Dec. 12, 1775.

WHEREAS this Congress has received undoubted Information, that a Number of disaffected Persons in Queen's County, have been supplied with Arms and Ammunition, from on board the Asia Ship of War, and are ar-
ranging themselves in military Manner to oppose the Measures taking by the United Colonies, for the Defence of their just Rights and Privileges. Ordered that, of

Jamaica Township,

Captain Benjamin Whitehead,
Charles Ardin,
Joseph French, Esq;
Johannes Pollenius.

Newtown.

Nath. Moor,
John Moor, senior,
Samuel Hallet,
John Moor, junior,
William Weyman,
John Shoals,
Jeromus Rapalye.

Flushing Township:

John Willet.

Hempstead Township:

Justice Gilbert Van Wyck,
Daniel Kiffam, Esq; Cowneck:
Captain Jacob Mott,
Thomas Cornell, of Rockaway:
Gabriel G. Ludlow,
Richard Hewlet,
Captain Charles Hicks;
Doctor Martin,
Justice Samuel Clowes.

Oyster-Bay.

Justice Tho. Smith, Hog-Island.
Justice John Hewlet,
Captain George Weeks,
Doctor David Brooks,
Justice John Townsend.

being charged as principal Men among the disaffected in said County, do attend this Congress, at Ten o'Clock, Tuesday Morning next, the 19th inst. to give Satisfaction to this Congress in the Premises, and that they be protected from any Injury or Insult during their coming to and returning from this Congress.

Fig. 3

Courtesy of the New-York Historical Society, New York City

militiamen. Heard reached New York on January 18 and was re-enforced not only by three hundred of Stirling's men under Major William DeHart but by a volunteer unit raised in New York City. On January 29, 1776 the combined force crossed the East River into Queens County. When Heard arrived at Jamaica, he arrested a few leading Tories and sent out hunting parties to bring in those proscribed by the Provincial Congress. The former were granted freedom as long as the troops remained in Queens; the latter were disarmed and forced to sign the oath. The militiamen then proceeded to Hempstead where they "expected the warmest opposition, but were disappointed." Six hundred residents voluntarily brought in about one thousand weapons as speedily as the Continental forces "could conveniently receive them." Heard completed his mission and was in Philadelphia by February.⁴

Thomas Jones expressed the outrage many inhabitants felt when he called Heard "a low tavern keeper" guilty of excessive force in executing his orders. The army had "robbed" loyal inhabitants of their "arms and ammunition" and "whatever else the rebel officers and soldiers could lay their hands upon." "Living upon free quarters, and ransacking every part" of the county, they had violated the principles the rebels supposedly stood for.⁵ DeHart blamed the New York volunteers for the breaches of discipline that occurred, but Heard ordered DeHart's troops and the volunteers back to New York before the operation was completed. The official explanation was that fewer troops were needed than

had been expected.⁶ There had been abuses, but the soldiers were not as disorderly as Jones had stated. From his perspective the expedition was illegal, and therefore every individual action was a violation of the rights of persons and their property. In fact, Heard had been more humane than other officers would subsequently be in Queens County. His treatment of prisoners, for example, was generous when their alleged crimes are taken into consideration.⁷

The Whigs in Philadelphia were as critical of the expedition as Thomas Jones, but for other reasons. On February 15, 1776 the Continental Congress directed Heard to furnish Colonel Elias Dayton with the arms taken in Queens County. On March 20 a committee of Congress, after receiving a letter from Dayton, reported that the weapons "may not be fit for use to arm any of the troops." The Hempstead residents had deceived Heard by their apparent cooperation and had not turned in the arms from the Asia.⁸ The prisoners were another problem. Undecided as to the best method of dealing with them, the Continental Congress sent them to the Provincial Congress which attempted to collect evidence against them. A Jamaica resident, who was asked for information, wrote Congress that since his "letter will be read publicly," he could not, "consistent with [his] safety, publicly name persons who would be proper evidence." The north Hempstead committee responded, but it also provided little evidence. The Provincial Congress reluctantly freed the prisoners on their own recognizance after they had paid bail.⁹

General Charles Lee believed that Draconian measures were necessary in Queens County. On January 5, 1776 he appealed to George Washington for authority to recruit volunteers in Connecticut so that with the support of Stirling he could "effect the security of New York, and the expulsion or suppression of that dangerous banditti of Tories, who had appeared on Long Island." Washington replied on January 8 that a great many Long Island inhabitants were "not only inimical to the rights and liberties of America," but had demonstrated "a disposition to aid and assist in the reduction of that colony to ministerial tyranny." He authorized Lee to enlist volunteers, to organize the defenses of New York, and to disarm "all such persons upon Long Island and elsewhere (and if necessary otherwise securing them,) whose conduct and declaration" made them of doubtful loyalty. Washington then directed Stirling to assist Lee.¹⁰

Lee visited Connecticut where he persuaded Colonel David Waterbury's regiment to remain beyond its period of enlistment to suppress the Long Island Tories. Washington gave further encouragement writing Lee "that the Period is arrived when nothing less than the most decisive and vigorous measures should be pursued." At the end of February 1776 a Connecticut regiment under Colonel Andrew Ward was in Queens, and Waterbury's troops were expected shortly. Lee wrote the President of the Continental Congress that he "had little pain about what we have concerted." The situation on Long Island was "most alarming." The bonds given by Tory leaders

to the Provincial Congress were publicly ridiculed, and most inhabitants intended to take up arms when the British landed. Lee devised a test oath which would reveal those "whose swords are whetted to plunge into the vitals of their Country."¹¹

Lee ordered Isaac Sears to administer the oath and to arrest those who refused "as irreclaimable enemies to their country." He was to secure Richard Hewlett "without ceremony" or the opportunity of declining the oath. On March 7, 1776, in the postscript of a letter to the Provincial Congress, Lee noted that he had instructed Ward "to secure the whole body of professed Tories in Long Island." Although the measure was extraordinary, "when the enemy is at our door, forms must be dispensed with." The same day Sears wrote Lee that he had "tendered the oath to four of the grate Torries, which they swallowed as hard as if it was a four pound shot, that they were trying to git down." He had sent out scouting parties and expected in a few days "to ketch the gratest part of the ringleaders." Five days later Hempstead committeemen were protesting to the Provincial Congress. Sears had arbitrarily arrested a former loyalist who had signed the association and had been restored to full liberty by Congress. Sear's refusal to accept the legislature's written pardon and his cavalier treatment of other residents was converting Whigs into Tories and endangering the already precarious situation in the county.¹²

The Continental Congress was as disturbed as the

Hempstead patriots. Whatever beneficial effect Lee's oath may have had, it was illegal and unconstitutional. A military officer could not be permitted to assert that the desperation of a particular situation justified his assumption of authority not granted by Congress. Such a step was a "high encroachment" upon the "Representatives of a free people." A similar incident in Rhode Island had passed unreprimanded, and it was now "an unquestionable duty to assert the independence and superiority of the civil power." On March 8, 1776 Congress ordered that "no oath, by way of test, be imposed, exacted, or required of any of the inhabitants of these colonies, by any military officer." A subdued Lee, anxious to maintain his command, lamented the "thundering stigma" he had brought upon himself and vowed that his "immoderate zeal" would never cause him "a second time into any measure which may so justly merit reprehension." Although civil authority was upheld and Lee transferred to another command, Congress found it necessary to sanction the measures it had just halted.¹³

The continued vigor of loyalism in Queens County and the expected landing of British forces in New York impelled the Whigs to adopt more radical measures. On March 27, 1776 the Continental Congress directed that all non-associators be disarmed and their weapons turned over to the Continental army. On May 19 the Provincial Congress began investigating Washington's information that loyalists from Connecticut and Long Island were planning to join the royal army when it landed. Washington had to go to Philadelphia at this point,

but he was so certain that the New York Congress was prepared to act that he left explicit orders commanding his subordinates to carry out the instructions of Congress.¹⁴ Sentiment had changed so much in New York that the Provincial Congress abandoned its usual moderation and debated the question of taking hostages from Queens to assure its "future peaceable behavior." Although the plan was abandoned, Congress on June 5 directed that all royal officeholders and prominent loyalists be brought to New York "to show cause why they should be considered friends to the American cause."¹⁵ With Washington in Philadelphia, the Continental Congress on June 14 urged New York to "make effectual provision for detecting, restraining, and punishing disaffected and dangerous persons" and preventing their "correspondence with the enemy." On June 15 the New York Committee for hearing and trying disaffected persons met, and on June 24 the Queens County committee recommended that individuals who had been apprehended by Heard be arrested again and that five hundred Provincial or Continental troops be stationed in Hempstead to neutralize the Tories.¹⁶

On June 30, 1776 the Provincial Congress authorized General Washington "to take such measures for apprehending and securing Dangerous and disaffected Persons as he should think necessary for the security of the Colony and the Liberty of America." Washington then asked for and received permission from Congress to transport loyalist prisoners from Queens to other colonies. On July 16 Congress directed

the county and town committees "to apprehend and secure all such persons whose going at large at this critical time they shall deem dangerous to the State." To prevent a repetition of Lee's misconduct, safeguards were established against arbitrary arrest. The same day Congress enacted a statute finding guilty of treason anyone "who shall levy war against New York State" or who adhered to the king and other enemies by "giving to him or them Aid and Comfort."¹⁷

The residents of Queens County soon felt the full force of these resolutions. Tory hunting parties became daily rather than periodic disturbances. Nathanael Greene, in charge of patriot defense preparations in Brooklyn, sent detachments into Queens to arrest suspected persons. A Continental unit under Colonel Ezekiel Cornell of Rhode Island was stationed at Hempstead, and with independent parties working under the auspices of the province and county he scoured the countryside terrorizing the population. Individuals fearful of apprehension lived in the swamps and woods for weeks at a time, while a few built hiding places in their own homes. Some lived in small boats out in the Atlantic Ocean, and others sought by land or sea to reach the British army on Staten Island where they provided intelligence on Whig military positions. Few of the inhabitants felt secure. An informer or a capricious fate could transform life into a nightmare.¹⁸ By the middle of July 1776 the jails in New York City were overcrowded with prisoners from Queens County. Since no charges had been made against these people, the

Convention of the State of New York requested Washington's advice on what should be done with them. In August Washington ordered that they be sent to Connecticut and placed under the custody of Governor Jonathan Trumbull. Washington also directed the committee in Queens County to protect the prisoners' property. He had taken a "temporary" precautionary measure to prevent them from assisting the British. Any action against their property rested "intirely within the Jurisdiction of the Civil Authority of the Province." After the Battle of Long Island, Trumbull allowed the prisoners to return to their homes.¹⁹

Patriot authorities also began to issue directives concerning the inhabitants' private property. Before Howe landed on Staten Island in July 1776, Washington expressed concern that the vast store of provisions on Long Island would fall into the hands of his ill-supplied enemy. In June 1776 the Provincial Congress ordered the Queens County committee and the local militia to move all the stock in the county to the north shore or into Suffolk County. Opposition to the measure was universal. The county committee, after considering the "Difficultys and Impossibilitys" of carrying out the task, sent a delegation to George Washington and the Provincial Congress. Washington impatiently demanded immediate execution of the resolve, threatening that if the Tories resisted, he "would send in men with orders to shoot all the creatures," but he guaranteed that the commissary of the American army would pay full value for any sheep or cattle

that their owners brought to Brooklyn. The Congress dispatched Benjamin Kissam, a representative from New York City whose relatives lived in Hempstead, to enforce its decrees. Instead of ruthlessly executing his orders as Charles Lee had done under somewhat similar circumstances, Kissam became an advocate of the inhabitants. He told Congress that the task was too immense. There were more than fifteen thousand animals in the county, and adequate grazing lands did not exist in the areas where the herds were to be driven. "Rigid execution" would cause "extreme distress" and the poor "must be left to starve." If Congress rescinded its resolutions, the people would drive their stock "any place" at the first sign of "immediate danger."²⁰

On July 20, 1776 the Provincial Congress modified its stand permitting the people to gather the livestock at "convenient and secure places" within the county from where the animals could be expeditiously moved eastward, if it were necessary. Provision was made allowing each farmer to retain a few animals. The militias of Kings, Queens, and Suffolk counties were to be ready to move the stock at a moment's notice. If these precautions failed, the herds were to be destroyed. These concessions, however, had no effect. Nothing was done to implement the new regulations, and on August 24 Congress appointed a committee to oversee the removal of the stock. When the members discussed the situation with Washington on August 26, "he was afraid it was too late." While the Battle of Long Island was being fought, an

American General, Nathaniel Woodhull, at the cost of his life, collected a large number of the cattle, but his beneficiaries were the British who captured the herd.²¹

Although this failure demonstrated the continued weakness of the patriot cause in Queens County, the intervention of the Continental Congress after January 1776 led to a growing assertiveness by local Whig committees. In December 1774, when the patriots had begun to organize support, they succeeded in establishing Committees of Correspondence and Observation in Newtown, Jamaica, and Flushing. In May 1775 the Provincial Congress directed every county to form a committee and district sub-committees, but by this time the Whig organizations in the three towns had ceased functioning. If the May resolution had any initial effect, nothing substantive or permanent survived. The residents of north Hempstead established a committee in September 1775, but after November it existed mostly on paper. On March 7, 1776 Congress ordered the towns to establish committees "out of which a general county committee may be formed." By this date north Hempstead's committee was active, and by April 16 a county committee was at work. The Jamaica committee re-established itself on April 26, and by May the organizational structure for the entire county, except south Hempstead, was complete. The committees survived until the Americans were defeated in September at the Battle of Long Island.²²

In May, after a six-month absence, county Whigs were strong enough to send representatives to the Provincial

Congress. Although their influence was increasing, the committees' effectiveness depended on the power of the Continental Congress. The inability to enforce the modified resolutions concerning the removal of stock was typical of many of the patriot efforts. The Whigs were most resolute in their harassment of individual Tories, but the committees usually suffered as much discomfort as their victims. When it became obvious that it was impossible to end loyalism in south Hempstead, committeemen directed their anger at a poor countyman accused of hoisting up a flag with the king's standard on it. Although the man was brought to New York, Congress could not determine if he was at fault or if it was the prank of children. The time had passed when such actions could be effective in controlling the population, but the Whigs did not realize they were only strengthening loyalism. When a matter was serious, such as the refusal by a resident to accept Continental money, the offended party by-passed the local committees and took his case directly to New York City.²³

Thomas Wooley, a feltmaker at Cow Neck, twice refused to appear at muster, and the Whig militia captain, John Sands, fined him. Unintimidated, Wooley appealed to a justice of the peace to recover the fine and attended the next training session but refused to obey orders or answer to his name. When he spoke, he abused the captain and challenged him to a duel. Sands told the feltmaker to appeal his case to the local committee, but Wooley replied that he

would again see a magistrate. The next militia meeting was a repetition of the previous one. To maintain his authority, Sands had the Hempstead committee issue a warrant against Wooley. When the company's second lieutenant brought Wooley to the county jail, the keeper, Hope Mills, said he was not "the jailer for the congress" and refused to accept the prisoner. Mills notified the sheriff, who demanded a warrant from a justice of the peace. When the lieutenant could not produce one, the sheriff released the feltmaker. The committee then brought Wooley before Congress where he stated his willingness to bear arms if the Provincial Congress decided he should. Congress remanded him to the Queens County jail, and he was released on June 11, 1776, after he petitioned that there remained "in him that virtue that can distinguish him as a friend to his native country." Wooley was one of the residents of Queens who had been proscribed by the Provincial Congress in December 1775 and therefore could not legally bear arms. His case not only demonstrates the problems confronting the Whig committees, but it points out the difficulty of setting up a patriot militia among hostile people.²⁴

The local committees were responsible for organizing and overseeing the militia. The purpose was as much to assert the Whigs' authority over the population as to train fighting units. Several companies had been established in Queens in 1775, but they did not survive the Whig reverses of that year in the county. In March 1776 the Provincial

TABLE 34
 LOYALTY BY RESIDENCE: KNOWN WHIG MILITIAMEN
 (1775-1776)

Town	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Loyalty				Uncom- mitted	Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed			
Newtown	9 22.0 8.7	6 14.6 13.6	1 2.4 12.5	25 61.0 10.3	41 10.3		
Flushing	6 27.3 5.8	1 4.5 2.3	1 4.5 12.5	14 63.6 5.8	22 5.5		
Jamaica	60 58.3 58.3	17 16.5 38.6	3 2.9 37.5	23 22.3 9.5	103 25.9		
Hempstead	21 12.4 20.4	15 8.9 34.1	3 1.8 37.5	130 76.9 53.5	169 42.5		
North	20 13.7 19.4	12 8.2 27.3	3 2.1 37.5	111 76.0 45.7	146 36.7		
South	1 7.7 1.0	3 23.1 6.8	0 0.0 0.0	9 69.2 3.7	13 3.3		
Unknown	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	10 100.0 4.1	10 2.5		
Oyster Bay	5 15.2 4.9	2 6.1 4.5	0 0.0 0.0	26 78.8 10.7	33 8.3		
Non-Residents	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0 0.0	0 0.0		

TABLE 34--Continued

Town	Count		Loyalty				Row Total
	Row Pct	Col Pct	Whig	Tory	Mixed	Uncom- mitted	
Residence			2	3	0	25	30
Unknown			6.7	10.0	0.0	83.3	7.5
			1.9	6.8	0.0	10.3	
Column Total			103	44	8	243	398
			25.9	11.1	2.0	61.1	100.0

TABLE 35

LOYALTY BY RELIGION: KNOWN WHIG MILITIAMEN (1775-1776)

Loyalty	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
Whig	10	11	40	2	1	39	103	
	9.7	10.7	38.8	1.9	1.0	37.9	25.9	
	14.7	19.3	61.5	15.4	33.3	20.3		
Tory	12	15	2	2	0	13	44	
	27.3	34.1	4.5	4.5	0.0	29.5	11.1	
	17.6	26.3	3.1	15.4	0.0	6.8		
Mixed	2	0	2	0	0	4	8	
	25.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	2.0	
	2.9	0.0	3.1	0.0	0.0	2.1		
Uncommitted	44	31	21	9	2	136	243	
	18.1	12.8	8.6	3.7	0.8	56.0	61.1	
	64.7	54.4	32.3	69.2	66.7	70.8		
Column Total	68	57	65	13	3	192	398	
	17.1	14.3	16.3	3.3	0.8	48.2	100.0	

Congress ordered the committees to renew their efforts, and a company was formed at Jamaica. In May Congress again stated the urgency of the task. By this time Continental troops were stationed in the county, and the patriots had established a committee system. The county's militia was now placed on as firm a foundation as it would ever achieve. Two regiments were set up--one for the two eastern towns and the other for the western area of the county. A total of 1,770 men were subject to bear arms. Of this number 1,144 men lived in Hempstead or Oyster Bay and the extant records indicate that 1,028 of them (89.9 percent) mustered. Since support for the Continental Congress was proportionately greater in Jamaica and Newtown, it is probable that at least as high a percentage of males served in the western towns.²⁵

The effectiveness of these troops in battle was questionable from the outset. In south Hempstead, for example, four companies had been raised, but two had no officers, and the other two did not have a sufficient number of them. In July 1776 the Queens County committee appointed a sub-committee to combine the four units into one and supervise the election of officers. Although only a few of the inhabitants participated, the sub-committee ratified the election results and forwarded the nominations to the Continental Congress.²⁶ Many inhabitants who had not attended the patriot muster continued to train but did so with arms from the Asia. Resistance was also evident in other areas of the county, and military deserters began to join the

politically motivated Tories in their hiding places. Since only 1,770 men were subject to bear arms, it is probable that the loyalists who had been outlawed by the Provincial Congress were not required to serve in the county militia, but this policy could not have been uniformly followed. A number of men living in Jamaica protested to the Congress that they had been fined for appearing unarmed at muster. Heard had disarmed them, and they had taken an oath to remain unarmed. They thought the fine unjustified and wanted relief. Wooley was in the same category.²⁷

Despite the doubtful value of the Queens County militia, the Provincial Congress was determined, out of necessity, to use it. In April 1776 one company was assigned to New York City. In the following months one-quarter of the militiamen were drafted to remove the stock of animals from the county, and one-half of the militia was ordered to fight on the front lines when the British landed on Long Island. Only one-quarter of the soldiers named on the surviving militia lists were Whigs. When the Battle of Long Island began in August 1776, most troops from Queens quietly deserted the patriot lines. A few fought and fled with the American army. Patriotism motivated some of these men, but most seem to have left Long Island because they could not safely reach their homes. These men returned to the county as quickly as the situation permitted. A few weeks later the militia reformed under the authority of the king.²⁸

The Battle of Long Island abruptly terminated the

patriot effort to subdue Queens County. When news of the American loss became known, the Whig committees disbanded, and many committeemen fled to the mainland. County residents believed that at last their ordeal was over and that the arrival of the British army signaled the return of peace. What the people did not know was that the Whigs were simply a prelude to a longer and harsher period of trial under the British. In the end the inhabitants would become as anti-British and as dedicated as the rest of the new nation to the success of the American experiment in self-government.

FOOTNOTES

¹Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 229-30; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, pp. 433-36.

²Naval Documents of the American Revolution, III, pp. 257-58.

³Journals of the Continental Congress, IV, pp. 25-27, 47; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, III, p. 589; Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of the Members of the Continental Congress (8 vols., Washington, D.C., 1921-1936), I, pp. 298, 299-300.

⁴Isaac Sears to Charles Lee, Mar. 7, 1776, MISC MSS, Sears, Isaac, N.Y.H.S.; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, pp. 702, 764, 772, 831, 857; Burnett, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress, I, pp. 294-95, 307, 340; Journals of the Continental Congress, IV, p. 112; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, III, p. 1014; Flint, Long Island before the Revolution, pp. 361-62; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 44-47.

⁵Jones, History, I, p. 68.

⁶Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, p. 851.

⁷For accounts of Heard's treatment of the population: New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 663; New York Gazette, Jan. 29, 1776; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, p. 923; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, p. 273.

⁸Journals of the Continental Congress, IV, pp. 150, 212, 220.

⁹Ibid., p. 114; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 267, 289, 294, 300, 305, II, pp. 125, 127-28, 194, 240, 258; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 235, 240, 258; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., IV, pp. 1077, 1119-20, V, pp. 253, 265, 269, 273, 312; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 48-50.

⁹The Lee Papers (New-York Historical Society, Collections, IV-VII [New York, 1871-1874]), I, pp. 234-37;

Charles Lee to George Washington, Jan. 5, 1776, Instructions to Major General Charles Lee, Headquarters at Cambridge, Jan. 8, 1776, George Washington to Lord Stirling, Jan. 10, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXV, Library of Congress.

¹¹Lee Papers, I, pp. 240, 253-54, 346-48; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., V, pp. 74-75; New York Packet, Feb. 29, 1776; George Washington to Charles Lee, Jan. 23, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXV, Library of Congress.

¹²Lee Papers, I, pp. 350-52, 359; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 354, 355; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., V, pp. 75, 105, 348, 371, 517; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 50-52.

¹³Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., V, pp. 131, 213-15, 1391-92; Lee Papers, I, pp. 360-61.

¹⁴Onderdonk, Documents, p. 54; George Washington to Provincial Congress, May 21, 1776, George Washington to Israel Putnam, May 21, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVI, Library of Congress.

¹⁵Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 459-60; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., V, pp. 1365, 1369-70; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 65-66; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 50.

¹⁶Journals of the Continental Congress, V, p. 441; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, pp. 1055, 1706; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, p. 334; In Committee, Queens County, June 24, 1776, Peter Force Collection, Ser. VIIIE, Box 57, Library of Congress.

¹⁷Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, pp. 255, 333-34, 351; Proceedings of the Provincial Congress, June 30, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVI, Library of Congress; Proceedings of the Provincial Congress, July 16, 1776, Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, July 14, 1776, ibid., XXXVII; Washington to the Committee of the Convention of New York State, July 15, 1776, July 19, 1776, ibid., IV.

¹⁸Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, p. 497; Nathaniel Green to George Washington, Aug. 10, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., pp. 621, 887; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, V, p. 295; Jones, History, I, pp. 106-11; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 72, 81-82, 86; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, pp. 245-46.

¹⁹Peter Force Collection, Ser. VIIC, Box 30, pp. 31-32, Library of Congress; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, p. 1442; ibid., 5th Ser., I, pp. 334, 593, 898, III, pp. 593-94; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 755; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, pp. 420-21; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 72; George Washington to New Jersey Legislature, Aug. 7, 1776, Washington to Committee of Queens County, Aug. 11, 1776, Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, Aug. 11, 1776; Washington to New York Legislature, Aug. 12, 1776, Nathanael Greene to Washington, Aug. 11, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress.

²⁰Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, pp. 1109, 1198; ibid., 5th Ser., I, p. 1414; Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 509-10, II, pp. 202, 245, 310; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 74-75, 76-77; George Washington to New York Legislature, June 13, 1776, June 27, 1776, Conference of General Officers of the Army and a Committee of the Provincial Congress, June 28, 1776, Resolves of the Committee of Queens College, July 1, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVI, Library of Congress.

²¹Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 533, 584-88, 589, 590, 593, 596; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, p. 1136; ibid., 5th Ser., I, pp. 1425, 1533-34, 1537-38, 1541; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 79, 88-92; George Washington to President of Congress, July 23, 1776, Washington to New York Legislature, July 24, 1776, Aug. 3, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress; Washington to New York Legislature, Sep. 1, 1776, ibid., XXXVII; Landon Papers, Package XXV, L.I.H.S.

²²Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, p. 410; Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, p. 155; Calendar of New York Revolutionary Manuscripts, I, p. 304; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 29-30, 56-57.

²³Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 449, 456, 464; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 29-30, 56, 73.

²⁴Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 432, 438, II, p. 113; Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, I, pp. 301, 319; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 57-58.

²⁵Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 21, 388, 437, 485, 495, 499, 550, 568, 572, 583, II, pp. 239, 244, 308, 467; Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, I, pp. 186-87, 251, 325; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., III, pp. 646, 777, V, p. 352, VI, p. 1031; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 54, 60-61, 75, 79, 86-88; Mather, Refugees

of 1776, pp. 999-1000; Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, pp. 774-75; see Tables 34 and 35.

²⁶Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, pp. 304, 334, 501; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, pp. 257-58; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 75; Order of Queens County Committee, July 27, 1776, Peter Force Collection, VIIE, Box 56, Library of Congress.

²⁷Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, pp. 169-70; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 55, 68-69; Force, American Archives, 4th Ser., VI, p. 926; New York Journal, June 27, 1776.

²⁸Journals of the Provincial Congress, I, pp. 483, 486, 582, 605, II, pp. 227, 291-92; Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts, I, p. 466; George Clinton, Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York, 1777-1795, 1801-1804 (10 vols., Albany, N.Y., 1904), I, pp. 338-42, 370; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., I, p. 953; George Washington to President of the Congress, Aug. 12, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVII, Library of Congress; Washington to President of Congress, Sep. 4, 1776, ibid., XXXVIII; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 66-68, 81, 82-85; Mather, Refugees of 1776, p. 695; Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, I, p. 39; Nathaniel Woodhull to Washington, Aug. 8, 1776, Peter Force Collection, Ser. VIID, Box 19, vol. XI, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER V

"RESTORED TO THE KING'S MOST GRACIOUS PROTECTION": THE BRITISH IN QUEENS COUNTY, AUGUST 1776-NOVEMBER 1783

The Battle of Long Island was quickly won by the British, and Queens County was almost as quickly "restored from anarchy and confusion." Since inhabitants believed that the war could not conceivably last the year, leading county Tories retired to their farms waiting to be "restored to the King's Most Gracious Protection." They had preserved the loyalty of the county and now expected to enjoy "the blessings of Order and good Government."¹ Ordinary farmers sported red rags in their hats as a mark of friendship for the conquering army and to set themselves apart from the despised rebels. Others sought to ingratiate themselves with the victors by arresting patriot committeemen and escorting them to British headquarters. Although most people sat passively by, the general view was that the Whigs had been "in the highest degree arbitrary and tyrannical" and must now suffer punishment.²

The British position was difficult since the Howes had to wage war and attempt to make peace at the same time. They were equally serious about both missions. In their view Long Island was to be an example of the hopelessness of

revolution and of the blessings of royal government. Governor Tryon wrote Lord George Germaine in December 1776 that he had gone among the people to explain "the iniquitous arts, etc., that had been practiced on their credulity to seduce and mislead them." In 1779 when General James Robertson was asked by Parliament if the forces sent in 1776 had been adequate to put down the Americans, he answered, "I never had an idea of subduing the Americans--I meant to assist the good Americans to subdue the bad ones." Leading rebels were to be arrested, but while this encouraged some loyalists, it was the exception rather than the rule of British policy. There were also practical considerations. The army was dependent on Long Island for supplies, and conciliation was more productive than retribution.³

Although official British policy stressed reconciliation, it was not implemented in the days immediately following the Battle of Long Island. Army officers of lower rank did not understand how they could wage war when they could not tell patriot from loyalist, and they simplified their task by abusing all as rebels. When the wife of a committeeman complained that soldiers were stealing her property, she found that although there had been no trial, her possessions belonged to the king. Loyalists cheered, but they lost their enthusiasm when the same practice was applied without reference to loyalty. One prominent Tory while riding down the road came upon some British soldiers; he walked home with his saddle over his shoulder.⁴ A Hessian officer wrote in

September 1776 that all the British regiments had a full quota of horses and his own units were not far behind "because an officer can acquire them for little money and often for nothing." The Hessian had "procured three horses in this manner."⁵ German soldiers came to America with the idea of making a fortune and acted accordingly. More unfortunately, on some occasions they destroyed what they could not steal. In October 1776 they cut down in one area of Queens every sapling they could find so that for many years following the war there was an acute shortage of wood. Ambrose Serle, an English officer, noted in his journal on August 25, 1776 that the Hessians "had committed already several Depredations, and even upon the Friends of Government," and he would "have rejoiced if the Rebellion could have been reduced without Foreign Troops at all." Another writer thought that "the Hessians bore the blame at first, but the British were equally alert." Officers "rather encouraged than discouraged" this plunder, since they also profited from it.⁶

The disorder that followed the Battle of Long Island troubled county residents. They had expected the British not only to punish the Whigs, but also to reward Tories for their loyalty. Thomas Jones believed that the courts should have been opened so that treason trials could have begun at once, but the Howes pardoned anyone who renewed his allegiance to the crown. When aggrieved Tories pressed their cases against patriots who had injured them, the loyalists were

often maltreated by the British.⁷ The plundering by the British army was also not insignificant. Richard Alsop, a justice of the peace in Newtown, recorded that between September 1 and September 24, 1776 he had personally sustained "by his Majesty's Sea and Land Forces" losses amounting to £326.15.6.⁸ If the first month of the British occupation brought disillusionment, it was nothing compared to what the inhabitants would suffer until the British departed in November 1783. The demands of the British army, the abusive conduct of British officers, and the lawless violence experienced during these years put the residents' loyalty to a severe test.

The inhabitants' initial consternation would have passed, if order had eventually been imposed. Instead, the demands on Long Island to supply the army exacerbated the discord. Queens County not only had to support its own population, the increasing number of loyalist refugees within its borders, and the soldiers quartered within the county, but it contributed significantly to the civil and military population of New York City and helped outfit the army for each year's campaign. Before the British had evacuated Rhode Island in 1779, the county's obligation also included that state.⁹ The methods used by the British in collecting supplies exhibited a criminal disrespect for county residents. When the rebels retreated, they left the cattle Woodhull had collected. General Howe instructed the owners to present a

claim, prove their loyalty, and take the animals. Not all animals were turned over by the British, however. After the campaign of 1776, the owners requested compensation but were refused. The British branded a few as rebels, threatened some with jail, and told others that redress must come from the patriots. Hundreds of cattle were taken. The crown was billed, but royal officials pocketed the money.¹⁰ The army also needed horses, wagons, and drivers. Troops blanketed the county impressing what was wanted. The drivers and wagons followed Howe to New York, White Plains, then Westchester, and after the reduction of Fort Washington, to Trenton. In the confusion equipment losses were great. When the army returned, the quartermaster refused to pay owners whose property was missing unless a driver swore to the loss and the exact time of service. Since a considerable number of drivers had died or deserted, many owners were not compensated. The quartermaster billed the government and kept the proceeds.¹¹

In 1777 the army again needed baggage trains. Justices of the peace in each town summoned the residents to determine how the burden was to be allocated. People were outraged. A compromise was finally reached when it was agreed that the horses and wagons were to be impartially appraised and the owners' names and the value of their property recorded in a special book. An individual employed by the quartermaster was to keep an account so that compensation could be given from the date of entry to the time of

loss or return. If the property was lost, the owner was also entitled to its assessed value. When the campaign was over, the quartermaster notified the owners that the date of entry was a date of sale and that he was prepared to pay the original valuation. Many inhabitants rejected the offer intending to go to court, but the courts never reopened. British officials had the drivers, many of them illiterate runaway slaves, sign reimbursement receipts for the wagons. The ruse was simple. The quartermaster personally rented the baggage trains to the government and used his profit to buy the teams from the county residents. When he returned to England in 1778, after collecting twelve shillings per day for each animal and feeding them at government expense, he sold the wagons and horses to his successor who also became wealthy by following his predecessor's practices.¹²

Military authorities continued to impress wagons and teams on a temporary basis. Colonel Archibald Hamilton, commander of the county militia, kept a record in an attempt to insure that the inhabitants shared the imposition equally. But the system failed to work when equipment was needed on short notice, as always seemed to be the case.¹³ The number of officials who made such demands on the population was endless, and there was never a distinction made between official and personal use. It did not matter if a farmer was in the middle of chores or needed his team for plowing. An officer's personal convenience came first.¹⁴

The military's need for firewood also provoked

discontent. At first, wood cut from the estates of absentee rebels satisfied British requirements. Although these patriot proprietors received no compensation on the assumption that their property had been forfeited, contractors laid bare entire farms without regard for any future need for wood.¹⁵ Little supervision was exercised over the licensees, and officials in New York City were not certain how many permits had been issued or who had the authority to grant them. Unscrupulous contractors cut their quota from the most accessible woodlands and left others to determine if they had the right. Farmers protested, but the lumbermen were gone and officials apathetic. In 1780 the government intervened, withdrawing all permits and establishing guidelines for the future.¹⁶ The belated concern may have been a realization that available timber was scarce and other sources had to be found. One alternative was condemnation of part of large woodlands with compensation given the owners.¹⁷ Although the plan was ordered into operation, it did not go into effect and another expedient was used. Militia captains determined the amount of wood to be cut in each district of the county. The inhabitants cut the quota and transported it to selected landing places. Although the system was never satisfactory, contracting was ended. In the winter of 1780-1781 Queens supplied forty-five hundred cords of wood; in February another six thousand cords were demanded from the residents of the north shore. The other parts of Queens had to supply the soldiers quartered in the county.

In July 1781 forty-five hundred additional cords were requisitioned. The pattern continued until the evacuation.¹⁸ After the war the county became an importer of wood.¹⁹

The army encroached upon every facet of life. Officers told farmers when to thresh grain and cut hay. Everything except what was needed for a family's own use was often taken at prices set by the British commander. One year the people did not have sufficient seed left to plant their next crop and had to buy it at exorbitant rates.²⁰ In winter soldiers were billeted in private homes. A military official and a local "gentleman" visited each house to assign the number of troops to be quartered there. Ten or twelve soldiers were usually boarded off in a section of the house. Their treatment of the inhabitants rivaled that of their superiors. Farmers had to lock their animals in the barn or house to prevent thievery. Since the officers had sold the firewood provided for the soldiers, they tore down fences to keep warm in the winter, and herds of animals strayed through unfenced fields destroying the crops. The damage was incalculable. Officers disclaimed responsibility for the soldiers' actions because the farmers had not provided adequate firewood.²¹ Inhabitants periodically had to leave their property unprotected against the soldiers when called to stand guard or do fatigue duty.²²

The British saw no injustice in their demands on county residents. The loyalists had benefited for years by the crown's protection and must now make the effort required by the crisis. Although the government paid hard currency

TABLE 36

BRITISH, GERMAN, AND PROVINCIAL TROOPS STATIONED
ON LONG ISLAND (1777-1783): ESTIMATES

Date	No. of Rank and File
1777, July	488
1778, August	8,117
November	5,630
1779, January	5,498
February	5,714
March	5,734
May	6,056
July	229
1780, August	1,698
October	4,298
November	6,431
December	6,886
1781, January	2,417
March	4,454
May	3,230
November	5,877
1782, October	1,158
December	615 ^a
1783, January	8,192 ^b

Source: C.O. 5/96, pp. 113, 197, 198, 5/97, p. 69, 5/98, p. 237, 5/100, pp. 102, 234, 312, 5/101, pp. 57, 121, 5/102, p. 105, 5/104, p. 63, 5/107, p. 141, 5/108, p. 129; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 6393, N.Y.P.L.; Letters and Documents on Colonial Affairs, VIII, pp. 149, 309-10, N.Y.P.L.; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, pp. 54-55; Diary of Frederick Mackenzie, pp. 632, 637, 677, 691.

^aNumber of troops in Queens County.

^bThis figure is a minimal estimate.

for the supplies it bought, the method of payment was still another grievance. When material was taken, a certificate was given to the owner. The holder had to put aside his work and go to New York City at a specified time. There he faced hostile officials who profited from every rejected claim. If the farmer was successful, there was the danger of meeting highway robbers on the way home. Many residents sold their certificates at a large discount to British agents who profited accordingly.²³

As vexing as the demands for supplies was the insolent and arbitrary behavior of British officers. Some of it, although degrading, was trivial: everyone had to dismount and remove his hat when passing the residence of an army commander. Other actions were more serious. An officer on a foraging party led fifty horses into an orchard where apples had been gathered into piles for making cider. The farmer pleaded with the officer to use another field where the pasture was better, but the request was denied, and the farmer called a "damned old rebel." The loss amounted to two hundred pounds. Another officer made a resident feed one hundred horses with oats rather than straw. Three hundred bushels were used, but the man was not compensated.²⁴

Benjamin Franklin's description of British colonial officials aptly portrayed the character of their military counterparts during the war: "Their office makes them insolent; their insolence makes them odious; and being conscious

that they are hated, they become malicious."²⁵ Paul Amberman, a miller at Hempstead, sold flour to Major Richard W. Stockton of Skinner's Brigade and later applied for payment. The major saw the request as a personal affront and the next day, after horsewhipping the miller, killed him with a sword. Stockton was arrested and tried by a court martial for murder. Although he was found guilty, his sentence was never carried out. General Henry Clinton appealed to the miller's widow asking her to join in a petition to pardon the convicted man. When she refused, he released the man.²⁶

Colonel Samuel Birch of the Seventeenth Dragoons, stationed at Hempstead, embodied what was wrong with British rule. The Reverend Leonard Cutting, an S.P.G. missionary, wrote of the "Rapacity" of the officer whose "various Acts of Violence and Oppression [were] too tedious to mention." His "worse than useless Regiment" which had "scarce been out of the Smoke of Hempstead" took whatever it wanted including the society's school and land in Hempstead. "This . . . is . . . perhaps the most trifling Instance of a thousand that might be produced of a Tyranny we are under; Where the Army is, Oppression, such as in England you can have no Conception of Universally prevails. We have nothing, We can call our own; and the Door to Redress is inaccessible. What a state must that people be in, who can find Relief from neither Law, Justice, or Humanity Where the Military is concerned." This is the situation of "Inhabitants Within the King's Lines."²⁷

Birch gave his own lesson in justice to the population.

In the summer of 1779 a few of his troops robbed a house. A skirmish ensued, and a soldier was killed. Although the other soldiers escaped, they were known by the inhabitants and sworn statements were sent to a British general who had the accused arrested and then freed without a trial. Birch had the dead man tried, convicted, and sentenced to be hanged in chains. The colonel then informed the people that the military had done exemplary justice, and he desired not to be troubled in the future by such matters. The fewer the complaints the better, for Birch, as other officers, not only acquiesced in but participated in the plunder taking place. Just before the British evacuation Birch had his men take about two thousand sheep from the Hempstead Plains. He told the inhabitants his actions had been in their interest since he feared their flocks would fall into the hands of the rebels. After the animals' ears were cut off, he notified the residents that they should come in and get their sheep. If a farmer took any animals that were not his own, he would be severely punished. Since all the sheep had been branded on the ear, not a single man could claim his property. Birch sold all the sheep for his personal profit.²⁸

The attitude of British officers produced an atmosphere of lawlessness which tore at the life of the community.

"Plunder, rapine, and violence still go on, and 'the end does not appear,'" wrote a female diarist. "With Job I feel I can almost say, 'My soul is weary of my life.'"²⁹ Responsibility

rested with the military command which hoped Long Island would be an example of the beneficence of royal rule. Thomas Jones believed British officers prolonged the war to satisfy their greed. County farmers were shocked by toasts of military officers to a long and moderate war.³⁰ This attitude became a license for wrongdoing by the common soldier. Crimes ranged from petty thievery to burglary and murder and were often accompanied by unnecessary physical and mental cruelty. When wrongdoers were punished, it was not because of the crime but to satiate the whim of an officer. In the wake of such violence, community control began to break down. Young men from the county began to take part in the violence, and some joined the gangs of criminals who infested the Long Island Sound and its adjoining shores. Home life was disrupted by the war. A woman described a typical scene: "Once a month the Hessians go to head-quarters for their rations, including spirits, and then for three days they are . . . given up to intoxication . . . fighting, brawls, drumming and fifing, and dancing the night long; cards and dice playing, and every abomination going on under our very roofs! The noise from the kitchen . . . is terrifying. The door opening into the rest of the house is nailed fast but . . . [we] are continually in dread of" our house burning down.³¹

The forests throughout the county were unsafe because of robbers, and residents avoided traveling after sunset. Some homes became armed fortresses to protect their residents against night-time raids, but the occupants faced the prospect

of being burned to death in retaliation. Farmers gathered their valuables in hiding places and told no one, not even their families, where the caches were. At night men would go off to the woods to sleep so that their secrets would not be forced from them. The greatest danger was not the soldiers and common thieves but the privateers engaged in whaleboat warfare. "The depredations, robberies, and not seldom murders, committed" in these raids "are alarming, and exasperating the people in the extreme" wrote one patriot.³²

The raids began with the American attempts to interdict the exposed supply line of the royal army along the Long Island Sound. Long Island's northern ports were filled with the necessities of warfare. The Continental Congress and the states of New York and Connecticut were involved in the privateering. General Washington was very specific in stating the limits of authority granted by the commissions: raiders could attack only supply boats and magazines; the rights of civilians and private property were to be strictly maintained. But the attacks soon became mere brigandage. Legitimate whaleboaters succumbed to the temptation of pillaging private property in the interior of the county. They were quickly joined by freebooters of more dubious authority: "skimmers" who claimed to be Whigs and "cowboys" who favored the British, but there was frequent connivance between captains of the opposite parties. Many skimmers were Whig refugees from Long Island who were experiencing desperately hard times within the patriot lines. The efforts by both

sides to kidnap individuals suitable for prisoner exchanges complicated the situation. The lack of specie in the northern states and the shortage of goods within the British lines also played a part; robberies were staged to facilitate smuggling without raising the suspicion of officials. At night, Queens County was a no-man's land where the rule of violence prevailed.³³

The situation became more perilous after 1778. At the beginning of the war General Howe made Oliver DeLancey a Brigadier-General with authority to raise three battalions of five hundred men each. The third battalion was to consist of officers and enlistees from Queens County, but the unit never reached full strength and the majority of those who enlisted were not inhabitants of the county. DeLancey's Brigade was commissioned "for the defense of Long Island and other exigencies." When people were asked to join or contribute money to the brigade, recruiters emphasized that the people were providing for their own security; "other exigencies" were not mentioned. One battalion was stationed at Oyster Bay, another at Huntington, and the last at Brookhaven. In the summer of 1778 the British ordered the forts at Huntington and Brookhaven destroyed and in the fall sent the first two battalions to Georgia. The third remained for the rest of the war at Lloyd's Neck to defend the wood cutters.³⁴

The inhabitants' anger at this alleged breach of trust was heightened by the increased number of whaleboat

TABLE 37

THIRD BATTALION, DeLANCEY'S BRIGADE: STATE
OF THE TROOPS (1777-1783)

Date	Officers	Rank and File: Total Effectives
1777, July	?	204
1778, January	20	202
June	19	212
August	22	210
October	21	208
December	23	227
1779, February	26	223
March	26	225
May	26	225
June	22	229
September	23	247
October	23	257
December	17	248
1780, April	15	284
August	24	336
October	22	379
November	21	338
December	24	335
1781, May	20	379
June	21	390
August	?	357
September	24	385
November	23	369
1782, March	22	366
May	23	364
June	21	359
September	23	403
October	18	373
December	30	370
1783, January	23	365
February	32	362
March	30	356
April	27	352
May	26	352

TABLE 37--Continued

Date	Officers	Rank and File: Total Effectives
1783, July	26	262
August	24	216
September	26	232 ^a
October		95 ^b

Source: C.O. 5/94, p. 263, 5/95, p. 223, 5/96, pp. 37, 180, 1112, 5/97, pp. 351, 355, 5/98, pp. 22, 271, 318, 5/99, pp. 14, 254, 5/100, pp. 233, 311, 5/101, p. 56, 5/102, pp. 74, 104, 149, 5/103, p. 161, 5/104, p. 62, 5/105, p. 59, 5/106, p. 134, 5/107, pp. 161, 252, 5/108, pp. 134, 267, 5/109, pp. 112, 395, 5/110, p. 108, 5/111, p. 75; Transcript of Various Papers relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VIII, pp. 207, 263, 483; for muster rolls of DeLancey's Brigades see the photostat copies in the Library of Congress of Public Archives of Canada, Ser. C, vol. 1878, 1879, 1882.

^aThis muster was taken September 9, 1783; battalion sailed for Nova Scotia on September 13, 1783.

^bOfficers and Men.

raids that followed. British officials, lacking sympathy for a loyalist county that had provided few military recruits, argued that protection against privateering was a militia responsibility. General Henry Clinton, the British commander from March 1778 to April 1783, always feared an attack on New York and complained that the number of troops he had to leave in the province hindered his offensive operations. While Long Island was an essential supply base, its extensive coastline was a defensive nightmare. County residents saw only the impositions they were forced to bear, and they avoided their militia obligation whenever they could. The militia commander sought to hire guards with a tax paid by the inhabitants, but this expedient failed, and the farmers had to return to their guard posts at night.³⁵

Although countymen may have been shortsighted in avoiding their duty, they were more conscious of the failings of the occupation army. The stationing of a few ships off the coast would have been the most effective response to Whig raids, but the British refused to take this step. Underlining the farmers' intransigence was the belief that the British had no interest in stopping the privateering since officers were profiting from the trade in contraband goods. The army's response to the raids--the launching of their own attacks--invited retaliation, increasing the scope and intensity of the warfare. Tryon wrote Lord George Germain in 1779, "My opinions remain unchangeable respecting the utility of depredatory excursions. I think Rebellion must

soon totter if these exertions are reiterated and made to extremity." In July 1779 Tryon plundered and burnt several towns in Connecticut, and in December 1780 the British established the Board of Associated Loyalists "for the purpose of annoying the sea-coasts of the revolted Provinces and distressing their trade." This act and the consequent behavior of the Associated Loyalists sanctioned the warfare.³⁶

Patriots were never able to stop the harassment of Queens County, but they did not approve of it. Washington was concerned about the raids, and continually urged the Continental Congress and the governors of New York and Connecticut to halt the depredations. When stolen goods were found, he ordered his officers to confiscate and sell the property so that restitution could be made to the owner. After a judge had ruled that the raids were legal, Washington petitioned the Continental Congress to forbid them and Congress eventually followed his advice. At one point he notified the appropriate governor of each illegal raid made against Long Island. Connecticut, whose own coast had suffered attack, was the last holdout, but by the end of the war Washington's position was the accepted one among the patriots. Although privateering continued, the American efforts to end it had some impact.³⁷ It was not lost on the people of Queens which side stood for upholding order and the rights of property.³⁸

The accumulated grievances county men suffered at the

hands of the British contributed to the failure of the royal cause. Support for the king had always been weak, and British officials had never ceased complaining about the county's lack of enthusiasm. They had assumed, as the Whigs before them had, that the residents' failure to endorse rebel initiatives was an expression of loyalism rather than an honest desire for non-involvement. During the seven long years of military occupation, the British alienated what support they did have, and the inhabitants began to re-assess their ideas about where tyranny rested. Open resistance was impossible, but the people fought back as best they could. Proclamations were laughed at and ignored whenever possible. Patriots secretly loaned hard currency to the State of New York. The bonds tying the people to the crown gradually dissolved, and the situation reached a crisis stage over the question of martial law.³⁹

FOOTNOTES

¹S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, III, p. 236; Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., III, pp. 1159-64; New York Gazette, Nov. 25, 1776.

²Thompson, History of Long Island, I, p. 193; History of Queens County, New York, pp. 32, 198-99; S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, III, p. 236.

³Troyer Steele Anderson, The Command of the Howe Brothers During the American Revolution (New York, 1936), p. 145; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 693-94; Printed Proclamation Issued by General Howe from His Long Island Headquarters, Aug. 23, 1776, Documents Collection, Q.B.P.L.

⁴Force, American Archives, 5th Ser., III, p. 1276; Ira D. Gruber, The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution (New York, 1972), pp. 146-47; Jones, History, I, pp. 114-15; Anderson, Command of the Howe Brothers, p. 233.

⁵Baurmeister, Revolution in America, p. 45.

⁶Naval Documents of the American Revolution, VI, p. 710; Lydia Post, Personal Recollections of the American Revolution (New York, 1859), pp. 26, 136-40; E. H. Tatum, ed., The American Journal of Ambrose Searle (San Marino, Calif., 1940), p. 77; Journals of the Provincial Congress, II, p. 486; Jones, History, I, p. 114; also see: A.O. 13792, p. 160.

⁷Anderson, Command of the Howe Brothers, p. 232; Jones, History, I, pp. 111, 114, 127, II, pp. 27, 116, 144-45, 160-61; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 100, 114; Royal Ralph Hinman, A Historical Collection, from Official Records, Files . . . of the Part Sustained by Connecticut, during the War of the Revolution (Hartford, Conn., 1842), p. 384; Jared Sparks, ed., Correspondence of the American Revolution (4 vols., Boston, 1853), II, p. 37; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 693-94; for examples of pardons given to known Whigs, see: Documents relating to Nassau County, New York, 1774-1839, p. 46, E.H.F.L.; Townsend Family Papers, of Long Island and New York, I, N.Y.H.S.; Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, pp. 778-79.

⁸James Riker Collection, Memoria, 1653-1846, IX, pp. 7-19, N.Y.P.L.; the same account is published in Riker, Annals of Newtown, p. 197; a different statement in which he puts his losses at £318.5.0 is in A.O. 13/99, p. 27.

⁹C.O. 5/96, p. 62; Gruber, Howe Brothers, p. 192.

¹⁰Post, Personal Recollections, p. 29; Jones, History, I, pp. 115-18; Oscar T. Barck, New York City during the War for Independence (New York, 1931), pp. 100-101.

¹¹Jones, History, I, pp. 330-32; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 108-109, 203-204; Documents Collection, XXXVII, p. 129, L.I.H.S.; New York Gazette, Dec. 2, 1776; for examples of claims by county residents for unpaid bills, see: A.O. 13/92, pp. 153-55, 175; Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, p. 297; Barck, New York City during the War for Independence, pp. 106-11.

¹²Jones, History, I, pp. 332-36; Sir Henry Clinton Papers, IV, pp. 61-63, 67-68, Library of Congress; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 2487, N.Y.P.L.; William Shirref, "Manuscript List of Waggon and Horses, and Owners' Names, All Living on Long Island," MS, L.I.H.S.; Proceedings of a Board of General Officers of the British Army at New York, 1781 (New-York Historical Society, Collections, II [New York, 1916], pp. 70-79, hereafter cited as Proceedings of a Board of General Officers).

¹³The Examination of Colonel Archibald Hamilton Taken on Oath, April 20, 1789, MISC MSS Hamilton, Archibald, N.Y.H.S.; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 209.

¹⁴William Kelby, comp., Orderly Book of the Three Battalions of Loyalists Commanded by Brigadier-General Oliver DeLancey, 1776-1778: Including a List of New York Loyalists in the City of New York during the War of the Revolution (Baltimore, 1917), pp. 9, 47, hereafter cited as Orderly Book of Oliver DeLancey; [New York] Royal American Gazette, May 20, 1779; for British demands on Long Island for horses, wagons and drivers, see: A.O. 13/92, pp. 176, 187-89; A.O. 13/97, pp. 525-26; A.O. 13/99, pp. 208, 209, 211, 229, 261, 265, 277, 312, 318-20, 324, 325, 334-35; Rivington's, July 31, 1782; Manuscript Volume, p. 223, Q.B.P.L.; "Captain (Daniel) Youngs' Forage Book as Forage Master," MS, Apr. 20, 1780, May 23, 1780, Oct. 29, 1780, Apr. 20, 1781, June 1, 1781, June 30, 1781, N.C.H.M., hereafter cited as "Captain Youngs' Forage Book"; "Original Order Book of Colonel (Archibald) Hamilton, Commandant of Queens County Militia," MS, Aug. 5, 1779, Feb. 23, 1780, L.I.H.S., hereafter cited

as "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton"; Henry Onderdonk, ed., "Correspondence of Major John Kissam Illustrating the Revolutionary History of Queens County on Long Island," MS, pp. 44-45, 46, 61, 64, 66, L.I.H.S., hereafter cited as "Correspondence of Major Kissam"; Document Book Number 1, p. 37, E.H.F.L.

¹⁵Proceedings of a Board of General Officers, pp. 97-102; Jones, History, I, pp. 337-38; A.O. 13/92, p. 149; A.O. 13/99, p. 332; Rivington's, Nov. 11, 1778, Feb. 6, 1779, Mar. 13, 1779; New York Gazette, Nov. 16, 1778, Mar. 22, 1779, Feb. 8, 1779; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 31, 33, 36; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," Feb. 11, 1780.

¹⁶"Captain Youngs' Forage Book," Apr. 15, 1780, July 17, 1780, July 19, 1780; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," p. 43; Rivington's, Nov. 14, 1776, Apr. 26, 1780, Oct. 14, 1780; New York Gazette, Jan. 5, 1778, Sept. 18, 1780.

¹⁷"Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 37, 39.

¹⁸A.O. 13/97, pp. 603-604; A.O. 13/99, pp. 189, 201, 202-203, 204-205, 206-207, 269-70, 275-76, 328; Documents Relating to the Revolutionary War and Civil War, L.I.H.S.; New York Gazette, July 24, 1780, Dec. 3, 1780; Rivington's, Dec. 9, 1779, June 17, 1780, July 15, 1781, Nov. 28, 1781, Dec. 5, 1781; [New York] Royal American Gazette, Aug. 10, 1780; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 44, 55-58, 60, 73, 75, 77, 79; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," June 28, 1780, Mar. 8, 1781; Copy of Wood Contract, Feb. 14, 1781, Queens County, New York Box, N.Y.H.S.; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," June 28, 1780; Document Book Number 1, p. 37, E.H.F.L.; Return of the Inhabitants of Jericho Who Has Furnished with Fire Wood from the 30th December to the 8th of January, 1783, Being 10 Days, N.Y.H.S.

¹⁹Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 116; the British were to provide armed escorts for the wood boats going from the north shore of Long Island to New York City, but their failure at times increased the burden on the county: Rivington's, Dec. 6, 1776; William Crosbie to Major John Kissam, Mar. 29, 1781, Documents Relating to the Revolutionary War and Civil War, L.I.H.S.

²⁰Barck, New York City during the War for Independence, pp. 102-104; A.O. 13/113, p. 145; Rivington's, Nov. 21, 1777, Dec. 27, 1777, Sept. 23, 1778, Jan. 27, 1778, Oct. 2, 1779, Nov. 18, 1780, July 14, 1781; New York Gazette, June 23, 1777, Sept. 14, 1778, Jan. 25, 1779, Oct. 30, 1780; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 15, 21; Jones, History, I, p. 168, II, pp. 27-29; for other examples of British demands

on Long Island for provisions: A.O. 13/97, p. 528; A.O. 13/99, pp. 213, 231, 259, 267, 271, 272-73; History of Queens County, New York, pp. 270-71; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 235-36.

²¹A.O. 13/99, pp. 188-89, 197, 247; A.O. 13/114, pp. 29, 31; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," Nov. 12, 1779, Nov. 17, 1779, Jan. 7, 1780, May 15, 1780; Orderly Book of Oliver DeLancey, pp. 5, 17, 50; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," p. 50; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," Aug. 1, 1781; Old Documents of the Youngs' Family at Oyster Bay, Apr. 29, 1780, N.C.H.M.; Document Book Number 17, July 14, 1781, E.H.F.L.; Colonel Archibald Hamilton to John Suydam, n.d., MISC MSS, Hamilton, Archibald, N.Y.H.S.; Charles Scott to George Washington, Nov. 10, 1778, Washington Papers, LIV; Rivington's, Mar. 27, 1779; [New York] Royal American Gazette, Feb. 25, 1779; James Riker, Historical Notes of Newtown (4 vols., Jamaica, N.Y., 1941), III, p. 429; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 234; History of Queens County, New York, p. 244; Simcoe's Military Journal, A History of the Operations of a Partisan Corps, Called the Queens Rangers . . . during the War of the American Revolution . . . (New York, 1844), pp. 93-94.

²²Regimental Orders, Mar. 17, 1778, Sept. 9, 1779, Documents Collection, Q.B.P.L.; A.O. 13/99, pp. 218, 220, 233, 235, 296-97, 300; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 8-9, 27-28; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," Sept. 7, 1779, Oct. 8, 1779; Document Book Number 16, p. 31, E.H.F.L.; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 3724, N.Y.P.L.; Jones, History, I, pp. 303, 346-49; Huntington-History-Revolution-Folder, Huntington Town Historian; Silas Wood, A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns of Long Island with the Political Condition to the American Revolution (Brooklyn, 1865), p. 120.

²³Tatum, American Journal of Ambrose Searle, p. 217; Benjamin F. Stevens, ed., Facsimiles of Manuscripts in European Archives Relating to America, 1773-1783 (25 vols., London, 1889-1895), Document No. 2057; Jones, History, I p. 345; Rivington's, Mar. 21, 1778, June 17, 1778, June 23, 1779, Sept. 21, 1782; New York Gazette, Mar. 20, 1780, Sept. 30, 1782.

²⁴Jones, History, II, pp. 84-88; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," p. 13; G. Henry Mandeville, Flushing, Past and Present, A Historical Sketch (Flushing, N.Y., 1860), pp. 58-59.

²⁵Quoted in George Otto Trevelyan, The American Revolution, I (New York, 1909), p. 16.

²⁶Jones, History, II, pp. 92-93.

- 27 S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, pp. 512-13.
- 28 Jones, History, I, pp. 324-25, II, pp. 70-75.
- 29 Post, Personal Recollections, p. 150.
- 30 Jones, History, I, pp. 362-66; S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, pp. 512-13; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 142.
- 31 Post, Personal Recollections, pp. 34, 127-28; Rivington's, Mar. 18, 1780; Orderly Book of Oliver DeLancey, pp. 8, 21, 23, 60; William H. Moore, History of Saint George's Church, Hempstead, Long Island, New York (New York, 1881), pp. 131-33; American Revolution Folder, Haviland Record Room; Transcript of Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, IV, p. 527, N.Y.P.L.; History of Queens County, New York, pp. 83-84; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 143; Gruber, Howe Brothers, p. 145; Mandeville, Flushing, p. 6; for General Howe's denial of misconduct by soldiers, see: Howe, The Narrative of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe, p. 60; Table 36 has estimates of troop strength.
- 32 Post, Personal Recollections, pp. 5, 36; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 184; Thompson, History of Long Island, I, p. 195.
- 33 Public Papers of George Clinton, I, pp. 342-45, V, pp. 195-269; Record Group 360, Papers of the Continental Congress (204 Reels of microfilm, Washington, D.C.), Item 152, III, p. 17, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Hinman, Historical Collection, pp. 419, 453; The Public Records of the State of Connecticut . . . with the Journal of the Council of Safety . . . and an Appendix (3 vols., Hartford, Conn., 1894-1922), II, pp. 110, 346, III, p. 13; Naval Documents of the American Revolution, VI, pp. 1218-20; History of Queens County, New York, pp. 33, 483-85; Charles Burr Todd, "Whaleboat Privateerism of the Revolution," Magazine of American History, VIII (Mar., 1882), pp. 168-81; Wallace Even Davies, "Privateering around Long Island during the Revolution," New York History, XX (July, 1939), pp. 283, 285, 291; Wilbur C. Abbott, New York in the American Revolution (New York, 1929), p. 244; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 54; for General Washington's involvement in whaleboat warfare, see: Committee of Safety for New York to George Washington, Aug. 31, 1776, Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, Sept. 30, 1776, Washington to George Clinton, Sept. 30, 1776, Washington to President of the Congress, Oct. 2, 1776, Washington to Trumbull, Oct. 21, 1776, Henry B. Livingston to Washington, Oct. 28, 1776, Washington Papers, XXXVIII; Samuel H. Parsons to Washington, Feb. 3, 1777; ibid., XXXIX; Washington to William Heath, Feb. 2, 1777, Washington to

Parsons, Feb. 8, 1777, Washington to Parsons, Feb. 10, 1777, Parsons to Daniel Wait, Feb. 16, 1777, Parsons to Washington, Feb. 23, 1777, Washington to Parsons, Mar. 20, 1777; Parsons to Washington, Mar. 21, 1777, ibid., XL; Parsons to Washington, May 11, 1777, Washington to Parsons, May 17, 1777, Washington to Parsons, May 25, 1777, Washington to Parsons, May 29, 1777, ibid., XLI; Parsons to Washington, June 12, 1777, ibid., XLII.

³⁴Orderly Book of Oliver DeLancey, pp. IX, X; Bernard Mason, The Road to Independence: The Revolutionary Movement in New York, 1773-1777 (Lexington, Ky., 1966), p. 254; Diary of Frederick Mackenzie Giving a Daily Narrative of His Military Service . . . during the Years 1775-1781 . . . (2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1930), I, p. 67; for muster rolls of DeLancey's Brigades see the photostat copies in the Library of Congress of Public Archives of Canada, Ser. G, vols. 1878, 1879, 1882; the inhabitants' fears were partly due to a belief that the British would depart or that Washington would attack New York: H. Glen to D. Tucker, Aug. 23, 1778, Force Collection, Ser. 7E, LXIV, Library of Congress; Riker, Annals of Newtown, p. 203; see Table 37.

³⁵C.O. 5/96, p. 110; C.O. 5/100, pp. 88, 171; C.O. 5/102, pp. 184, 192; A.O. 13/99, pp. 183-84; "Correspondence of John Kissam," pp. 5, 6-7, 14, 15, 20, 25, 34, 45-46, 54-55, 72; Orderly Book of Oliver DeLancey, p. 16; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," June 8, 1780, Jan. 7, 1781; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," July 6, 1779, July 15, 1779, July 30, 1779, Jan. 11, 1780; Public Papers of Henry Clinton, II, p. 678, IV, p. 621; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 184; History of Queens County, New York, p. 483.

³⁶Jones, History, I, pp. 271, 301-302, 314-15, II, p. 482; Marshall, Colonial Hempstead, p. 331; Davies, "Privateering around Long Island," New York History, XX, pp. 284-85, 292-93; Louis F. Middlebrook, Maritime Connecticut during the American Revolution (2 vols., Salem, Mass., 1925), II, pp. 1-2; New York Gazette, June 14, 1779; Royal American Gazette, Feb. 25, 1779; Rivington's, July 1, 1778, Dec. 30, 1780; Hinman, Historical Collection, p. 124; Simcoe's Military Journal, p. 97; Elizabeth Fries Ellet, Domestic History of the Revolution (New York, 1850); British Headquarters Papers, Document Nos. 3097, 4473, N.Y.P.L.

³⁷Public Papers of George Clinton, IV, p. 199, V, pp. 195, 269, 306-307, VI, pp. 778-79, 824, 830-31, VII, pp. 175-77, 233, 234-36, 236-38, 550; Public Records of the State of Connecticut, III, pp. 292-93, 512-13; Hinman, Historical Records, pp. 597-98; Samuel H. Parsons to George Clinton, Dec. 22, 1778, MISC MSS, Parsons, Samuel H., N.Y.H.S.; Davies, "Privateering around Long Island," New York History,

pp. 287-88; Burnett, Letters of Members of Congress, VI, pp. 163-64, 173, 182, 187, 200-203, 211-12; New York Assembly Journal, 4th Session (1779), p. 47; John C. Fitzpatrick, The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799 (4 vols., Boston, 1925), II, p. 235; George Washington to Matthias Ogden, Apr. 13, 1778, Washington Papers, XLVIII; Memorandum from Washington to John Lauvens, July 22, 1778, ibid., L; Washington to John Sullivan, Aug. 10, 1778, ibid., LI; Washington to Ebenezer Gray, Oct. 31, 1778, Washington to Charles Scott, Oct. 31, 1778, ibid., LIII; Washington to Pierre Regnier, Nov. 13, 1778, Washington to Israel Putnam, Nov. 27, 1778, Putnam to Washington, Dec. 17, 1778, ibid., LIV; Putnam to Washington, Jan. 24, 1779, Washington to Putnam, Feb. 5, 1779; Washington to Putnam, Feb. 8, 1779, ibid., LV; Washington to Joseph Reed, Feb. 12, 1779, ibid., LVI; General Orders, July 1, 1779, ibid., LIX; Washington to Robert Howe, Aug. 15, 1779, ibid., LX; Washington to Robert Howe, Sept. 11, 1779, Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, Sept. 30, 1779, ibid., LXI; Washington to Robert Howe, Oct. 24, 1779, Washington to Benjamin Tallmadge, Nov. 2, 1779, Washington to George Clinton, Nov. 3, 1779, Washington to Trumbull, Nov. 4, 1779, Parsons to Washington, Nov. 11, 1779, ibid., LXII; Washington to Trumbull, Jan. 14, 1780, Washington to Enoch Poor, Jan. 14, 1780, ibid., LXIII; Robert Howe to Washington, July 22, 1780, ibid., LXVIII; Instructions of Washington to William Heath, Aug. 19, 1781, ibid., LXXX.

³⁸The evidence concerning the disorders in Queens County is extensive; in particular, see: Onderdonk, Documents, Rivington's, and the New York Gazette; the following are selected cases from the New York Gazette, July 14, 1777, Aug. 4, 1777, Oct. 20, 1777, Dec. 1, 1777, Dec. 22, 1777, May 4, 1778, July 27, 1778, Sept. 7, 1778, Sept. 14, 1778, Nov. 9, 1778, May 31, 1779, June 14, 1779, June 28, 1779, July 5, 1779, Aug. 2, 1779, July 10, 1780, July 17, 1780, Aug. 7, 1780, Aug. 21, 1780, Sept. 4, 1780, Mar. 14, 1781, June 18, 1781, July 9, 1781, July 16, 1781, Aug. 13, 1781, Oct. 7, 1782, Oct. 26, 1782, Oct. 28, 1782, Dec. 9, 1782.

³⁹Public Papers of George Clinton, VI, pp. 103, 419-20, 510-11, 718-19, 874-75, VII, pp. 528-29; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 23, 26-27; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 174-75; Gruber, Howe Brothers, p. 113; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 3763, N.Y.P.L.; Rivington's, Nov. 20, 1782, Nov. 23, 1782; A.O. 13/99, pp. 310-311.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEENS COUNTY, 1776-1783

The antagonism between the population and the British occupation forces reached a critical point in the years 1780-1781. The Reverend Leonard Cutting of Hempstead, writing in 1781, expressed the discontent when remarking "that more pains have been taken to Subjugate the Loyalists within, than to reclaim the Americans without the Lines." He thought that "the Army has done more Essential Injury to the King's Cause, than, than the utmost Efforts of his Enemies.--Oppression naturally tends to alienate affections, and When Affection is gone Principal operates less Vigorously."¹

County residents' dissatisfaction with all aspects of the occupation led to the demand for an end to military government. The patriots' disregard for the people's political rights in 1775 and 1776 had persuaded many inhabitants to support the Tories and the December 1775 Declaration. Now to people's consternation the British were proving themselves little better than their adversaries. It was martial law which permitted the existence of so many of the abuses that had taken place since 1776.

The British placed Long Island under military rule in

August 1776. People accepted the change as a necessary, but temporary, part of the war effort. On September 24, 1776 the Howe brothers indicated they were unprepared to relinquish their authority. As the King's Commissioners for Restoring Peace, they reappointed William Tryon governor of New York but ordered him to keep "the executive powers of civil government dormant." Residents of Queens petitioned for the restoration of civil government, but they received no reply.² The English government had not planned to make martial law permanent.³ It was a step taken by military officers who expected a short war and who did not want civilian interference with the war's prosecution.⁴

There was no uniform policy guiding the implementation of martial law: it varied at different times and in different places.⁵ Throughout the years of occupation county inhabitants preserved what they could of their former liberties. Towns held annual meetings and elected local officials as before. But administrative authority passed to the justices of the peace, accentuating a trend evident throughout the eighteenth century.⁶ At first the justices called the inhabitants together to determine how the needs of the army were to be met. By 1780 decisions were made at meetings of the justices and militia officers, and these officials then personally enforced what they had agreed upon. In the same year Oyster Bay highway commissioners noted in their decisions that their authority came not from the town but

"By Virtue of an Order of Police."⁷

The loss of town authority was accompanied by the decline of the towns' traditional leadership. A disproportionate number of men who held important local offices between 1771 and 1776 became Whigs, and they lost their positions in the elections of 1777. Although some patriots held office in three of the seven years of military occupation, they never won more than 4.5 percent of the major offices in any given year. Tories held more than 76 percent of the major offices in 1777 and 1778, but their proportion declined in each succeeding year except 1781, when county residents incorrectly believed that civil government would be restored. In the end victory belonged to the uncommitted who, although the majority, had never held a percentage of offices commensurate with their numbers. In 1777 and 1778 they won approximately 20 percent of the major offices. By April 1783 they controlled 50 percent of the important town offices. The prominence of the uncommitted was not a temporary phenomenon. Although their hold on office decreased somewhat in the post-war years, they continued to win twice as many positions as they had been elected to in the early seventeen-seventies.

The religious affiliation of major officeholders also changed. Anglicans won an increasing number of positions from 1780 to 1783. Although the voters no longer favored Tories, they elected people who were acceptable to the British. The Reformed Dutch and Presbyterians lost ground.

Officeholders between 1776 and 1783 also tended to be either richer or poorer than those elected before and after the conflict. In the early seventeen-seventies, performance, not wealth, was the quality the electorate looked for. What caused the pattern to change is unknown. Possibly there was a feeling that richer people could mediate more successfully with the British, but this suggestion does not explain why poorer people also came to power. Whatever the reason, it was presumably related to conditions during the occupation, for the trend did not continue after 1783.⁸

Although office-holding patterns changed in response to the military occupation and justices of the peace administered local affairs throughout the war, Archibald Hamilton, colonel of the county militia and aid-de-camp to General Tryon, held unlimited power in the county until 1780. Colonel Hamilton was a retired British officer who had served in America before the American Revolution. In 1766 he married a daughter of Lieutenant Governor Cadwallder Colden, and on retirement in 1774 he bought a farm in Flushing, Long Island, the town where the Colden family resided. The previous county militia commander, Gabriel G. Ludlow, served briefly after August 1776, but he and his Lieutenant Colonel, Richard Hewlett, joined DeLancey's Brigade. Tryon probably appointed Hamilton because of his family connection. As militia commander, he made and enforced regulations necessary to the war's conduct. While his chief task was overseeing supply arrangements, he perceived it his "Duty to See Justice Done"

and acted as a judge settling disputes between inhabitants. There were no bounds to his authority, but his attempt to control every facet of life led to the dissipation of his energy and afforded residents what relief they had. He complained constantly that the people did not obey his orders and that their exertions were insufficient.⁹

The British would have been better served had they chosen a native of Queens. Hamilton's imperious manner was akin to that of his fellow British officers for he never understood that to lead was to serve. In 1779 twelve Flushing residents made sworn complaints to Tryon concerning his aid-de-camp. They accused Hamilton of conducting himself with "all the fury of a mad man" and of attempting to kill one of the complainants who was a noted Tory and a judge. When the attempted murder failed, the colonel "got down on one knee in the dung in the Cow Yard" and prayed to his maker. The same day he attacked another man with a sword. Hamilton gave a third man thirty blows for no apparent reason and horsewhipped another inhabitant. Tryon requested David Colden to investigate the charges against his brother-in-law, but Colden refused, and no further action was taken. At the end of the war, Hamilton applied for American citizenship but fled to England when the request was denied. Tryon wrote after the war that his subordinate "had served with great credit and reputation during the war."¹⁰

The war entailed great sacrifices by county residents,

TABLE 38

OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: LOYALTY OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (APRIL 1777-APRIL 1783)

Year	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Loyalty				Row Total
		Whig	Tory	Mixed	Unknown	
1777		1	23	0	6	30
		3.3	76.7	0.0	20.0	16.1
		33.3	18.4	0.0	10.3	
1778		1	20	0	5	26
		3.8	76.9	0.0	19.2	14.0
		33.3	16.0	0.0	8.6	
1779		0	20	0	8	28
		0.0	71.4	0.0	28.6	15.1
		0.0	16.0	0.0	13.8	
1780 ^a		1	14	0	7	22
		4.5	63.6	0.0	31.8	11.8
		33.3	11.2	0.0	12.1	
1781		0	18	0	6	24
		0.0	75.0	0.0	25.0	12.9
		0.0	14.4	0.0	10.3	
1782		0	19	0	15	34
		0.0	55.9	0.0	44.1	18.3
		0.0	15.2	0.0	8.6	
1783 ^b		0	11	0	11	22
		0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	11.8
		0.0	8.8	0.0	19.0	
Column Total		3	125	0	58	186
		1.6	67.2	0.0	31.2	100.0

^aThere are no records for Jamaica in this year.

^bThere are no records for Jamaica or Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 39

OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION
OF MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (1770-1776)

Year	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Col	Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
1770			11	7	2	0	0	6	26
			42.3	26.9	7.7	0.0	0.0	23.1	14.1
			15.9	15.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	16.7	
1771			11	5	4	0	0	6	26
			42.3	19.2	15.4	0.0	0.0	23.1	14.1
			15.9	10.9	16.6	0.0	0.0	16.7	
1772			10	8	2	1	0	5	26
			38.5	30.8	7.7	3.8	0.0	19.2	14.1
			14.5	17.4	8.3	12.5	0.0	13.9	
1773			8	8	4	2	0	4	26
			30.8	30.8	15.4	7.7	0.0	15.4	14.1
			11.6	17.4	16.6	25.0	0.0	11.1	
1774 ^a			8	3	4	0	0	5	20
			40.0	15.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	10.8
			11.6	6.5	16.6	0.0	0.0	13.9	
1775			11	8	4	1	1	6	31
			35.5	25.8	12.9	3.2	3.2	19.4	16.8
			15.9	17.4	16.6	12.5	50.0	16.7	

TABLE 39--Continued

Year	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion					Row Total	
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
1776		10 33.3 14.5	7 23.3 15.2	4 13.3 16.6	4 13.3 50.0	1 3.3 50.0	4 13.3 11.1	30 16.2
Column Total		69 37.3	46 24.7	24 13.0	8 4.3	2 1.1	36 19.5	185 100.0

^aNo records available for Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 40

OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (APRIL 1777-APRIL 1783)

Year	Count		Religion					Row Total	
	Row Pct	Col Pct	Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presbyterian	Quaker	Baptist		Unknown
1777		12		5	1	2	1	9	30
		40.0		16.7	3.3	6.7	3.3	30.0	16.1
		13.8		14.7	33.3	11.8	14.3	23.7	
1778		12		5	1	2	1	5	26
		46.0		19.2	3.8	7.7	3.8	19.2	14.0
		13.8		14.7	33.3	11.8	14.3	13.2	
1779		12		6	1	2	1	6	28
		42.9		21.4	3.6	7.1	3.6	21.4	15.1
		13.8		17.6	33.3	11.8	14.3	15.8	
1780 ^a		9		3	0	2	1	7	22
		40.9		13.6	0.0	9.1	4.5	31.8	11.8
		10.3		8.8	0.0	11.8	14.3	18.4	
1781		12		5	0	2	1	4	24
		50.0		20.8	0.0	8.3	4.2	16.7	12.9
		13.8		14.7	0.0	11.8	14.3	10.5	
1782		18		6	0	5	1	4	34
		52.9		17.6	0.0	14.7	2.9	11.8	18.3
		20.7		17.6	0.0	29.4	14.3	10.5	

TABLE 40--Continued

Year	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
1783 ^b		12	4	0	2	1	3	22
		54.5	18.2	0.0	9.1	4.5	13.6	11.8
		13.8	11.8	0.0	11.8	14.3	7.9	
	Column Total	87	34	3	17	7	38	186
		46.8	18.3	1.6	9.1	3.8	20.4	100.0

^aNo records available for Jamaica in this year.

^bNo records available for Jamaica or Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 41

OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: THE RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF
MAJOR OFFICE HOLDERS (NOV. 1783 to APRIL 1788)

Year	Count Row Pct Col Pct	Religion						Row Total
		Anglican	Dutch Reform	Presby- terian	Quaker	Baptist	Unknown	
1783		5	10	10	5	2	9	41
		12.2	24.4	24.4	12.2	4.9	22.0	12.3
		6.3	17.2	12.3	11.1	40.0	13.8	
1784		13	13	14	10	1	15	66
		19.7	19.7	21.2	15.2	1.5	22.7	19.8
		16.5	22.4	17.3	22.2	20.0	23.1	
1785		10	10	13	9	1	12	55
		18.2	18.2	23.6	16.4	1.8	21.8	16.5
		12.7	17.2	16.0	20.0	20.0	18.5	
1786		13	11	13	7	1	12	57
		22.8	19.3	22.8	12.3	1.8	21.1	17.1
		16.5	19.0	16.0	15.6	20.0	18.5	
1787		16	6	18	9	0	6	55
		29.1	10.9	32.7	16.4	0.0	10.9	16.5
		20.3	10.3	22.2	20.0	0.0	9.2	
1788		22	8	13	5	0	11	59
		37.3	13.6	22.0	8.5	0.0	18.6	17.7
		27.8	13.8	16.0	11.1	0.0	16.9	
Column Total		79	58	81	45	5	65	333
		23.7	17.4	24.3	13.5	1.5	19.5	100.0

TABLE 42
 OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: MAJOR OFFICE
 HOLDERS OF KNOWN WEALTH (1770-1776)

Year	Count Row Pct	Wealth			Row Total
		0 to £100	£101-£1000	£1001 and Above	
1770		1 6.3	12 75.0	3 18.8	16 13.8
1771		1 6.3	13 81.3	2 12.5	16 13.8
1772		1 5.9	13 76.5	3 17.6	17 14.7
1773		2 13.3	12 80.0	1 6.7	15 12.9
1774 ^a		1 7.7	10 76.9	2 15.4	13 11.2
1775		1 4.8	19 90.5	1 4.8	21 18.1
1776		2 11.1	15 83.3	1 5.6	18 15.5
Column Total		9 7.8	94 81.0	13 11.2	116 100.0

^aThere are no records for Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 43

OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: MAJOR OFFICE
HOLDERS OF KNOWN WEALTH (1777-1783)

Year	Count Row Pct	Wealth			Row Total
		0 to £100	£101-£1000	£1001 and Above	
1777		2 11.1	9 50.0	7 38.9	18 14.6
1778		2 11.8	9 52.9	6 35.3	17 13.8
1779		3 17.6	8 47.1	6 35.3	17 13.8
1780 ^a		2 14.3	7 50.0	5 35.7	14 11.4
1781		4 22.2	6 33.3	8 44.4	18 14.6
1782		3 12.0	12 48.0	10 40.0	25 20.3
1783 (April) ^b		3 21.4	6 42.9	5 35.7	14 11.4
Column Total		19 15.4	57 46.3	47 38.2	123 100.0

^aThere are no records for Jamaica in this year.

^bThere are no records for Jamaica and Oyster Bay in this year.

TABLE 44
 OFFICE HOLDING IN QUEENS COUNTY: MAJOR OFFICE
 HOLDERS OF KNOWN WEALTH (1783-1788)

Year	Count Row Pct	Wealth			Row Total
		0 to £100	£101-£1000	£1001 and Above	
1783 (Nov.)		7 20.0	23 65.7	5 14.3	35 13.6
1784		9 16.7	36 66.7	9 16.7	54 21.0
1785		5 11.9	31 73.8	6 14.3	42 16.3
1786		4 9.8	30 73.2	7 17.1	41 16.0
1787		4 10.0	33 82.5	3 7.5	40 15.6
1788		8 17.8	33 73.3	4 8.9	45 17.5
Column Total		37 14.4	186 72.3	34 13.2	257 100.0

TABLE 45
ESTIMATED VALUE OF REAL ESTATE CONFISCATED
BY THE BRITISH (c 1778)

Original Owner	Value of Estate
Jacob Foster, Hempstead	£ 600
Oliver Lawrence, Hempstead	1,200
Uriah Mitchell and Gilbert Jones, Hempstead	600
Benjamin Birdsall, Hempstead	1,000
Cornell, Success Pond	200
Jacob LeRoy and Anthy Rutgers, Jamaica	3,000
Abraham Ketteltas, "a preacher of sedition," Jamaica	3,000
Francis Lewis, Whitestone	4,000
Joseph Robinson	<u>2,000</u>
	£15,600

Source: Stevens, Facsimilies, Document No. 1234.

TABLE 46

DERELICT PROPERTY IN QUEENS COUNTY LEASED FROM 1st APRIL 1780 (UNLESS OTHERWISE EXPRESSED) FOR THE RELIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S LOYAL SUBJECTS DRIVEN FROM THEIR HABITATION BY THE REBELS [1783?]

Proprietors	Property Leased	To Whom	Yearly Rent
Benjamin Birdsall	House and Farm from Jan. 1782 ^a	David Jones	£50.0.0
Henry Remsen	One-third of a Paper Mill	Henry Onderdonk	40.0.0
LeRoy and Rutgers	Land ^b	Major Wallop	20.0.0
John Wright	House and Lott	Edward Willett	20.0.0
James Livingston	House and Farm	James Everitt	15.0.0
Joseph Robinson	Land ^c	Joseph French	10.0.0
John Van Loo	House and Land	Charity French	50.0.0
Maurice Hazard	One-half house and farm	Abraham Schenck	50.0.0
Richard Beman	One-half house and farm	Major Barclay	24.0.0
Susannah Ride	House, twelve acres	Edward Ketchum	12.0.0

Source: British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 9733, p. 11, N.Y.P.L.; Transcript of Various Papers relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VIII, p. 569, N.Y.P.L.

^aValued at £1000 in 1778, Table 45.

^bValued at £3000 in 1778, Table 45.

^cValued at £2000 in 1778, Table 45.

TABLE 47

COURT OF POLICE ON LONG ISLAND: A GENERAL ACCOUNT
OF THE RECEIPT AND DISBURSEMENT OF THE FUNDS ON
LONG ISLAND FROM 16 JULY 1780 TO JUNE 1783
BEING TWO YEARS AND ELEVEN MONTHS

Dr

	<u>Stirling</u>	
To pay following Salaries		
1. Hon. Geo. Duncan Ludlow, Esq., Superintendent of Police from 16 July 1780 to 16 June 1783 at £365 stg p ^r annum	1064.11.0	1825.0.1½
2. David Colden, Esq., Assistant Superintendent from d ^o to d ^o at £200 stg p ^r annum	583.6.8	1000.0.2½
3. James Curghton, Esq., Sec. from D ^o to D ^o at £100 stg p ^r annum	291.13.4	500.0.1
4. Mr. Aaron Van Nostrand Martial fr d ^o to d ^o	72.4.4	123.16.0
5. Mr. Mutiton Groome, assistant fr d ^o to 16 April 1782	25.10.5	43.15
6. Chas M'Evers, Esq., Treasurer from 16 July 1780 to 16 June 1783 at £200 stg p ^r annum	583.6.8	1000.0.0
7. Philip J. Livingston Esq ^r Superintendent of Derelict Estates	583.6.8	1000.0.0
8. M. Joseph Page Priv Sec. to Gov. Robertson from 1st April to 2nd June 1781	12.12.0	21.12.0
9. Mr. Samuel Wells d ^o from 3 June 1781 to 1 June 1783	<u>148.16.0</u>	<u>255.1.6</u>
	3365.7.9	5769.4.11

TABLE 47--Continued

To pd Contingent Expenses vis. Charitable donations to refugees, Surveys travelling charges and incidental expenses on the location of derelict Property assigned to Refugees, repairing the Super- intendent's office and Jail, rent maintenance of prisoners, stationary and Fuel.		1845.0.7-3/4
To Balance Mr. Ludlow's hands	30.11.0	
To Ditto Mr. M'Evers	15.19.11 $\frac{1}{4}$	<u>46.10.11$\frac{1}{4}$</u>
		£7660.16.6

Cr

	<u>Excise and License</u>	<u>Rent of Derelict Property</u>	<u>Fines</u>	
By Cash received by				
Ch. McEvers, Esq.	4732.8.8	736.17.8		5469.6.4
Philip J. Livingston, Esq.		749.18.4		749.18.4
The Hon. G. D. Ludlow, Esq.	<u>1147.6.0</u>	<u>276.14.8</u>	<u>17.11.2</u>	1441.11.10
	5879.14.8	1763.10.8	17.11.2	

Locations have been made and lands assigned for
upwards of 200 refugees who are now in posses-
sion of the farms under grants from Gov.
Robertson to the amount of £5,500 per annum

/s/ Geo D Ludlow Super Intendent

/s/ Charles M'Evers Treasurer

/s/ Philip M. Livingston Supt Derelict Property

£7660.16.6

TABLE 48
 MONEY RAISED BY THE HEMPSTEAD PARISH OF THE
 ESTABLISHED CHURCH FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE
 MINISTER AND THE POOR

Year	Amount ^a
1769	£ 561.3.9
1770	343.3.10
1771	401.18.2
1772	521.1.9
1773	442.15.5
1774	335.7.0
1775	335.16.0
1776	507.11.8
1777	420.12.10
1778	762.4.0
1779	910.0.0
1780	1232.6.0
1781	1364.14.9
1782	1461.11.0
1783	b

Source: Manuscript Records of the Town of Hempstead, V,
 pp. 88, 91, 95, 99, 104, 105, 108, 110, 111, 112,
 117, 120, 124.

^aTo the nearest penny.

^bNo figure available for this year.

and under the best conditions people would have resisted. The British blundered in ignoring the town meetings and the county's traditional political leadership. In the pre-war period many loyalists worked effectively to support royal authority, but instead of depending on these people the British turned to Colonel Hamilton, an outsider who was unfamiliar with local customs and whose conduct became detrimental to British success. The inhabitants' desire for an end to military rule grew, and when General James Robertson, the newly-appointed governor of the province, arrived in New York in 1780, county residents demanded the re-establishment of civilian control. In his proclamation of April 15, 1780 Robertson stated that the king favored a revival of civil authority, and that as governor he had the authority to fill vacancies in the civil government. But Robertson never wanted such a change, and Lord George Germain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, left the final decision to General Clinton. When Clinton indicated in 1782 that he might favor a return to civilian control, the governor and his council vetoed the idea. Robertson's authority rested on the fact that he was a general rather than on his executive position.¹¹

The people of Queens, anxiously waiting for Robertson to fulfill his promise, postponed sending the traditional congratulatory address of appointment to him until he had taken steps to curb the military's power. When the governor expressed his discontent with their failure, Hamilton called

together the leading inhabitants on August 9, 1780, and they drafted the county's reply. After apologizing for their tardiness, they noted that they had delayed in "an expectation of doing it in the usual Way on the Revival of civil Power" when they could declare their "sentiments in the most authentic Form."¹²

Instead of re-establishing civil authority, Robertson in July 1780 appointed George Duncan Ludlow as the superintendent of a newly-created Court of Police on Long Island.¹³ The commission granted Ludlow power "to hear and determine peace and good order" and required all officials on Long Island to assist him and obey his decrees. Although Ludlow had no authority to make judgments concerning events before May 1777, his power was otherwise extensive and even exceeded that of Hamilton. Ludlow forwarded orders from General Tryon to military officials and issued his own decrees on such varied matters as road and fence repairs, the weight and quality of bread, and the time for harvesting. In its judicial capacity his office combined the functions of police, judge, and jury. Ludlow also took charge of the militia captains who were taking the census of the county, a task formerly under Hamilton's direction.¹⁴

The governor argued that the Court of Police was a step in the direction of civil government and a convenience in that the inhabitants no longer had to go to New York City to settle judicial disputes. Although Ludlow had not been connected with the military and had been a justice of New

York's Supreme Court before the war, the Court of Police was martial law under a different guise. Trial by jury was not restored, and the superintendent was directly responsible to the military authorities. Administrative offices which had continued to operate under civil law during Hamilton's rule now ceased to function. After Ludlow's appointment, local justices lost their judicial role, the county Board of Supervisors ceased meeting for want of business, the mortgage office closed, and land conveyances were no longer recorded. The people called Ludlow "the little tyrant of the island." In December 1780 a slight concession was granted inhabitants when Robertson appointed William Walton and William Waddell, two civilians, to try civil suits not exceeding ten pounds.¹⁵

Thomas Jones believed that he understood why Robertson refused to end military rule. If the governor had taken such a step, the courts would have opened, and "barrack-masters, quarter-masters, and commissaries would have been prosecuted, and punished for the plunder, robberies, and other illegal acts, daily committed by them, and their dependents, upon his majesty's loyal subjects." Jones and Daniel Kissam, the county's representative in the last General Assembly, had discussed the point with Ludlow who replied that the opening of the courts "would be inconvenient, prejudicial, and injurious to the king's service." When civil law had been restored after the British army captured Georgia, the first action was against a quartermaster for an act done in his official capacity. Before his appointment as Governor, Robertson had

been Commander-in-Chief in New York, and he had no desire to have his earlier actions tested in court. Loyalists such as Jones who believed that the army's conduct had ended the chance of defeating the rebellion were prepared to prove their case in the law courts.¹⁶

Robertson and Ludlow immediately began to participate in the lucrative smuggling trade with New England. A proclamation of General Howe, published in November 1776 and continued in force by his successor, prohibited the shipment of goods out of New York without a permit from the Superintendent of Exports and Imports. The number of requests for permits became so great that each applicant had to submit a recommendation verifying his attachment to government. The authority to grant recommendations was given to different individuals at various times during the war. Since trade with New England was illegal, authorities could not charge a fee for granting a license. Because Robertson wanted to make a profit from the trade, he used his influence to have the power to grant recommendations vested solely in Ludlow who began charging an unauthorized fee for the recommendations. The two shared the profits with Andrew Elliot, the Superintendent of Exports and Imports.¹⁷

In July 1780 Robertson, with the approval of the British military commander, ordered the confiscation of the estates of absentee rebels which were to be assigned, where possible, to loyal refugee families. Those wishing to obtain such lands were to apply to Philip Livingston, the newly

appointed superintendent of Derelict Properties on Long Island. The procedure was simple. Livingston would appear as plaintiff before the Court of Police and claim the land as rebel property. Since the owner was not called to testify, judgment was made by default. There was no right of appeal, and the action, according to Thomas Jones, was illegal under the British constitution. The governor expanded his authority to include the seizure of the land of anyone not within the lines at New York. Land confiscated but not needed as a residence for a refugee, according to the instructions of Lord George Germaine, could be rented, and the proceeds were to be put into a fund for exiled loyalists.¹⁸

Confiscation was not a new policy. The army had previously taken the woodlands and the movable estates of persons actively engaged in rebellion. By 1778 the British had confiscated nine farms valued at £15,600. Some provision had been made for refugees, but most land became the property of royal officials and their favorites. Military officers were in the habit of taking possession of any public or private property which they needed. Little concern was given to the justification for such actions, and many officials made no distinction between what was needed for the army and what was wanted for their own personal comfort or profit. The confiscation of patriot property was considered final, and no compensation was ever made for the unnecessary destruction that took place. In 1779 the New York State Legislature passed a confiscation act, and after that,

particularly as victory became less certain, the British began to stress the temporary nature of their seizures. Clinton wrote Germaine in 1782 that the different military commands must not be given authority to deal with debt cases before 1777 or be allowed any "improper Interference with the Real Property of Rebels lying within the British Lines" since the precedents set "must ultimately embarrass Government, injure the British Merchant, and be always immediately fatal to the Loyalists in America." Because they would be liable for any damages "henceforward" committed, people living on rebel estates were enjoined in 1783 to take care of property entrusted to them. In the same year persons whose land had been "withheld" for real or "Supposed" offences to the crown were permitted to apply for the return of their land. When the people applied, most were told that the army still needed their property and that it therefore could not be given back. The purpose had not been to return the land but to protect the property of loyalists when the Whigs returned.¹⁹

Livingston and the Court of Police assigned 2,807 acres, the land of more than forty Queens County residents, to 468 refugees; ten more estates were rented to raise relief funds for the refugees. The amount of land in possession of military officers and their favorites is unknown. Despite later British protests over New York State's confiscation of loyalist property, New York's confiscation was not as large as the British had been, and it was accomplished with greater

concern for the rights of those whose property was taken. The fact that the rents obtained from the ten patriot estates amounted to £291 per annum suggests that the chief concern was not always raising funds. Governor Tryon had previously given Joseph French the use of the estate of Joseph Robertson of Jamaica which was valued at £2000 in 1778. The Court of Police rented it to French for only £10, but another man had to pay £50 for an estate valued at £1000. A British officer rented an estate worth £3000 for only £20. Ludlow and Livingston also held land, but it was not recorded. The discrepancies in the rents were concealed by neglecting to give a description of the lands in the rent rolls, a procedure followed when land was given to the refugees.²⁰

Ludlow and Livingston used every possible device to increase the amount of land they could confiscate. A farmer who died before the war had willed his farm to his wife during her natural life, and then to his eldest son in fee; if he died under age, the farm would go to his second son. The first son became a Whig committeeman and had fled Long Island, but he had died under age. The mother and second son were both alive living on the farm. The Court of Police seized the estate, ejected the widow, cut down the woodland and sold the timber, and gave the farm to refugees. By the end of the war the orchards and buildings were also irreparably damaged. Another farmer, who had moved to Dutchess County fifteen years before the war, still owned woodland in Hempstead. The Court of Police declared him a rebel and had

the wood cut down. A third farmer willed his land to two infant nephews who had been born and were living in Dutchess County. This land was also confiscated. If either a mortgagee or mortgager were a rebel, Ludlow and Livingston seized the land. Often a father owned land but allowed his son to farm it. If the Court of Police found the son a rebel, the father lost the property.²¹

The Court of Police on Long Island was to use the revenues it raised to support homeless Tory refugees. In the two years and eleven months of its existence, it collected £7660.16.6--£5879.14.8 from an excise tax and fees for liquor licenses, £1736.10.8 from rents on derelict properties on Long Island, and £17.11.2 from fines levied by the court. Most of the money was used to pay salaries. Ludlow received more than £1825 for working one day a week for thirty-five months. His assistant, David Colden, and the treasurer, Charles M'Evers, were each paid £1000. Ludlow's secretary was given £500. Livingston's share was £1000 plus another £250 for travel expenses. Four other men received a total of £444.4.6. After other expenses were paid, the refugees were given £300. At the end of the war, when Ludlow stated his financial losses to the loyalist commission, he never subtracted the money he made because of the war--his salary, the land he gave himself, or the profits from illegal transactions.²²

The excise tax had been established by the General Assembly, and it was collected by the county Board of

Supervisors until October 1781. The revenues were used to pay various county expenses, and the remainder went to support the poor in the different towns. When the Court of Police took over the collection of the tax, it was done for the benefit of the refugees. While many of these people were poor, they were a British, not a county, responsibility. The war was increasing the number of poor in the county, and the Hempstead Parish vestry during the war had to increase its expenditures to support the poor by 300 percent.²³ The loss of revenues from the excise tax was a serious blow to the parish. Opposition to the tax was strong even before the loss of this money. In January 1780 William Tryon ordered Colonel Hamilton to use militia officers if there was any difficulty in collecting the excise or poor tax.²⁴

When the Court of Police was created, most county residents appear to have approved of it as an initial step toward the re-establishment of civil government. But once Ludlow's tactics had become evident, the estrangement between the military and the people became irreversible. The British had lost the war not only on the battlefield but in the minds and hearts of the people. Martial law had become the cause and the symbol of the abuses county inhabitants endured from 1776 to 1783. British officials had done what the Whigs could not; they had made patriots out of most of the uncommitted and loyalist inhabitants of Queens. After 1781, the people waited expectantly for the return of the Whigs to Queens County.

FOOTNOTES

¹S.P.G., Letter Ser. B, II, pp. 512-13.

²New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 691; Flint, Long Island Before the Revolution, pp. 422-23.

³The basis for martial law was the Prohibitory Act passed by Parliament in Nov. 1775; for criticism of the military's interpretation of the act, see: Barck, New York During the War for Independence, pp. 50-53; Jones, History, II, pp. 110-11, 118-19, 128-33.

⁴C.O. 5/101, p. 292; C.O. 5/175, p. 170; Barck, New York During the War for Independence, pp. 60-63; New York Gazette, Nov. 4, 1776.

⁵Jones, History, II, pp. 119, 128-33.

⁶Most works on Queens County during the Revolution state that the courts in the county were closed and justices of the peace lost their judicial powers; see, for example, Onderdonk, Documents, p. 257; Kennedy, "Jamaica, Long Island," p. 99; but, according to Thomas Jones, the Queens County Court of Common Pleas remained open until 1779; Jones, History, II, p. 119; the justices of the peace also continued to fulfill their lawful responsibilities: A.O. 13/47, p. 314; Documents Collection, III, p. 45, L.I.H.S.; Loyalist Transcripts, XLV, p. 662; justices continued to try petty larcenies, "but in civil causes, of which they had cognizance by their commissions, and the laws of the province, they were forbidden to act," see Jones, History, II, p. 130.

⁷Regulations for the Captains of Militia, and Justices of the Peace in Queens County, Nov. 27, 1779, Documents Collection, N.C.H.M.; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 25, 47, 48; Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VI, p. 640; also see: "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton."

⁸There was little change in the composition of county and province officeholders, except that, as with town officeholders, the Whigs lost power; see Tables 38 to 44.

⁹A.O. 13/114, pp. 280, 282-83; The Examination of Colonel Archibald Hamilton, April 29, 1789, MISC MSS, Hamilton, Archibald, N.Y.H.S.; William Tryon to Lord George Germaine, Jan. 20, 1777, Force Collection, Ser. VIIIE, IV,

p. 125, Library of Congress; Benjamin Hewlett to Elijah Spraz, Feb. 20, 1780, Landon Papers, Documents Related to Long Island Persons, Estates, and Businesses, Pkg. 25, L.I. H.S.; Archibald Hamilton to John Kissam, May 15, 1780, Documents Relating to the Revolutionary War and Civil War, XIII, p. 24, L.I.H.S.; Commission Papers of Benjamin Hewlett, Jr., Esquire of Queens County, Dec. 16, 1776, MISC Single Documents, Various Dates, Various Places, L.I.H.S.; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 698, 755; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," Apr. 28, 1780, July 17, 1780, July 19, 1780, Sept. 10, 1780; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 7, 13, 33, 41, 47; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," Aug. 13, 1779; Rivington's, Aug. 4, 1782.

¹⁰Statement of John Willet, Feb. 24, 1779, Statement of John Morrel, Feb. 25, 1779, Statement of Walter Dulton, Feb. 26, 1779, Willet to Oliver DeLancey, Mar. 18, 1779, Hamilton to DeLancey, Mar. 22, 1779, Hamilton to DeLancey, Mar. 29, 1779, Landon Papers, Pkg. 25, L.I.H.S.; A.O. 13/114, p. 284; History of Queens County, New York, p. 83; Mandeville, Flushing, pp. 59-60; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 54.

¹¹New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 767; C.O. 5/104, p. 195; C.O. 5/105, pp. 41-43, 46-48; C.O. 5/175, pp. 145-46, 154, 166; Rivington's, Apr. 19, 1780, July 15, 1780; Barack, New York During the War for Independence, pp. 52, 60-64, 66-71.

¹²Onderdonk, Documents, Second Series, p. 47; Rivington's, Aug. 12, 1780.

¹³The Court of Police on Long Island was patterned after the Court of Police in New York; for a description of the latter body see: C.O. 5/104, pp. 86-92.

¹⁴Rivington's, Aug. 19, 1780, Sept. 9, 1780; New York Gazette, Sept. 18, 1780; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," p. 7; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," Jan. 31, 1781, Apr. 17, 1781; Order for Aaron Van Nostrand, Aug. 14, 1781, Appointment of Aaron Van Nostrand, Marshall of the Police Office at Jamaica, as Inspector of Weights and Quality of Bread, Oct. 16, 1782, Collection of Miscellaneous Documents Removed from Henry Onderdonk, Jr. Papers and from the Pierrepont Family Papers, Pkg. 123, p. 33, L.I.H.S.

¹⁵British Headquarters Papers, Document Nos. 4686, 7397, N.Y.P.L.; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, p. 799; Barck, New York During the War for Independence, pp. 68-70; Jones, History, II, pp. 1-2, 118-19, 128-31; "Queens County Supervisors Book [1709-1787]," MS, Museum of the City of New York.

¹⁶Jones, History, I, p. 266, II, pp. 12-15, 23.

¹⁷Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 234-35; Barck, New York During the War for Independence, pp. 123-24; Jones, History, I, pp. 166-67, II, pp. 12-15.

¹⁸British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 7655, N.Y.P.L.; New York Gazette, July 17, 1780; Rivington's, July 19, 1780, Nov. 29, 1780; New York Colonial Documents, VIII, pp. 768, 773; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," pp. 46, 49; "Captain Youngs' Forage Book," May 19, 1780; "Order Book of Colonel Hamilton," Feb. 28, 1780; Barck, New York During the War for Independence, p. 87; Jones, History, II, pp. 35-37, 144-49.

¹⁹Stevens, Facsimilies, Document No. 1234; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 8047; C.O. 5/105, p. 13; C.O. 5/106, pp. 37-45; C.O. 5/108, p. 161; C.O. 5/110, p. 54; A.O. 13/99, pp. 304, 318-20, 324, 326; New York Gazette, Feb. 24, 1783; Rivington's, Oct. 16, 1779, Feb. 22, 1783, June 21, 1783; New York Packet, June 22, 1783, Aug. 14, 1783; John Youngs to Samuel Youngs, Nov. 8, 1779, Youngs Collection, N.C.H.M.; Jones, History, I, pp. 336-39; Onderdonk, Documents, Second Series, p. 7; History of Queens County, New York, p. 37; John Thomas Waugh, The United Empire Loyalists: With Particular Reference to the Niagara Frontier (Buffalo, N.Y., 1926), p. 84; Barck, New York During the War for Independence, p. 83; see: Tables 45 and 46; Appendix C.

²⁰A.O. 13/114, p. 20; Transcript of Various Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VIII, pp. 559-72, N.Y.P.L.; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 9733, N.Y.P.L.; Stevens, Facsimilies, Document No. 1234; Petition of John Eagle of Flushing to Governor Robertson, Apr. 28, 1780, Percival Smith Collection, Pkg. 333C, L.I.H.S.; Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, pp. 780-81.

²¹Jones, History, II, pp. 35-47.

²²British Headquarters Papers, Document Nos. 7777, 7980, 8554, 10385, 10386, N.Y.P.L.; Transcript of Various Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VII, pp. 194-98, 390, N.Y.P.L.; Ludlow was paid approximately twice as much per month as Colonel Hamilton, see: ibid., pp. 248-249; also see Table 47.

²³No records remain for the Jamaica parish; the cost of living in New York City during the war increased 300 percent: Barck, New York During the War for Independence,

pp. 100-105; Manuscript Records of the Town of Hempstead, V, pp. 88, 91, 95, 99, 104, 105, 108, 110, 111, 112, 117, 120, 124, Hempstead Town Clerk; no record exists for the amount of money raised in 1783; in 1784 support of the poor became a town responsibility.

24A.O. 13/99, pp. 263, 324; C.O. 5/96, pp. 41-44, 65; British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 9853, N.Y.P.L.; Transcript of Various Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of American Loyalists, III, p. 247, IV, p. 169, N.Y.P.L.; Rivington's, Nov. 1, 1780; Baurmeister, Revolution in America, p. 253; see Table 48.

CHAPTER VII

THE TRIUMPH OF THE REVOLUTION: 1783-1784

A woman diarist expressed the change in the attitude of most Queens residents caused by the British occupation, when she wrote that Cornwallis' defeat at Yorktown in October 1781 brought "general joy; not for the discomfiture of the British, but from the hope of peace . . . and the healing of discord." When word of Lord North's resignation as Prime Minister reached Long Island in August 1782, "faces of men, women, and children brighten[ed] with expectation of better times." They were "ready . . . to exult afar off in the triumph, and to cheer on the conflict." After the Continental Congress ratified the peace settlement in April 1783, "children ran from school, dismissed by the teacher, that all might share in the general joy."¹

Others, however, experienced only anguish on hearing the peace terms. Petitioners to Sir Guy Carleton, the British commander in America, wrote that they had "the most alarming apprehensions."² David Colden, after being forcibly exiled by Whigs from his home in Flushing, wrote of the patriots in June 1784, "Cursed, cursed Tyrants who drive me from my Wife and Children, and put it out of my power to assist or comfort them, when they need it most." He was dead

within a month, and George Ludlow wrote that Colden had "ceased to look on death as an evil; after all he had suffered; and felt life a burden he was duty bound to bear; rather than a possession, of which the very apprehension of losing is dreadful."³

The advent of peace and the British evacuation of New York in November 1783 forced county residents, whether or not they favored independence, to rebuild their lives in a world changed from that of 1775 or 1779. Most remained in the county and accepted republicanism. Others departed for Canada or England, placing their trust in a political system they had known since birth. Three aspects of the inhabitants' adjustment must be considered: the plight of refugees; the treatment of loyalists remaining in Queens; and the re-establishment of civil government.

Men became refugees for diverse reasons. Colden noted that many had "an abhorrence of a republican government." People had "been taught a dangerous truth, that all power is derived from them." Some departed, according to Thomas Jones, "rather than live in a Country governed by the iron and oppressive hand of rebellion." Not all county refugees were loyalists in 1775. People who had not sided with Britain before the war later worked for the royal army and feared Whig retribution. Rivington reported in December 1782 that "no less than one hundred and two Loyalists [were] put to death by the rebels, in the county of Albany alone."

Other residents had been indicted or found guilty of treason by New York State. Some people feared law suits for actions committed under British authority. For other men the promise of land in Canada was sufficient motivation. There had been a land shortage in the pre-war period, and inhabitants continuously migrated westward. The process was halted during the war but resumed with peace.⁴

Jones, who was in England in 1783, stated that "nearly one-third of the whole" of county inhabitants became refugees. Although later chroniclers accepted this estimate, he presented no evidence to support it. Possibly he included non-residents who lived in Queens during the war. He may have assumed that because DeLancey's Brigade went to Canada, five hundred county inhabitants and their families also departed. But brigade muster rolls indicate that few residents enlisted and that many men who joined remained in the United States. Jones was probably incorrect, for the existing evidence does not support him. Loyalists attempted to sell their property when departing, but county records do not indicate the massive transfer of land which would have accompanied the migration of so many families. Nor is there evidence of a large turnover of tenant farmers.⁵

Many of the staunchest loyalists wished to remain on Long Island. Jones visited England in 1781 for his health but wrote in 1782 that with peace "I shall embark for my Native Country. I had rather spend one year at Fort Neck [Oyster Bay] in peace than three years here in the anxious

state all we poor refugees in this country are in." In the early seventeen-nineties friends petitioned the state legislature to allow his return, but he died in 1792.⁶ Archibald Hamilton decided to remain in Flushing and requested state citizenship, but he was refused.⁷ Colden wrote, "Now for myself, here I am, condemned to suffer death, if ever I am found in the State of New York; and yet my determination is to put them to the test." Twice he petitioned Governor George Clinton's permission to remain but left when patriots warned him he must go.⁸ Other inhabitants preferred indictment of treason before the state Supreme Court to leaving their homes.⁹

The exact number of residents who became refugees will probably never be known. The tremendous movement of people through the county during the war years and, in particular, in 1783 makes any estimate risky. Estimates on the percentage of Queens County refugees based on data on the male population range from a low of 5.5 percent to 18.1 percent. These figures are necessarily tentative, but they are far more reliable than those of Jones.¹⁰

Many who migrated to Canada began their journey by experiencing the incompetence and corruption they had endured throughout the British occupation. In October 1783 Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hewlett, who commanded an expedition of Queens and other refugees bound for Nova Scotia, informed Carleton that the Martha, a transport under his command, had "wrecked on a ledge of rocks of the Seail Islands, between Cape Sables

and Bay of Fundy." One hundred sixty-seven refugees died, and others lost their baggage. Hewlett, who had organized county Tories before the war, wrote Carleton, "Allow me . . . to lay before you the distress of an unfortunate Old Man, weighed down by a variety of misfortunes." In the wreck he lost £200 sterling worth of tools, stoves, and baggage, and his family suffered "the utmost want, distress, and misery." Another officer lost £200, and a third £100.¹¹

When British authorities investigated the tragedy, they found the vessel unseaworthy, ill-equipped, and undermanned. If the crew had not deserted the ship when the accident occurred, both the number of lives and the amount of property lost could have been drastically reduced. Rather than allow passengers to escape, the captain set a small boat "adrift and empty in full view of the people aboard." When he reached shore he reported that all had perished and discouraged a rescue operation, although the Martha "was fast aground on the rocks . . . [and] no material part had given way, only her Masts." Carleton directed that the survivors be given a musters pay and supplies for their immediate relief.¹²

Reports to New York from those who survived the wreck were optimistic about the future of the Canadian settlements. John McQueen wrote to his family in Oyster Bay that he "got a good farm lot" and had "hopes this country will do well after some time." In another letter he remarked "we live Very Comfortable" and added that he had reserved land for his

TABLE 49

LOYALIST COMMISSION: SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS SUBMITTED
BY INHABITANTS OF QUEENS COUNTY^a

Name ^b	Amount Claimed ^c	Amount Awarded ^c
Colden, David	10285.15.0 ^d	2720.0.0
Folliott, George	13144.0.0 ^d	4200.0.0
French, Joseph	682.0.0 ^d	500.0.0
Hallett, Samuel	10003.12.6	162.0.0
Hamilton, Archibald	9395.0.0 ^d	1646.0.0
Hughston, James	2210.12.6 ^f	0
Jones, Thomas	12631.0.0 ^d	5522.0.0
Lloyd, Henry	10162.0.0	3300.0.0
Ludlow, Gabriel	2500.0.0 ^d	1450.0.0
Ludlow, George	7000.0.0 ^d	2500.0.0
Polhemus, John	1350.0.0	800.0.0
Stone, John	2450.0.0	200.0.0
Thorne, Steven	3690.19.0	300.0.0
Van Dine, Dow	1671.10.0	900.0.0
Youngs, Israel	<u>0^e</u>	<u>0</u>
	87176.9.0 ^g	24200.0.0

Sources: A.O. 12; A.O. 13; Loyalist Transcripts.

^aOther individuals claimed compensation from the Loyalist Commission, their memorials appear in A.O. 13, but their claims were rejected and their requests do not appear in A.O. 12: Richard Alsop, £318.5.0, Paul Amberman, £329, Dow Ditmars, £2162, Dow Ditmars, Jr., £150, Daniel Kissam,

TABLE 49--Continued

£984, John Kissam, £984, Daniel Rapalje, £280, George Rapalje, £952, Rem Remsen, £1125, Edward Thorne, £770, and Charles Welling, £731.

^bAll of the individuals named are important for understanding the Revolution in Queens County, but not everyone of them would give the county as their place of residence: Henry Lloyd's memorials are found with those of Massachusetts; George Folliott was a New York merchant.

^c£ Sterling.

^dThis amount includes property not in Queens County.

^eYoungs claimed a loss of £1293.15 for the confiscation of his estate, but the claim was disallowed when it was found that his property remained in the possession of his family.

^fProperty lost in March 1776 in a fire allegedly set by the Whigs; other loyalists did not support his claim, and it was rejected by the commission.

^gThe amounts claimed as lost included claims not only for property taken or destroyed by the rebels, but property damaged by the British, property honestly but wrongly assumed confiscated, and property which had been destroyed while hired to the British for profit; the commission sought to limit claims to those sustained by an individual because of his loyalty to the crown.

father-in-law in case the latter decided to leave Queens. George Ludlow wrote that people had "shut the door to the United States," and "time is as pleasantly passed as it ever was in the days of our pride." Ludlow had more reason than most to be optimistic. He was one of a small number of county residents compensated by the British government for losses sustained because of loyalty to the crown.¹³

Other refugees passed judgment on conditions in Canada by returning home. A former county resident wrote, "There are several loyalists gone back to the states, and some glad to get back again, by paying some £100, some £500." Henry Onderdonk, Jr., the county's most reliable chronicler of the Revolution, wrote, "We find the Loyalists, except those who have been in arms, gradually returning home." Harsh conditions in Canada and homesickness were factors. More important was news that former loyalists lived in Queens unmolested by their Whig neighbors.¹⁴

Refugees who returned to Queens to become part of the larger group of former Tories seeking accommodation with the state government presented the state with a critical problem. Although most loyalist leaders were in exile, there remained a significant number of people in the southern district of the state who had actively and openly opposed the Revolution. The postwar settlement had to promote reconciliation but in a manner which did not allow the emergence of a fifth column dedicated to reunion with the mother country.

"An Act for the forfeiture and sale of the estates of persons who have adhered to the enemies of this state, and for declaring the sovereignty of the people of this state, in respect to all property within the same" was passed on October 22, 1779. The law ipso facto attainted fifty-nine loyalists of felony, confiscated their property, and banished them from the state on pain of death. Grand juries of the supreme court, court of oyer and terminer, or general or quarter sessions of the peace could indict any other person who was guilty of loyalism. The oath of one "credible" witness was sufficient evidence. If the accused did not traverse the indictment before the Supreme Court, his property was forfeited. Any person who was in territory not held by Great Britain on July 9, 1776, but who voluntarily joined the enemy or broke parole and fled to the British was guilty of high treason. People who remained in the southern district solely to protect their property and who did not aid the enemy were exempt from prosecution.¹⁵

The act attainted six county residents, and grand juries indicted approximately fifty other inhabitants. Indictment was a matter of chance, for state officials did not attempt to apply the law impartially or universally. A Dutchess County court of oyer and terminer brought charges on July 19, 1783 against ten Queens County men on the testimony of Abel Smith of Dutchess who lived within British lines from October 1777 to August 1782. Thomas Thorne of Hempstead was named because he "acted as a private in the Horse Guards

of the Militia." Almost every adult male in the county could have been indicted on this charge. Three of the ten men who were charged were indicted twice on the same day by the same jury for the same offense. The jurors did not know who they were indicting but simply listed the names mentioned in testimony.¹⁶

The jury's action points to the difficulties inherent in this act and in all anti-loyalist legislation. Sentiment in the state, particularly in Dutchess, favored punishment of loyalists and confiscation of their property. The government could not permit Tory leaders to remain after the peace settlement. If they mobilized former loyalists in post-war elections, as loyalists had united Queens County residents in 1775 and 1776, the Revolution's success would be imperiled. But it was impossible to define in legislation who was a Tory or what was a loyalist act. The 1779 act partially solved the problem by specifically naming fifty-nine individuals and declaring them ipso facto guilty of adhering to the enemy. British officials had already set a precedent by confiscating Whig property in southern New York without a trial. The power of state juries to indict permitted the trial of lesser Tory leaders when passions had subsided and there was a better opportunity to assess the political situation.¹⁷

Because the authority given grand juries was too vague, it was often employed indiscriminately. After the war the state did not seriously attempt to punish those charged with the crime of loyalism. Most indicted county

residents appeared before the Supreme Court when it opened in October 1783 at Albany. They "were treated with the utmost hospitality and good humor by the worthy inhabitants of that city." After they pleaded not guilty and no one appeared to testify against them, the charges were dismissed. If an individual failed to appear, the indictment was filed and his property forfeited.¹⁸

It is uncertain how many residents of Queens lost property under the Confiscation Act. Alexander Flick in Loyalism in New York stated that the commissioners of forfeiture for the southern district sold the land of "not less than fifty-two loyalists in Queens County," but he confused indictment under the act with conviction.¹⁹ Isaac Stoutenburg, a commissioner for the southern district, "filed Abstracts of Sales of Forfeited Estates in the Clerks Office of Queens County amounting to 12 folio of 120 words each." Abraham Skinner, the county clerk, was paid eighteen shillings for recording the abstracts, but they are lost.²⁰ It appears twelve pieces of property were confiscated, and there is evidence the commissioners sold ten parcels of land. Thomas Jones' estate, granted him for life by his father's will, was also confiscated but was given to the next heir named in the will. The sales had little social or economic impact on the county. Peggy Kissam bought her deceased husband's property; John Lloyd, Jr., his uncle's land. Eight of the ten men whose properties were confiscated received compensation from the loyalist commission. Daniel Kissam's heirs

TABLE 50
THE CONFISCATION OF LOYALIST PROPERTY
WITHIN QUEENS COUNTY

Name	Acreage	Town	Price	Buyer
Colden, David	240	Flushing	£1800	William Cornwell
Folliott, George	21	Jamaica	500	Abraham Skinner
Ford, Joseph	4	Jamaica	450	Melancton Smith
Jones, Thomas ^a		Oyster Bay		
Kissam, Daniel	330	N.Hemp.	2000	Peggy Kissam
Lloyd, Henry	700	Oyster Bay	2900	John Lloyd, Jr.
Ludlow, Gabriel	140	N.Hemp. and Flushing	800	Capt. John Berrien and Isaac Ledyard
Ludlow, George D.	300	Hempstead	2000	Isaac Wells
Ludlow, George D.	26	Hempstead	265	Dr. Charles McKnight
Polhemus, Johannes	200	Jamaica	1650	Marinus Willet
Vandine, Dow	200	Newtown	200	Thomas McFarren

Sources: Abstract of sales by the Commissioners of forfeiture of the Southern District, 1784-1787, of forfeited estates in New York City, Long Island, Staten Island, and Westchester County, N.Y.H.S.; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 67.

^aDavid Jones willed his Oyster Bay estate in fee to his son Thomas for Life with the remainder, on failure of issue, to the testor's eldest daughter, Arabella, and her issue in tail; Thomas Jones was named in the 1779 Act of Attainder and lost his estate at the end of the war; the provisions of David Jones' will were followed, and since Thomas had no issue, the estate became the property of Arabella and her heirs; other property owned by Thomas Jones was confiscated and sold by the Commissioners of Forfeiture.

returned to Queens and under the guidelines set down by the Loyalist Commission lost their right to compensation.²¹

From another point of view, the state confiscated part of every inhabitant's property. "An Act for raising £100,000 within the several counties therein mentioned," passed on May 8, 1784, levied a special tax on areas of the state within British lines during the war. The law's preamble stated that all inhabitants enjoyed "the blessing derived from freedom and independence," but not everyone had "sustained [the] many and heavy burdens and expenses in prosecuting the late war." The county's share of the tax, fourteen thousand pounds, was raised by assessments on inhabitants' real and personal property. The act exempted individuals who fled Queens after the Battle of Long Island and remained within American lines until March 1, 1783. The tax was paid in two installments and does not appear to have caused undue economic hardships. But it was vindictive and failed to take into account the sufferings endured during the British occupation. Jones maintained that loyalists were assessed more heavily than Whigs, but there is no evidence to support the charge, and an overassessment of twenty-five pounds would mean an extra tax of only about four shillings.²²

New York State also had to determine the political rights of former loyalists. After Tories voted in the 1783 election, the legislature passed on May 12, 1784 "An Act to preserve the freedom and independence of this State, and for other purposes therein mentioned." The law declared

guilty of misprison of treason anyone who held a military or civil office or commission from the king after July 9, 1776, who fitted out privateers or vessels of war after that date for service against the thirteen states, who served on such vessels as an officer, who fled from another state to the protection of the British army or navy after July 9, 1776, or "who since that date, have voluntarily gone over to, remained with, or joined the fleets and armies of the king of Great Britain aforesaid at any time during the late war." The act disfranchised the individuals in these categories and barred them from holding "any legislative, judicial, or executive office or place, whatsoever within this state."²³

Flick has written that the act "is said to have excluded from voting . . . nine-tenths [of the inhabitants] of Queens County." He relied on Jones who based his conclusion on a reading of the act and on his belief that the law was passed to give the Whigs a majority so they could pass a tax of one hundred fifty thousand pounds on the southern district of New York in 1785. But the tax was for one hundred thousand pounds and was passed six days before the voting act. Jones failed to point out that enforcement of the act was left to inspectors of elections who were to permit "any person" to vote who "has, during the late war, within the southern district, by fear or compulsion accepted held or exercised any such commission or appointment, or who may have involuntarily done any act or acts which by the said section would have disqualified him from holding any office

or from being an elector had the same been voluntarily done, and that such person has otherwise . . . [been] a friend to freedom and independence."²⁴

The number of people disqualified depended upon inspectors' interpretation of the law and their willingness to enforce it. In post-war elections for major town offices the percent of officeholders who were former Tories is as follows: 1783, 4.9 percent; 1784, 12.1 percent; 1785, 12.7 percent; 1786, 21.1 percent; 1787, 23.6 percent; 1788, 22.0 percent. The 1783 and 1784 elections were held before passage of the act. Since Tories were successful in contravening the act and winning a significant number of offices in the years following the law's passage, it is implausible to maintain that 90 percent of the inhabitants could not vote or hold office because of their war-time activities. Some individuals may have been penalized, but there is no evidence that they were. Other loyalists possibly refrained from voting, but if they did, their number decreased with each passing year.²⁵

There is less conclusive evidence concerning the act's enforcement at state elections. The New York Packet reported on February 20, 1786 that South Hempstead, "that most obnoxious part of the county" and a stronghold of loyalism, cast 127 of the county's 359 votes in the 1785 elections for the State Assembly. The paper called for legislation to deal with the "peculiar situation" in Queens. It does not appear that anti-loyalist legislation was enforced any more stringently at these elections than at town elections.²⁶

A loyalist faced one further legal difficulty, for he could be sued by another person for actions committed during the British occupation of Long Island. "An Act for granting a more effectual relief in cases of certain trespass" defined the plaintiff as "any person or persons, who are, or were inhabitants of this State, and who by reason of the invasion of the enemy left . . . their place or places of abode, and who have not voluntarily put themselves into the power of the enemy, since they respectively left their places of abode." Such persons, their executors, or administrators, could "bring an Action of Trespass against any person or persons who may have occupied, injured, or destroyed" the plaintiff's real or personal property. Few county residents left Queens after the Battle of Long Island and remained within American lines for the entire war. Those who did often had no one to sue, for the defendant was a propertyless Tory refugee from another state or another part of New York who resided in Queens during the war and left in 1783 with the British.²⁷

The act was amended in 1784 to allow a plaintiff to attach an absentee defendant's property in the state to pay the damages and cost of a suit. The 1784 law also permitted any citizen "whose estate, real or personal, had been injured, destroyed or occupied by such persons who have withdrawn themselves from this state" to attach an absentee defendant's property.²⁸ Loyalists who had remained in Queens were not affected by this provision of the Act.

Since county and state court records are incomplete, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the incidence of trespass cases. Residents were litigious, and there was a large number of suits following the war. Most cases were not directed at individuals because they were loyalists but resulted from the fact that the courts had been closed for a long period of time. Non-payment of debt was a frequent complaint. Comparatively few known cases in Queens were brought under the Trespass Act. Although the courts attached the farms of a few loyalists, Henry Onderdonk's summation of the impact of such cases is still valid: "The suits against the Tories (under the Trespass Act) for damages done the Whigs did not amount to much. Able lawyers, disagreeing jurors, certioraries, and the laws delay were obstacles in the way of indemnity."²⁹

Most accounts of Queens County in the immediate post-war period have stressed the plight of Tory refugees and the harsh treatment of former loyalists which were manifested by the confiscation of property, taxation, loss of political rights, and court suits by vindictive Whigs. Certain individuals did suffer terribly. It is difficult to read the letters of David Colden without sympathy. But emphasis on the very small number of residents whose situation was similar to Colden's obscures the more important point. The great majority of residents were not adversely affected by anti-loyalist legislation. The period was marked

by moderation and leniency rather than retribution. The re-establishment of civil government in Queens in 1783 exemplified the state's conciliatory attitude.

Throughout 1783 many residents were uncertain about the future. They were relieved that the occupation would be over, but anxious about what would befall the county when the state took control. People had accepted the new government, but would it accept them? There was also optimism. County patriots met at Hempstead Harbor in April 1783 to arrange for an orderly transfer of government. Inhabitants were "under great apprehensions of the confusions, robberies, and other disagreeable circumstances" which they thought would occur in the interval between the British evacuation and the arrival of American troops. Local Whigs had at last recognized the demand for order and stability. The meeting requested Governor George Clinton's assistance and notified him that county residents were "entitled to a voice with our fellow citizens of the State in the approaching election."³⁰

The Whigs' assertion of their political rights was not inappropriate. The state government from its inception had rested its authority on a legal and popular foundation. Clinton considered Long Island a part of the state "prevented" by "local circumstances" from participating in the struggle for independence. Although the British occupation precluded the election of representatives to the State Assembly, residents who had fled Long Island represented the county in the legislature from its first session in September 1777.

When the lives and property of Long Islanders were endangered, as in the whale-boat warfare, New York State successfully intervened with the Continental Congress and the governments of other states to protect its citizens. At the war's conclusion, county inhabitants were "established in the full enjoyment of . . . [their] Freedom and independence."³¹

Governor Clinton was also concerned about the possibility of violence when the British departed, and he corresponded with Carleton and Washington concerning "measures" that "can be taken by the State to prevent" disturbances. State Whigs were pleased by the outcome of their efforts. The Independent New York Gazette reported on December 1, 1783 that "the mode of taking possession of this City on Tuesday last, evinced such inviolable regard to order and discipline, as Tyranny could never have enforced; and which nothing but an unremitting and exhalted sense of the extraordinary worth of the great Officers both civil and military they had the honor to attend, naturally prompted the troops and inhabitants so rigidly to observe." When commenting on the orderliness of the transaction, one county resident wrote, "One day the British patrolled the streets, next day the American soldiers."³²

The peaceful nature of the transfer was not an accident. If a cause of the Revolution was the rise of a competent colonial political elite, the presence of this leadership facilitated the resolution of post-war problems. Before British defeat became inevitable, the state government had

laid the groundwork for the transition period and the re-establishment of civil government. "An Act to provide for the temporary government of the southern parts of this State, whenever the enemy shall abandon or be dispossessed of the same, and until the legislature can be convened," passed on October 2, 1779, provided for the creation of a council with authority to make ordinances "for the purpose of preserving peace and good order in the southern district of this state." The legislation enumerated the council's powers and specified that these would "become void on the sixtieth day after the first day on which they shall meet, or on the first day after a quorum of both houses of the legislature shall be convened, after the enemy shall abandon or be dispossessed of the southern district of this State, whichever shall first happen."³³

During its brief existence at the end of 1783 the council passed ordinances for: the arrest of persons for breaches of the peace, riots, misdemeanors, and felonies; the proper treatment of such prisoners; the price of bread in New York City; the control of cartman; the holding of elections in the southern district; the re-establishment of town government; the custody of Queens County public records; and the protection of confiscated estates.³⁴

Governor Clinton called the legislature into session on January 6, 1784. When it met, civil government had replaced military rule in the southern district of New York. The five towns in Queens had held meetings on December 22,

1783, elected new local officials, and resumed their traditional responsibilities. On December 29, 1783 county elections were held at Jamaica to select representatives to the Assembly.³⁵

The success of the Revolution in New York State depended on reconciliation between factions that had recently been at war. Events during the British occupation predisposed Queens County residents to accept republican government. But their assent was conditional. Dissension would have followed, if the state had employed the tactics of the Whigs in 1776 or of British military officers from 1776 to 1783. The peaceful nature of the transition and the rapid re-establishment of civil government convinced inhabitants that the new government was constitutional, orderly, and stable. People accepted anti-loyalist legislation because it was marked by leniency rather than revenge. If a few residents suffered severely, the laws channeled war-time animosities into law courts where most disputes could be settled equitably and peacefully.

New York State's wartime success consisted not only in helping to defeat Great Britain but in winning the allegiance of areas like Queens County, and consequently securing a genuine acceptance of the American Revolution.

FOOTNOTES

¹Post, Personal Recollections, pp. 198-99, 200-202.

²C.O. 5/108, pp. 187-90.

³David Colden to Nancy Colden, June 27, 1784, MISC MSS, Colden, David, N.Y.H.S.; George D. Ludlow to Elizabeth DeLancey, July 15, 1784, Colden Papers, Box XI, N.Y.H.S.

⁴A.O. 13/97, pp. 346-48; Jones, History, I, p. 108n; Norton, The British Americans, pp. 36-38; Rivington's, Dec. 21, 1782; Laws, 3rd session, Oct. 22, 1779, Chapter 38; ibid., 6th session, Mar. 17, 1783, Chapter 31; C.O. 5/94, p. 10; New York Gazette, Apr. 28, 1777; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 244; Abbot, New York in the American Revolution, pp. 270-71.

⁵Jones, History, I, p. 108n.; for muster rolls of DeLancey's Brigade see the photostat copies in the Library of Congress of Public Archives of Canada, Ser. C, vols. 1878, 1879, 1882; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 245; for examples of Tory refugees attempting to sell their land in Queens County: New York Gazette, May 20, 1780, Apr. 1, 1782, May 6, 1783; Rivington's, Nov. 29, 1780, May 4, 1782; Cox, Oyster Bay Town Records, VII, p. 34; Queens County Conveyances, micro-film Reel QCV3, F, pp. 23-25, 26-31, Queens College Historical Documents Collection; A.O. 13/113, p. 151.

⁶Thomas Jones to Mrs. [Arabella] Floyd, May 5, 1782, John [P.] DeLancey to Jones, Apr. 3, 1792, Thomas Jones Family Papers, Museum of the City of New York; Jones, History, I, p. xi; New York Assembly Papers, Forfeited Estates, XXVI, pp. 341-44, New York State Library at Albany.

⁷A.O. 13/97, pp. 346-48.

⁸Loyalist Transcripts, XIX, p. 437; Transcript of Various Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VI, p. 341, N.Y.P.L.; A.O. 13/97, pp. 346-48; David Colden to Mrs. DeLancey, Oct. 13, 1783, D. Colden to Gov. George Clinton [Draft], Nov. 19, 1783, D. Colden to Mrs. DeLancey, Dec. 23, 1783, Draft of letter by D. Colden, Jan. 15, 1784, D. Colden to Mrs. DeLancey, June 28,

1784, Colden Papers, Box XI, N.Y.H.S.; New York Assembly Journal, 7th Session (1784), pp. 19, 27; D. Colden to Nancey Colden, June 27, 1784, MISC MSS, Colden, David, N.Y.H.S.

⁹Onderdonk, Documents, p. 258.

¹⁰See Appendix B.

¹¹W. O. Raymond, The Winslow Papers (St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, 1901), pp. 51, 139; British Headquarters Papers, Document Nos. 9409, 9528; Transcript of Various Papers Relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VI, pp. 201, 285.

¹²C.O. 5/111, pp. 72-73, 76, 104-105, 106-107, 108, 110.

¹³Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, pp. 821, 822-23; George D. Ludlow to Peter Van Schaack, Jan. 10, 1785, Oct. 16, 1785, Apr. 2, 1786, Peter Van Schaack Papers, Library of Congress; Table 49.

¹⁴Stoutenburgh, Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, p. 186; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 256.

¹⁵Laws, 3rd session, Oct. 22, 1779, Chapter 38.

¹⁶Ibid.; Flick, Loyalism in New York (New York, 1969), pp. 155-157; New York Gazette, Aug. 11, 1783; New York Packet, Aug. 7, 1783; Revolutionary Manuscripts (Misc.), Folder 16, New York State Library at Albany; Supreme Court Judicature Minutes, 1704-1787, 9132, pp. 484-85, 9133, pp. 5-6, 8, 104-105, 183-84, 211-12, 294, 487, 490-91, 493-97, 499, 501, 503, 547, New York County Clerk's Office, Parchment Records Division; a microfilm copy of the Supreme Court Minutes are at Queens College Historical Documents Collection, Reels, SC1 to SC8.

¹⁷Flick, Loyalism, pp. 136, 138, 148-50; Jones, History, II, p. 528; Laws, 3rd session, Oct. 22, 1779, Chapter 38.

¹⁸Rivington's, October 29, 1783; Onderdonk, Documents, p. 250; also see note 16.

¹⁹Flick, Loyalism, pp. 155-156; see Table 50.

²⁰New York Revolutionary War Mss, XLVI, p. 9, New York State Library at Albany.

²¹Abstract of Sales by the Commissioners of Forfeiture of the Southern District, 1784-1787, of Forfeited Estates in New York City, Long Island, Staten Island, and Westchester County, pp. 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 67; Jones, History, I, p. lxxviii; "Correspondence of Major Kissam," p. 81; Laws, 13th session, Feb. 20, 1790, Chapter 10.

²²Laws, 7th session, May 8, 1784, Chapter 58; Jones, History, II, p. 249, "Queens County Supervisors Book [1709-1787]," MS, Museum of the City of New York; for 1784 tax rolls, see Appendix A, n.7.

²³Laws, 7th session, May 12, 1784, Chapter 66.

²⁴Ibid., Flick, Loyalism, pp. 163-64; Jones, History, II, pp. 248-49.

²⁵See Table 30.

²⁶New York Packet, Feb. 20, 1786; Onderdonk, Queens County in Olden Times, p. 69.

²⁷Laws, 6th session, Mar. 17, 1783, Chapter XXXI.

²⁸"An Act to amend an Act entitled, An Act for relief against absconding and absent debtors; and to extend the remedy of the Act, entitled An Act for granting a more effectual relief in cases of certain trespass; and for other purposes therein mentioned," Laws, 7th session, May 4, 1784, Chapter 54.

²⁹Onderdonk, Documents, Second Series, p. 65; for a partial listing of trespass cases, see: ibid., pp. 63-65; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 258-59; also see: Minutes of the Court of General Sessions of the Peace and also of Common Pleas, 1722-1787 and the miscellaneous bundles of court papers at Queens County Clerk's Office; Revolutionary Manuscripts (Misc.), Folder 16, New York State Library at Albany; [New York] Independent Journal, June 2, 1784; there are also several trespass cases in New York Mayor's Court Papers after 1775, Queens College Historical Documents Collection.

³⁰Onderdonk, Documents, Second Series, p. 68; Onderdonk, Roslyn and North Hempstead in Olden Times, p. 5; James Townsend to Samuel Townsend, Apr. 8, 1783, Revolutionary War Folder, Huntington Town Historian.

³¹Independent New York Gazette, Dec. 13, 1783.

³²Sparks, Correspondence of the American Revolution, IV, pp. 47-48; Independent New York Gazette, Dec. 1, 1783; Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 253-54.

³³Jack P. Green, "An Uneasy Connection: An Analysis of the Preconditions of the American Revolution," in Kurtz, Hutson, eds., Essays on the American Revolution, pp. 34-39; Laws, 3rd session, Oct. 23, 1779, Chapter 28.

³⁴Rivington's, Nov. 26, 1782; [New York] Independent Journal, Nov. 24, 1783, Dec. 1, 1783; Independent New York Gazette, Nov. 22, 1783, Dec. 13, 1783, December 20, 1783.

³⁵[New York] Independent Journal, Dec. 15, 1783; Rivington's, Dec. 3, 1783; Independent New York Gazette, Dec. 13, 1783.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY AND THE TRIUMPH OF MODERATION

Before the Declaration of Independence, Queens County residents had not been in the vanguard of the patriot movement. If the county had been representative of the thirteen colonies, there would not have been an American Revolution in 1776. Questions of imperial control were abstruse matters which most Queens farmers did not see as directly affecting their daily lives. Until December 1774 inhabitants maintained a cautious silence and preferred a peaceful resolution of the conflict before disturbances spread to their county.

Events occurring outside the five towns forced county residents to take sides. When they did, the configuration of the Whig and Tory factions mirrored already existing divisions over local issues within the communities. The American Revolution in Queens was as much a civil war as a colonial movement for independence. The patriot cause attracted people who believed they were suffering under long-standing grievances. Alleged injustices had sensitized these inhabitants to the ideology of the Revolution. Tories who defended the existing political order within the colonies were also supporting the status quo within their own communities.

Residents not only understood the War for Independence in terms of their own community problems, but the animosities that existed imparted vitality and momentum to the struggle between the king and his subjects. In Oyster Bay where there was little political dissension, there was also a noticeable lack of support for or activities in favor of either the Whigs or the Tories. Partisans did not have the analogs necessary to dramatize their stand and incite action.

Although a majority of county inhabitants were not won over by either faction's rhetoric, the struggle for home rule was not unintelligible to them. They also perceived the conflict in terms of their community experiences. While they may have sympathized with the aggrieved Whigs or understood the Tory abhorrence of rebellion, uncommitted men's loyalty rested with their families and their farms. What these residents demanded was a constitutional government with the legitimacy necessary to maintain order and stability. Because colonial New York's population was so heterogeneous, political institutions and social cohesion were fragile. Most inhabitants believed that the debate with the mother country would lead only to anarchy.

By 1776 the uncommitted had tacitly aligned with Great Britain. The lawlessness of the patriots, loyalist propaganda which stressed the exigency of a constitutional remedy, the arms shipments made by the Asia, and the sagaciousness of royal officials in promoting their cause

all combined to convince uncommitted inhabitants not only that the king would ultimately triumph, but that order and a government of laws depended upon British success. The intervention of provincial and continental authorities during 1776 did not reverse the situation. Instead, the Whig infringement of inhabitants' political rights cemented the alliance between the uncommitted and the loyalists.

Although inhabitants expected that the re-establishment of British authority in New York would signal the restoration of order, the years of occupation between 1776 and 1783 were more vexatious than the brief interlude of patriot domination. The Howes had planned to make southern New York a model of good government; but British commanders never succeeded in implementing this policy. The army's excessive requisitioning of supplies, the arrogance and rapaciousness of British officials, and the climate of violence existing during this period tested almost every resident's commitment to the crown.

In the years 1780-1781 the question of civil government became the single most important issue in Queens. Residents had accepted the propriety of martial law in the immediate aftermath of the Battle of Long Island. When military rule did not end and when it became the mainspring for the disorders plaguing the county during these years, people became restive. News that the crown would permit the re-establishment of civil government preceded the arrival of the newly appointed governor, General James Robertson, in

1780. But Robertson did not intend to restore civil government, and, instead, he instituted a Court of Police on Long Island. Although at the time there was some expectation in Queens that the court's creation was a movement in the proper direction, events demonstrated that it only increased the incidence of abuses and expanded the army's power.

Once this fact became apparent, estrangement between the population and the British was complete. The factors which had at first persuaded the uncommitted to side with the king now compelled them to reject the English government as arbitrary and tyrannical. The army had not only lost the war on the battlefield, but it had also alienated those who had been most receptive to continued royal rule. The British had blundered in ignoring the demands for an orderly and stable government. The ordeal of the occupation had transformed the political outlook of the uncommitted and had led to their genuine acceptance of the Revolution's ideology.

Once this juncture had been reached, the actions of New York State's government became crucial. If after the British evacuation, the state had employed the tactics of the Whigs in 1776 or of royal officials from 1776 to 1783, dissension would have followed. Although the plight of Tory refugees and the treatment of loyalists are important aspects of post-war history, the key development in this period was the reconciliation of factions that had recently been at war and the emergence of a state-wide consensus in favor of the republican experiment in government. The rapid re-establishment

of civil government in Queens, the participation of the county in state elections, and the existence of an effective government which allowed for a moderate and legal resolution of problems growing out of the war secured the triumph of the Revolution in Queens and the stability necessary for building a new nation.

Most historians of the Revolution in New York have simply stated that the county was a Tory stronghold and left the matter there. The events of 1775 appear to confirm this interpretation, but the situation was much more complex. The uncommitted were loyal only in the sense that they supported the crown as long as such a position furthered their own aims. When the British encroached upon their rights, the bonds tying them to the crown dissolved. In the long years of occupation, an experience not endured by many other Americans, county residents forged their commitment to the new nation.

The ordeal of county inhabitants throughout the War for Independence illuminates an important segment of New York State's Revolutionary history. The fact that so many residents were uncommitted helps explain why the province was not in the forefront of the movement against the king. At the same time, it is hazardous to draw generalizations from Queens County concerning either the response of New York or of all thirteen colonies to the Revolution. In many ways, the county, like the province, was unique.

The important comparative perspective is that the War for Independence in Queens was also a civil war. The issue debated in Hempstead may have been different from that in Jamaica, but the existence of such disputes was not peculiar to the county. Alice P. Kenney in a study of the Albany Dutch has shown that "endemic" antagonisms influenced the loyalty of individuals during the Revolution. Ethnic divisions, for example, played a part in Schenectady and Kinderhook; on the manors there was tenant antagonism toward patriot landowners; and in the City of Albany the old inhabitants opposed a newer group of British merchants who became loyalists. Staughton Lynd has found that in Dutchess County "the same economic groups, to a striking extent the same leaders, confronted each other in the tenants' risings of 1766, [and] in the struggle during the Revolution over the confiscation and sale of Loyalist lands. . . ."1

Provincial New York was distinct from the other colonies in that it was marked by political factionalism, a heterogeneous population, and a lack of social cohesion. These factors shaped the colony's development and influenced its response to the Revolution. Queens County fits into this larger pattern, and the uniqueness of Queens was part of the uniqueness of New York.

FOOTNOTE

¹Kenney, "The Albany Dutch: Loyalists and Patriots," pp. 331-50; Lynd, Anti-Federalism in Dutchess County, p. 4; in New Jersey's Hackensack Valley the bloody battles between patriots and loyalists were an outgrowth of animosities between pre-war ethnic groups, political rivals, and churches: Adrian C. Leiby, The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley: The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground, 1775-1783, New Brunswick, N.J., 1962.

APPENDIX A

THE COLLECTIVE BIOGRAPHY

The 1771 census placed the county's population at 10,980 with 3,033 males over sixteen years of age. No complete list of inhabitants exists for this period, and the names and biographical data of persons included within this study were obtained from extant records.¹ All white males over sixteen years of age who were residents of the county on January 1, 1776 were studied.² Three thousand seventy-four persons were found. Since the population was stable, the collective biography is coextensive with the adult male population. The survey did not include blacks and females, because there was insufficient evidence to study their attitudes and activities.

The collective biography includes information on each member's town of residence, religion, date of birth and death, wealth, family kinship, office holding, occupation, military service, and activities before, during, and after the war. In some categories there was not enough data collected to permit quantification. It was impossible, for example, to determine accurately which individuals were engaged in non-agricultural occupations in 1776. Although evidence of this nature would have been useful, the fact

remains that most inhabitants were farmers, and when they pursued another occupation, they usually combined it with agriculture. While there was adequate evidence in most categories to draw conclusions, certain qualifications and information about the data must be mentioned.

A resident is defined as a Whig or Tory, if he publicly declared himself by word or act to be a member of either group. Both sides published in 1775 voting lists and declarations with the names of their supporters. A patriot did at least one of the following: voted in April 1775 at Jamaica, Newtown, or Oyster Bay or in November 1775 at the county election in favor of sending deputies to the Provincial Congress; joined the Jamaica Minuteman in 1775;³ served as a committeeman, a delegate to the Provincial or Continental Congress, or as an officer in the Whig militia;⁴ or signed the patriot Association at Cow Neck, north Hempstead in January 1776. Since the record of the signers of the patriot Association at Cow Neck has been partially destroyed and is incomplete, a list of north Hempstead patriots, compiled by the British in January 1777, has been accepted as evidence that an individual was a patriot.⁵

A Tory did at least one of the following: voted in April 1775 at Jamaica or in November 1775 in the county election against sending delegates to the Provincial Congress; or signed a declaration at Jamaica or Newtown in January 1775 in support of the loyalist cause. There is a problem with this definition of loyalism. Many Tory leaders who were

organizing the loyalist opposition in Queens County did not vote or sign declarations. Personal safety was probably their motive. To include these people, an individual was listed as a Tory if he was: named as a principal or leading loyalist by the Whigs; arrested or ordered to be arrested by the Provincial or Continental Congress; declared himself to have been a Tory leader in Queens in a memorial to the British government after the war;⁶ took actions in 1775 or 1776 which were in support of the king.

If an individual fit the definition of both Whig and Tory, he was placed in a third classification of mixed allegiance. Twenty-seven persons (0.9 percent of the survey) fell into this class. Some of these people opposed Great Britain, but later changed their position. A few may have been opportunists. For others there is no known reason for their actions. The insignificant number of people in this class demonstrates the solidity of the Whig and Tory factions.

Every inhabitant had at least one opportunity to state whether he was a patriot or a loyalist. Comparison of an April 1775 list of Jamaica freeholders with the names of town residents who voted in November 1775 indicates that the county vote was not limited to freeholders but was open to all inhabitants. In areas, like Jamaica, where Whigs and Tories debated bitterly, people were asked on more than one occasion to support or oppose the mother country. For the most part, the same people are found on the different lists. The fact that in some towns residents had only the November

vote to register their views does not appreciably alter the conclusions drawn concerning patriot and loyalist strength. South Hempstead inhabitants had only one such opportunity, but the area had a larger percentage of Tories than any other part of the county.

The fact that there were no published voting lists or declarations for Flushing and only one for Oyster Bay and the fact that inhabitants in other towns did not vote or sign declarations were by design, not accident. These people were uncommitted in 1775 to either side and wished to be left in peace. Their silence was a statement of their position. People who do not fit into the Whig, Tory, or mixed allegiance classifications have been defined as uncommitted. Had they felt strongly about loyalism or patriotism, they would have declared their sympathies as the Oyster Bay Whigs did in April 1775.

An attempt has also been made, using county land records, to ascertain inhabitants' landed wealth as of January 1776. After much trial and error, this approach was rejected as unworkable. Estimates of wealth in this study are based on 1784 tax records.⁷ While the rate lists give inhabitants' real and personal wealth, there are limitations to using these records. Not everyone is rated, and the wealth of an individual was almost certainly not the same in 1784 as it had been in 1776. Although the economic position of some individuals may have changed drastically and suddenly because of wartime conditions, most individuals

remained in relatively the same status vis-a-vis the rest of the community. There is no evidence of extreme economic mobility during this eight-year period. Broad wealth classifications have been used--£0 to £100, £101 to £500, £501 to £1000, £1001 and above--so that small variations in individuals' wealth during this period would not negate conclusions concerning relationships between wealth and loyalty.

The 1784 tax lists do not include Whigs who fled Queens after the Battle of Long Island and remained within patriot lines until March 1783 or Tories whose estates were confiscated. In certain cases the wealth of these individuals can be found in the records of confiscation by New York State or from the records of the British Loyalist Commission, and when this was the case, the data were added to the collective biography. The tax lists do include estimates of the estates of deceased individuals. These assessments were not included for they give values to what remained of a person's estate rather than his wealth when alive. The 1784 lists also include valuations of the Queens County real property of Tory refugees. These data were also excluded.

The information on office holding does not include individuals who held town offices in Flushing for the Flushing town records were destroyed by fire in the seventeen-nineties. When data are missing for another town for a particular year, this fact is mentioned in the appropriate table. The tables on office holding include only those individuals who are part of the collective biography. An

individual, for example, who held office in 1771 but who died in 1773 has not been included in the calculations; nor was a person studied who was not of age in 1776 or who moved into the county after the war.

Although all town office holders were studied, the text and tables make particular use of what has been termed important or major office holders. Major offices, based on the fact that they entailed greater responsibilities, were supervisor, constable, collector, assessor, clerk, overseer of the poor, and a person assigned a special office or duty by a particular town meeting. Persons who held these offices provide a better indication of what was happening in a given town than do poundkeepers, fence viewers, and overseers of highways.

In attempting to reconstruct the lives of so many individuals, the possibility of error always has to be considered. The chance is greater when there was more than one individual of the same name in a community. People of the time very often solved the problem by distinguishing such individuals by their age or place of residence within the community. In some cases it was still impossible, for example, to tell which John Smith was the Whig and which the Tory. When this happened, the collective biography notes only that there were two John Smiths in the community in January 1776, one a patriot and one a loyalist. Other biographical data were omitted. In every case where there was doubt, the information was excluded.

FOOTNOTES

¹For a listing of the sources used to compile the collective biography, see the bibliography. A limited number of standard county genealogies were used, and these are also in the bibliography.

²Four non-residents were included in the survey, because they lived in Queens in 1775 and played a significant or at least visible role during this period.

³The fact that an inhabitant served in a Whig militia unit is not proof that he was a patriot; the Jamaica Minute-men are an exception to this rule.

⁴A Whig who served in one of these capacities has been considered a member of the Whig leadership.

⁵These two lists of north Hempstead Whigs can be found in: Onderdonk, Documents, pp. 30-31; Stoutenburgh, A Documentary History of the Dutch Congregation of Oyster Bay, pp. 779-80.

⁶A loyalist in one of the above three classifications is considered part of the Tory leadership.

⁷Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp., "Copy of the Rate List of Jamaica for the £100,000 Rate (1784 and 1788)," (Brooklyn, 1940), (Typewritten, Manuscript File, Long Island Historical Society); Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp. "Tax Bill for Raising £2466.12.0 in The Township of Flushing (1784-1788)," (Brooklyn, 1940), (Typewritten, Manuscript File, L.I.H.S.); Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp., "A Copy of the Tax List for Raising £3524.18 Within the Township of Oyster Bay," (Brooklyn, 1940), (Typewritten, Manuscript File, L.I.H.S.); Arthur Soper Wardwell, comp., "Annotated Hempstead, North Hempstead, and South Hempstead Tax Lists," (Brooklyn, 1940), (Typewritten, Manuscript File, L.I.H.S.); Henry Onderdonk, Jr., comp., "Tax Lists of Oyster Bay, Hempstead, North Hempstead, Flushing, Jamaica, and Newtown, 1784," MS, L.I.H.S.; "Newtown, Queens County Tax List [1784]," MS, N.Y.H.S.

APPENDIX B

ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF TORY REFUGEES

There is evidence that 55.6 percent (1709) of the individuals surveyed in this study were living in Queens in 1784 or had died by that date.¹ Another 3.2 percent (99) had become Tory refugees, and 41.2 percent (1266) of the surveyed residents are unaccounted for in 1784. Although most of the evidence for those who were present is based on the 1784 tax rolls, it can not be assumed that individuals unaccounted for had fled. The tax legislation required that the assessment rolls specify "the residents [living] in the town, manor, district, or precinct, and the residents [living] in the county, and not within the town, manor, district, or precinct; and also such as are not residents of either." If a person became a refugee and had not sold his land, he would appear on the tax rolls as a non-resident land owner. The value of Archibald Hamilton's land, for example, is on the Flushing rolls. Because an individual is listed as a non-resident, it does not necessarily mean that he was a refugee. He may have been a land speculator, or a former county resident who departed for reasons other than loyalty to Great Britain.

If the 1266 individuals who are unaccounted for

became refugees, they should fall into one of three classes: they conveyed their land to another person; they were landless inhabitants; or they left their land in the charge of another member of their family. Some individuals did manage to sell their land, but if many people did, the sales were rarely recorded. There probably was not a good market for such property because the grantor may have been attainted or indicted for treason under the 1779 act or subject to court suits for actions he committed while Great Britain was in possession of Long Island. If a large number of landless inhabitants became refugees, it raises the possibility that loyalty to the king and fear of Whig reprisals were not the chief motives for fleeing. Land hunger may have been an important cause of the migration. An interesting possibility is that an individual left his land in the charge of another family member. This gave him the alternatives of remaining in Canada and selling his land at a more opportune time or of returning to Queens County if the situation changed. If this was the case, political stability was more important to these people than loyalty to the crown, and it explains why so many refugees returned to Queens County.

Some of the people unaccounted for certainly fall into one of the three above categories, but there is no reason to believe that a large number of them did. It would be difficult to explain why 39.4 percent of all Whigs felt it necessary to flee and why a greater proportion of uncommitted inhabitants (47.7 percent) became refugees than did

Tories (39.4 percent).² It is more reasonable to assume that information is lacking for these persons because the records of the period are inadequate. The problem then is to determine what percentage of these people became refugees.

If it is assumed that persons unaccounted for acted in the same manner as individuals for whom there is data, then 5.5 percent of the collective biography became Tory refugees. This figure would represent the minimum number that fled because the calculations are biased in favor of those for whom there is information. It is, of course, more difficult to collect data on migrant individuals than on individuals who had remained in a given place. Therefore, there may have been a higher percentage of refugees among those for whom there is no data than among those for whom there is.

If 5.5 percent is the minimum, it is also necessary to develop a maximum estimate. If it is assumed that patriots had no reason to flee, and that patriots who are unaccounted for most probably acted in the same manner as Whigs for whom there is evidence, then 0.8 percent fled, 60.6 percent remained and can be accounted for, and 38.5 percent remained but can not be accounted for. It could then be argued that 38.5 percent of all uncommitted inhabitants also remained but could not be counted because of inadequacies in the records. This would mean that 9.2 percent of all uncommitted residents became refugees. Since only 4.6 percent of all uncommitted inhabitants whose residences are known in 1784

became refugees, 9.2 percent is not an unrealistic estimate. Since the purpose is to estimate the maximum percentage that left Queens County, let it be assumed that all inhabitants who are unaccounted for and who were either Tories or of mixed allegiance also became loyalist refugees. Then a maximum of 18.1 percent of the collective biography became loyalist refugees.

While these figures must remain tentative, they are the best estimates possible from the existing evidence. If the further assumption is made that the collective biography is representative of the county population in 1784, then the same estimates also apply to the entire population.

FOOTNOTES

¹Since the purpose is to estimate the number of individuals who became refugees, persons who left Queens County for reasons unrelated to loyalty are included in this data.

²These percentages were obtained by assuming that all individuals unaccounted for became refugees.

APPENDIX C

RETURNS OF DERELICT PROPERTY IN QUEENS COUNTY ASSIGNED
BY HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT GENERAL ROBERTSON FOR
THE RELIEF OF LOYAL SUBJECTS DRIVEN FROM
THEIR HABITATIONS BY THE REBELS [1783?]

Refugee ^a	Property Assigned		Proprietors
	Rooms	Acres	
Jesse Hoit	4	100	Gilbert Jones
John Peters	1	30	John Firman
Adam Seaman	-	10	John Firman
Christian Tobias	2	80	Richard Jackson
Moses Shaw	2	7	Mervin Rowland
Archelaus Carpenter	2	8	Benjamin Coles
John Nichols	-	20	Isaac Baldwin
Isaac Close	2	40	Philip and Sylvanus Pine
Rufus Green	-	40	Philip and Sylvanus Pine
Benjamin Close	2	40	Philip and Sylvanus Pine
Griffin Cory	-	40	Philip and Sylvanus Pine
Reuben Chase	2	30	Benjamin Valentine
Jacob Russel	3	30	Fordham Burtis
John Bates	3	50	Jacob Forster
Matthias Cook	2	10	Richard Cornell
Thomas Gilbert	-	30	Richard Cornell
Joshua Burt	1	40	Edward Hicks
Benjamin Burt	1	40	Edward Hicks

DERELICT PROPERTY ASSIGNED TO LOYALIST REFUGEES (Continued)

David Burt	1	40	Edward Hicks
John Golder	2	40	Uriah Mitchell
John Stanford	3	50	Joshua Carman
Samuel Okerson	2	30	Joshua Carman
Jonathan Morehouse	-	25	Joshua Carman
Joshua Tongue	-	25	Joshua Carman
William Blizard	-	22	Joshua Carman
Joseph Smith	-	22	Joshua Carman
Jeremiah Smith	-	16	Joshua Carman
John Olmsted	-	30	Joshua Carman
James Moorehouse	1	30	Benjamin Sands
Hezekiah Smith	1	30	Benjamin Sands
John Strachan	3	40	Benjamin Flower
Freeman Smith	2	20	James Baker
Thomas Merrit	1	23	Andrew Skidmore
Coartlandt Skinner	6	50	Abraham Kiteltas
Richard Reading	2	50	Saml Melanthon and Israel Smith
Lawrence Johnson	-	50	Israel Smith
Malcolm Morrison	3	40	Nehemiah Everitt
John Anderson	2	30	John Scidmore
Jacob Ferdon	2	30	John Scidmore
Joseph Mercer	-	10	John Scidmore
Th Robblee	1	17	Obadiah Smith
Andrew Ritchie	3	18	Jonathan Thurston

DERELICT PROPERTY ASSIGNED TO LOYALIST REFUGEES (Continued)

Daniel Bobbitt	1	25	Samuel Denton
Anthony Terrill	1	5	Jno, Jas, and Mary Seabury
Thomas Barker	3	50	Devisees, Widow Willomes
John Williamson	1	20	Devisees, Widow Willomes
Philip Kearney	4	70	Nathaniel TOM
Stephen DeLancey	4	150	Thomas Rodman
Jeremiah Fowler	2	30	Francis Lewis
Robt Merritt	1	30	Francis Lewis
Frederick Williams	1	30	Francis Lewis
James Hart	1	30	Francis Lewis
Ezekiel Griffin	-	30	Francis Lewis
Moses Knap	-	20	Francis Lewis
John Washburn	-	30	John Van Loo
Joshua Whitney	2	40	Jonathan Wright
Silas Belding	2	40	Jonathan Wright
Caleb Green	1	20	Jonathan Wright
John Holdsworth	1	50	Philip Edsall
Sarah Grant	3	50	Philip Edsall
Isaac Horton	-	50	Philip Edsall
Amos Partellow	-	25	Philip Edsall
Cornelius and Th Hyatt	-	50	Philip Edsall
John Low	2	4	John Culver
Nathaniel Underhill	2	30	Jonah Hallett
Noah Bishop	2	30	Jonah Hallett

DERELICT PROPERTY ASSIGNED TO LOYALIST REFUGEES (Continued)

Will Bliss	3	40	Samuel Morrell
Sarah McNeal	2	30	Alexander Waley
Sarah Grant	3	60	Benjamin Coe
Frederick Myers	-	10	Benjamin Coe
Will Briggs	1	50	Devises, Rem Remsen
Garrett Boskirk	1	50	Devises, Rem Remsen
Giddeon Ware	1	3	Devises, Rem Remsen
Simon Hagler	2	40	Luke Remsen
Stephen Horton	2	13	Simeon Horton
Thomas Bearran	3	5	Gabriel Smith
Mordecai Lester	1	15	Widow Waldron
Jacob Lester	1	15	Widow Waldron
John Pomeroy	2	8	Lambert Woodward
Daniel Brown	1	15	Samuel Hallet
Jacob Wright	2	20	Samuel Hallet
John Sloote	-	10	Daniel Lawrence
Philip J. Livingston	4	70	Jonathan Lawrence
John Cole	-	10	Jonathan Lawrence
Joshua Gidney	2	35	Maurice Hazard
Benjamin Anderson	2	3	Asher Devine
Mary Sweeten	2	20	Heirs, Jonathan Fish
Thomas Sumner	1	20	David Springsted

TOTAL NO. OF ACRES 2,807^b

Notes.

Source: British Headquarters Papers, Document No. 9733,

N.Y.P.L.; Transcript of Various Papers relating to the Losses, Services, and Support of the American Loyalists, VIII, pp. 559-572.

^aTotal number of refugees aided: 468 men, women, and children.

^bAt least another 185 acres were assigned to British subjects who were not refugees.

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