

American Colonies, 1689-1722." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1965.

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ROBERT HUNTER (1666-1734), born in Edinburgh, Scotland, was the son of a lawyer and the grandson of the laird of Hunterston. He seems to have been well educated, for his correspondence shows a familiarity with Latin, Spanish and French as well as an unusual felicity in English. He received his first commission in the army in 1689 and for nearly twenty years pursued a military career, serving under the first duke of Marlborough in the War of the Spanish Succession (in America called Queen Anne's War). Though he fought at Blenheim and Ramillies and reached the rank of colonel, he had neither a regiment of his own nor the large patronage which that position often gave.

Having quarreled with Marlborough, Hunter successfully moved into the nascent colonial service by wangling the lieutenant governorship of Virginia. His means of access to the source of political appointments is obscure, but it is likely that the initial link was through his literary friends, who often doubled as courtiers and civil servants. Among them were Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Dr. John Arbuthnot, the Queen's physician. En route to Virginia in 1707, Hunter was captured by the French, and he spent nearly two years in France in what was reportedly a socially dazzling captivity. Exchanged in 1709 (though not for the bishop of Quebec, as is customarily reported), Hunter was appointed governor of New York and New Jersey. He arrived in New York in June 1710.

Each of the two provinces offered grave dangers to a royal governor. New York, a

frontier outpost in the long wars between Great Britain and France, lived in constant dread of Indian attack. (Only twenty years before, the town of Schenectady had been destroyed.) As though that were not enough, a long series of corrupt governors had driven the colonists to the point of refusing to raise taxes unless the elective assembly controlled the returns, which meant, in effect, controlling the local government. New Jersey had internal rather than external problems, but they were much more virulent: the province, only recently taken over by the crown, was disrupted by disputing proprietors.

In 1664 James, duke of York, had given New Jersey to two cronies, John, Lord Berkeley, and Sir George Carteret. Ten years later, Berkeley had sold his interest (the western) to the Quakers John Fenwick and Edward Byllynge, beginning a pattern of fragmentation that after thirty years had left each half with dozens of proprietors—a "muddle of perplexity." At Hunter's arrival, there were two sets of contending proprietors. Colonel Daniel Coxe, the son of Governor Daniel Coxe; Jeremiah Basse, who had been governor of the colony between 1697 and 1699; Peter Sonmans; Hugh Huddy; Richard Townley, and William Hall formed one group. They were outspoken in their high-church Anglicanism, though in an age when religion and politics were almost interchangeable they probably had no religious motives per se but used religion as a stalking horse. They had been protected and rewarded by the egregious Lord Cornbury, the first royal governor of New Jersey. The other group was led by Lewis Morris, Thomas Gordon, George Willocks, John Johnstone, Thomas Farmer and Thomas Gardiner. Some of them, Quakers, owned shares bought from the older Coxe's receivers. The younger Coxe made a claim to the property, which if successful would ruin many of these men, for bankruptcy could easily mean life in prison. To add to the confusion, each side had support from pro-

prietors who lived in England: Edward Richier and Paul Doeminique supported the Morris faction (called by Hunter the "country party"), and William Dockwra supported the Coxe group.

When Hunter arrived in New Jersey, he found members of the Coxe party happily ensconced in the provincial council, the upper house of the legislature, where they could refuse to pass laws unfavorable to themselves (for example, a law that would permit Quakers to affirm rather than take oaths to serve on juries) and where they could act as the colony's supreme court. Queen Anne's reign was politically unstable, and when a new faction came into power in London it displaced its rivals' appointees in the colonial service. Consequently, new governors came prepared to believe the worst about their predecessors and to discover evidence of it to disgrace them and embarrass their political supporters in England. In 1711 Hunter, whether to pursue such a plan, or to retaliate for Peter Sonmans's attack on him in an election poll of 1710, or, as he himself said, to stop the obstructionism that plagued the government, began calling for the ouster of the Coxe group from the council. His Whig patrons had fallen from power in London in 1710, however, and their Tory successors were not especially inclined to please him. Not until 1713, after Doeminique and Richier pressured the Board of Trade, did the London administration remove Coxe, Sonmans and their cohorts from the council and replace them with members of the country party. In the interim, Hunter dealt with the Coxe party by moving to eliminate it from local judgeships and by failing to call any meetings of the legislature. When the legislature met in 1713, it passed a spate of bills. Some of these were designed to relieve the Quakers by permitting them to serve on juries and to hold local offices such as tax assessor and collector. Other bills made reforms in the court system, and one established a new county named in honor of the governor: Hunterdon.

Coxe and his men tried to regain power in 1715 and 1716 through the assembly elections; Coxe was named speaker, but Hunter, in no mood to be conciliatory or patient, repeatedly dissolved the assembly and called for new elections until the Quaker or country party had 50 percent of the seats. Coxe and his party boycotted the meeting of the legislature, but Hunter informed the remainder that they had a quorum, and the Quakers gleefully expelled the Coxe faction for nonattendance. Coxe fled to Pennsylvania and then to England, returning after Hunter's departure to play a prominent though less controversial role in the colony.

Hunter did not limit his interests to politics in New Jersey. He owned extensive property: more than one house in Perth Amboy, 500 acres along the Raritan River and on Burlington Island. He urged the establishment of an Anglican episcopate in America, with the cathedral church at Burlington and his old friend Jonathan Swift as the first bishop. In 1715 he recommended that the home government permit minting of copper coins from local mines to relieve the currency shortage that hurt the small farmers. The crown accepted neither of these suggestions, though both were consistent with Hunter's philosophy that "the true Interests of the People and the Government are the same, I mean A Government of Laws. No other deserves the Name, and are never Separated or Separable but in Imagination by Men of Craft."

Sick, and worried about political enemies who were traveling to London to try to replace him, Hunter left New York and New Jersey in 1719. The following year he exchanged positions with William Burnet, the comptroller of the customs. In 1727 he was appointed governor of Jamaica, where he died in 1734.

A tall, vigorous and personable man who was literary as well as literate, Hunter wrote the first published play in America, an astonishingly ribald political satire on New York entitled *Androboros*.

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James Edward Scanlon



WILLIAM BURNET (1687-September 7, 1729), who governed New York and New Jersey from 1720 until 1728, was born in the Netherlands, at the Hague. His father, Gilbert Burnet, who became the bishop of Salisbury, had been a chaplain to Charles II, but he was one of the first English subjects to transfer his allegiance from James II to William and Mary. Gilbert Burnet had gone to the Netherlands to pay court to William, and, while there, had married his second wife, Mary Scott, a wealthy Dutchwoman of Scottish extraction. Young William Burnet was named for his godfather, the man who became king of England in 1689. After the Glorious Revolution, Gilbert's fortunes waxed and waned with the rise and ebb of the Whigs, but in general the family held a privileged position because of its leading role in the events of 1688-89. William developed into a personable but hot-headed young man. Though he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of thirteen, he was expelled for laziness and disobedience. He was, however, privileged in having Sir Isaac Newton tutor him for a time.

As an adult he reportedly continued to be personable and hot-tempered, but he also displayed an active intellectual curiosity. His younger brother, Gilbert, concluded that William's curiosity was undisciplined and essentially frivolous. When informed that William was writing a book, Gilbert told him that he feared the book would make him a subject of derision. Nonetheless, William wrote the book, *An Essay on Scripture Prophecy, Wherein it is Endeavoured to Explain the three periods Contain'd in the Xii Chapter of the Prophet Daniel With some Arguments to make it Probable that the FIRST of the PERIODS did Expire in the Year 1715*. It was published anonymously in New York in 1724, and one of William's brothers-in-law suggested that he might have done better to spend his time at backgammon.

Burnet obtained the dual governorship of New York and New Jersey in 1720 by trading his post as comptroller of the customs with his friend Robert Hunter, who in 1719 had returned to England. Since Hunter and Burnet both had strong Whig connections the trade was easy to arrange. Burnet, whose first wife had died in 1717 and left him with a two-year-old son, willingly accepted the inconvenience of living in the colonies because he hoped the governorship would prove more lucrative than his post at the customs. He needed money because his heavy investment in the South Sea Company was rapidly depreciated after 1720. Through most of his term as governor, until the death of George I in 1727, he had few worries about opposition at home. Whatever problems he encountered originated in the colonies.

In both New York and New Jersey Burnet relied heavily on the advice of Lewis Morris and James Alexander, who had been principal advisors to Governor Hunter. In New Jersey both men were closely allied with the main proprietary interests, and Burnet, throughout his term, tended to favor legislation designed to protect or enhance proprietary claims. This meant that the landholders who