

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

defiance, avowed resistance and open violence, every friend of his country, every friend to Peace order and good Government will ardently wish that some prudent measure of accommodation, worthy a grateful and loyal People, may be proposed worthy the dignity and wisdom of our Parent State to attend to. Then may we hope that every black Cloud which now hangs over the Colonies, will be dispersed; that past Offences will be no more remembered, but joy be seen in every face, content be felt in every heart; that the Sceptre of Great Britain will continue to be held over the Colonies for their protection and security, and not like a Rod of Correction for the Punishment of Offences; that the Inhabitants of the Colonies convinced of their happiness as subjects of a Monarch whose Gracious Language to his People is, that he has, that he can have no interest separate from the Interest of his subjects, will therefore vie with each other in every testimony of active Loyalty where it is so justly due. I will conclude Gentlemen with my fervent Wish that all the subjects of the Dominion, convinced of the necessity of an happy union, May be of one heart and one mind to contribute to the Support of our Excellent Constitution, and that it may long, very long, continue, the uninterrupted source of good Government, good Laws, Liberty, Peace and Plenty to all without distinction, who are intitled to the Blessings of that Constitution.

1. The "Coercive Acts" directed toward Massachusetts, which were passed by Parliament in the spring of 1774 as a result of the Boston Tea Party.
2. The popular meetings called to endorse the action of the Continental Congress and implement the Association during the winter of 1774-1775.
3. Ten county committees were operative by April 1775; there is no evidence of such organizations in Bergen, Cape May, and Sussex Counties.

11 Elias Boudinot to the Morris County Committee

[Edwin A. Ely Collection, New Jersey Historical Society. The manuscript is a rough draft; I have incorporated interlinear and marginal additions and revisions into the text as was the author's intent. The document is not signed, but is in Elias Boudinot's hand.]

In the spring of 1775 Elias Boudinot, Elizabethtown lawyer, stood among the leaders of opposition to Great Britain in New Jersey. A strong Whig, a wealthy and respected member of his community, and the possessor of a prudent political sense, Boudinot played an important role in shaping the course of the resistance movement. It was in part because Boudinot and the other popular leaders were not radicals and were willing to counsel moderation that

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the popular front enjoyed such wide support in the province. In advising the Morris County committee, Boudinot, speaking for the Essex committee, follows a cardinal tenet of political organization: never risk unnecessarily alienating persons whose positions are not yet firm.

Sunday Evening April 30 1775

Gentl[emen]:

We have been much surprized, by an Information just received from a Mr. Morrell¹ of Chatham given to his Brother of this Town, that there is a determination of a considerable number of your County, to raise a Liberty Pole at Chatham to morrow and from thence they are to proceed to Mr. Thomas Eckley's² where it is supposed they intend to offer Violence to his Person on account of some imprudent Expressions said to be inimical to the Liberties of this Country; and that this determination is in Consequence of an Example said to be set by our People here, with regard to Dr. Chandler.³

Deeply impressed therefore with a sense of the unhappy Consequences that must necessarily attend a Proceeding of this kind with regard to our Common Cause, we are at the Trouble & Expence of an Express to you on this occasion, beseeching you immediately to exert your selves to prevent a Measure that if adopted by the friends of Liberty will be such a Stain to our Characters as Men & Christians, that it may in the End deter every good Man from joining with us. It is our honor that while we are engaged in so glorious a Struggle for what is more dear to us than Life, that even our very Enemies in the midst of us enjoy that Peace & Liberty which we so ardently wish for ourselves.

As to the Precedent alledged to be drawn from our Example respecting Dr. Chandler, nothing can be more untrue. The fact stands thus. A Number of men from a small distance from the Town having been under Arms all day towards Evening some of them became rather intoxicated with Liquor and being urged by a Person who was incapable of the exercise of his reason, (and we are afraid in order to answer some private design) marched away suddenly to Dr. Chandler's House, without the least suspicion of the Committee as to their design. They were immediately followed by the Committee who arrived [in] time enough to send them back before they entered the Doctors Yard, by which means all violence was prevented. And we are unanimous in discountenancing every Act of Violence to the Person or Property of any man whatever as a Measure essentially necessary to our union & Success and directly contrary to your & our Resolutions. And as there is no opposition to our publick Measures either with you or us we cannot think that Liberty Poles & unnecessary Meetings can be necessary or any ways serve the common Cause and if the People will undertake & carry on any publick Measure without the advice of the Committees chosen by themselves it will be impossible to perfect any Plan for the general good.

These are our Sentiments wrote in a great hurry, which we communicate to you as Brethren, from the earnest desire we have to preserve a similarity of Sentiment and Practice among all the Friends of Liberty in this Colony.

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1. Jacob Morrell, Chatham merchant.
2. Thomas Eckley, an Englishman who had a farm in Hanover and was an outspoken critic of the American protest movement.
3. The Reverend Dr. Thomas Bradbury Chandler (1726-1790), rector of St. John's Anglican Church in Elizabethtown. Chandler was the object of contention because of his religious as well as political activities (see Sec. III, Doc. 12, note 3). The prime mover of an attempt to secure the appointment of a resident Anglican bishop for the colonies, Chandler first sparked and then fanned a blazing pamphlet controversy between Churchmen and Dissenters over this highly emotional issue with his *An Appeal to the Public in behalf of the Church of England in America* (New York, 1767). An archconservative, he also became a chief spokesman for the Tory community in opposing the colonial challenge to British authority. With such publications as *What Think Ye of Congress Now? Or an Enquiry How Far the Americans are Bound to Abide by and Execute the Decisions of the Late Congress* (New York, 1775), he was the most prominent Loyalist pamphleteer of the middle colonies. The threat of violence from the radicals prompted him to quit America for England in May 1775.

12 Jemima Condict on the Outbreak of Warfare

[Jemima Condict Diary, New Jersey Historical Society.]

Whatever their political differences, all residents of New Jersey feared the prospect of war between Britain and America. Perhaps they thought less about armies and strategies and battles than about the personal horrors of death and destruction. That such thoughts troubled young Jemima Condict, a semiliterate Presbyterian maiden who lived on a small farm in the Newark Mountains, testifies to the pervasiveness of the fear of warfare. At the time she kept her diary, she was probably in her early twenties.

[October 1, 1774-May 1, 1775]

Saturday october first 1774. It seams we have troublesome times a Coming for there is great Disturbance a Broad in the earth & they say it is tea¹ that caused it So then if they will Quarel about such a trifling thing as that What must we expect But war & I think or at least fear it will be so. . . .

Monday² Wich was Called Training Day I Rode with my Dear father Down to see them train there Being Several Companys met together. I thought It Would Be a mournfull Sight to see if they had Been fighting in earnest & how soon they will Be Calld forth to the feild of war we Cannot tell for by What we Can hear the Quarels are not like to be made up Without bloodshed. I have jest Now heard Say that All