

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

13 The New Jersey Assembly Resolves Against Independence

[*Votes and Proceedings, November 15-December 6, 1775*
(Burlington, 1775), pp. 19-20.]

While it is certain that the New Jersey legislature did not advocate independence in November 1775, it is equally clear that the rebellion enjoyed more support in the lower house than is suggested by the resolutions below. Eight of the representatives were members, and three more were former members, of the rival Provincial Congress; James Kinsey sat in the Continental Congress. Several factors—the unstable political situation, the moderation of the Jersey Whigs, a forceful address by Governor William Franklin on the calamities of civil war, the receipt of four Burlington petitions decrying independence, and an unwillingness to act in advance of other colonies and the Continental Congress—all help explain the following resolves.

November 28, 1775

The House took into Consideration the Inquiry had Yesterday touching the Petitions presented to this House;¹ and it appearing from the Petitioners of the City of Burlington, who were called in and heard, that they signed the same from Reports that some Men affected Independency; and being alarmed at such Sentiments, they were induced to present the Petition, hoping that the House would discourage such Sentiments by their Resolutions; whereupon the several Petitions being read the second Time,

1 *Resolved*, That Reports of Independency in the Apprehension of this House are Groundless.

2 *Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Delegates of the Colony to use their utmost Endeavours for the obtaining a Redress of American Grievances, and for restoring the Union between the Colonies and Great-Britain upon constitutional Principles.

3 *Resolved*, That the said Delegates be directed not to give their Assent to, but utterly to reject any Propositions, if such should be made, that may separate this Colony from the Mother Country, or Change the Form of Government thereof.²

1. See Doc. 10.

2. The congressmen were never specifically so instructed.