

V FROM RESISTANCE TO REBELLION

5 Richard Cayford Proclaimed “An Enemy to the Rights of America”

[*Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 9, 1775.]

Social ostracism was one of the most effective means devised by the rebels to cow opponents. By declaring someone to be an enemy to the liberties of America, committeemen could transform a formerly respected member of the community into a social outcast, a political leper. The often subtle, invidious pressures brought to bear on such a person were often sufficient to bring about conversion to the popular cause. Richard Cayford, owner and operator of Cayford's Inn in Bridgeton, undoubtedly also paid a heavy economic price for his dissent.

Cumberland County, July 22, 1775

The Committee of the county of Cumberland, in New-Jersey, having from time to time received information of the inimical conduct of Richard Cayford, with respect to the present unhappy disputes between Great-Britain and America, met on the 21st day of July instant, and, having sent for the said Cayford, informed him of the charges that lay against him, and by the testimony of unexceptionable evidences, examined before the Committee in his presence, made it appear that he had repeatedly acted in opposition to the general measures pursued by the united American colonies, and endeavoured to instil[1] into others his own pernicious principles, that he had repeatedly impeached the first military characters in America, and dissuaded the unwary from learning the military art, branding those who had exerted themselves in those laudable exercises with the epithets of rebels, rascals, &c. &c. names which Americans detest! And it did not appear to the Committee, by any confession of the said Cayford, that he thought he had done amiss; and therefore, agreeable to their duty, they do in this manner hold him up to the public, that every person may break off all dealings with him, and avoid him as an enemy to the rights of America. By order of the Committee,

THOMAS EWING, Clerk

6 John Conway to the Provincial Congress

[*Provincial Congress Papers*, 60, New Jersey Historical Society.]

The tocsin of war rang loudly in New Jersey. Indeed, the willingness of men

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from all ranks and stations to take up arms was an important impetus behind the rapid development of revolutionary political organizations in the province. After all, men like John Conway who volunteered for military service were announcing a political decision. Beyond the description given in the letter below, nothing is known of Conway except that he was a member of the Woodbridge Township Committee of Inspection. His application to the Congress was successful: he was commissioned a captain in the First New Jersey Regiment in November 1775 and retired in January 1781 with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Woodbridge, July 31st 1775

Gentlemen,

As the unhappy dispute between Great Britain and these Colonies is advancing to a serious and Alarming Crisis, by which your Honourable Board will probably be under the necessity of raising Forces for the defence of our just and natural Rights and Liberties; should that be the case, you will doubtless appoint the Officers. I therefore presume (tho' undistinguished and unknown to your Board) to offer myself a Candidate, earnestly entreating your favour & encouragement. Being bred to the Sea almost from my Infancy, I confess I am ignorant and inexperienced in the Art of War, having never been in actual service, but as I fear that is too generally the case with the Inhabitants of this Province, I hope that consideration alone, will not exclude me from your notice. This I declare, that I am sincerely attached to the Rights & Liberties of British America, and am determined to support and defend them as far as my Interest and Capacity will extend, at the hazard of my life, for which end I have kept myself out of employ for some Months past, in which Time I have been constantly improving myself in Military Discipline, neither do I intend to go to Sea 'till the dispute is settled; Mr. Smith¹ and Mr. Deare,² to whom I have the honour of being known, can give you any other particulars, to whom I beg leave to refer. I have only to add, that should my application meet with the desired success, any Commission you may please to Honour me with, I shall make it my constant study to Merit as much as possible by a faithful discharge of the trust reposed in me. Be the fate of my Wishes Fortunate, or unfortunate, I hope it will not be imputed to any Arrogant, Ostentation, or Sinister motives; but to the dictates of a Heart Zealously attached to the Rights and Prosperity of its Native Country. I am with the greatest Veneration and respect,

Gentlemen,
your most Obedient,
Humble Servant,
JOHN CONWAY

N. B. If you raise Force, I will if you please to order it, wait on you in person on the first notice.

1. Probably William Smith, wealthy Woodbridge farmer, who served with Conway on the township committee of observation in 1775. He later sat in the

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Provincial Congress, but opted for the British after the Declaration of Independence.

2. Probably Jonathan Deare (1748-1796), Anglican lawyer from Perth Amboy who, as a major in the New Jersey militia, participated in the arrest of Governor Franklin in June 1776 (see Sec. VII, Doc. 4).

7 Governor William Franklin to Lord Dartmouth

[*NJA*, 10:652-53.]

For all the support enjoyed by the popular front, there existed a considerable number of Jerseymen who were either politically uncommitted or devoted to the royal standard. While Governor Franklin exaggerated the amount of latent Loyalism in the province, he was correct in asserting that the opponents of the rebellion were afraid to speak out because of the weakness of the civil establishment. By August 1775 Franklin and his associates had only their powers of persuasion and the inherent conservatism of Jerseymen to stem the tide of revolution. There was no Royal Army, no police force, no mass communications controlled by the government. To the contrary, the organs of public control (the militia and local sheriffs) were in rebel hands. Royal officials could only sit back, wait, and hope for the best. That fact alone explains to a considerable degree the lack of overt royalist activity in the province and the ease with which the radicals erected an extralegal political structure.

Perth Amboy, August 2nd, 1775

My Lord,

. . . . The same Disposition & the same Measures continue as mentioned in my last. A formal Declaration¹ has been published by the Congress, & every preparation made for carrying on a War which is in their Power, the Particulars of which I need not mention as they are printed in all the News-papers. Enclosed is a Copy of the Declaration, and also of a Letter which Mr. Skinner the Attorney General received a few Days ago from Col. Coxe one of the Members of His Majesty's Council in this Colony.² The latter will shew your Lordship the Critical Situation the Officers of Government are in, having no kind of Protection. It is true that there are many Friends of Government still remaining in the several Provinces, but they are too scattered to venture forming themselves into a Body, especially as they have no places of Strength or Security to resort to. Not that I believe there are any of the Gentlemen of the Country who would draw their Swords in Support of Taxation by Parliament; but there are many who would fight to preserve the Supremacy of Parliament in other respects, and their Connexion with Great Britain, until some