

VII FROM COLONY TO STATE

hitherto Preserved us will I trust Appear for our help, and prevent our being Crushed; if otherwise his Will be done.

I have no Particular News more to Communicate. No news from your family to send. I wrote you the day before I left home. I am Among a Consistory of Kings as our Enemy says. I assure you Sir, Our Congress is An August Assembly, and can they support the Declaration now on the Anvil, they will be the greatest Assembly on Earth.

As I am not Able to Communicate to you any thing but what the Public Papers will Announce, you will readily perceive I mean to let you know you are not forgot by me. Tho' I address myself to you Sir, yet I mean to include my much esteemed friend Mr. Caldwell^s in it.

We are now Sir embarked on a most Tempestuous Sea, Life very uncertain, Seeming dangers Scattered thick Around us, Plots Against the Military, and it is Whispered, Against the Senate. Let us prepare for the Worst. We can Die here but once may al[l] our Business, all our purposes & pursuits tend to fit us for that important event.

I am Dr. Sir

Yours & Mr. Caldwell's most Obedient & Hum. Servt.

ABRA. CLARK

1. That is, the Continental Congress.
2. Sandy Hook.
3. The Reverend James Caldwell (1734-1781), politically active pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethtown, who was serving in July 1776 as the chaplain of New Jersey's Continental Line and thus was in camp with Colonel Dayton. Among his Whig communicants in Elizabethtown were the Dayton and Boudinot families, Abraham Clark, William Livingston, Stephen Crane, and Francis Barber.

8 Princeton and Trenton Celebrate American Independence

[*Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet; or, the General Advertiser*, July 15, 1776.]

On July 5 John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, sent a copy of the Declaration of Independence to the New Jersey Congress along with a request that it be proclaimed and publicized "in such a Way and Manner as you shall judge best." But for reasons unknown the Congress delayed official endorsement of the Declaration until July 18, at which time it was announced: "Whereas, the Honorable Continental Congress had declared the United

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Colonies, Free and Independence States; We, the Deputies of New Jersey, in Provincial Congress assembled do resolve and declare, That we will support the freedom and independence of the said States with our lives and fortunes, and with the whole force of New Jersey." (*PCCS Minutes*, p. 511.) But the congressmen had earlier, in an unofficial capacity, participated in one of many demonstrations in New Jersey heralding the severance of political ties with Great Britain. Trenton and Philadelphia share the distinction of having staged the first public celebrations of American independence. Throughout the province, Jerseymen gathered to proclaim Thomas Jefferson's declaration and herald the advent of independence.

Trenton, July 8

The declaration of Independence was this day proclaimed here, together with the new constitution¹ of the colony of late, established, and the resolve of the Provincial Congress for continuing the administration of justice during the interim.²

The members of the Provincial Congress, the gentlemen of the Committee, the officers and privates of the Militia under arms and a large concourse of the inhabitants attended on this great and solemn occasion. The declaration and other proceedings were received with loud acclamations.

The people are now convinced of what we ought long since to have known, that our enemies have left us no middle way between perfect freedom and abject slavery.

In the Field we hope, as well as in Council, the inhabitants of New Jersey will be found ever ready to support the Freedom and Independance of America.

Princeton, July 10

Last night Nassau Hall³ was grandly illuminated, and INDEPENDANCY proclaimed under a triple volley of musketry, and universal acclamation for the prosperity of the UNITED STATES. The ceremony was conducted with the greatest decorum.

1. See Doc. 6.
2. To provide for continuance of administrative and judicial functions pending official institution of the constitution, the Provincial Congress resolved on July 2 that all crown officers were to continue to perform their duties but in a manner consonant with the new frame of government.
3. The main building of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University).