

IX WAR AND PEACE

4. John Witherspoon, president of the college, member of Congress, and signer of the Declaration of Independence.
5. Jacob Hyer's Hudibras Tavern.
6. Christopher Beekman's tavern.
7. The date should be February 4, when Great Britain issued a proclamation declaring an end to hostilities in America.
8. Louis XVI, king of France.
9. General Nathanael Greene, who assumed command of the Southern Army in October 1780; his leadership breathed new life into a previously demoralized and disorganized American campaign in the south.
10. Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, young French nobleman who volunteered his services to the American cause; a favorite of Washington, he contributed much both as a general in the Continental army and as a symbol of the spirit of the new republican order.

13 William Peartree Smith to Elias Boudinot

[*PNJHS*, 4 (1849), pp. 122-24.]

Although welcoming the end of hostilities, politically sensitive Jersey men like William Peartree Smith realized that the war had solved only the problem of independence. It was, after all, one thing to achieve national sovereignty and quite another to maintain it in the face of a host of unresolved domestic problems. Among the more pressing problems were an unstable economy, lack of effective political leadership, and the ineffectiveness of the Articles of Confederation as a national constitution. As Smith pointed out with utter candor to his old friend, Elias Boudinot, the future of the republic was by no means clear. Smith's words must have had special meaning to Boudinot, who had been named president of the Congress in November 1782 and in that capacity had signed the Treaty of Paris as well as numerous peace proclamations. Not only did Smith acknowledge the pressing problems that confronted the nation, but he also advocated the solution to national problems most feared by republicans—the advent of oligarchical or monarchical rule.

Newark, April [?] 1783

My Dear Sir,

The glorious work is completed! I salute and congratulate you on the opening of this, I hope, auspicious day—a day which, with the name of my Friend, will be recorded in the page of History, when his Spirit and mine, I trust in God, will be celebrating a Jubilee of eternal Peace and Harmony.

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

The fine air of this illustrious morning, you will find has set my silent bells into a little jingle; and the imperfect sounds are conveyed to your ears. They are very weak, I must confess. I am incapable of ringing the Grand and Noble Chimes of Triumph. They utter, however, very sincere joy and my ardent aspirations.

And now my dear Sir, all hands to work, to set all the parts of the Great acquired machine into some order, which I fear is all going to Pieces, without sufficient force in the Commanding Spring,¹ (over which you now preside) and which must be acquired. All the inferior wheels will run into Confusion, and by and bye, some Master Hand will seize it. So did a Cromwell;² and if this should become necessary, as (*inter nos et sub rosa*)³ I think it will, God grant it may be the man who merits from the Country he has rescued—a DIADEM!

I will detain you no longer, but finish my Letter, only tagging a little laughing mocking Picture at the End on't—

The Conscious Tory hangs his humbled Head,
Or sneaks to Scotia with his axe and spade;
Reluctant—there to weep 'mid Fogs or Frost—
His Friends, his Family, his Country lost.
There toils and sweats beneath inclement skies,
Envies the once damn'd Rebel—curses George and dies.

April 22d, 1783

...I take it for granted that a Day of Gen[er]al Thanksgiving is already appointed, when with you I shall join in my hearty Amen to the universal Song, "Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men!"—But I must hazard a melancholly Reflection or two amid this general Burst of Joy. Tell me, O my Friend, of what avail is this most wonderful blessing of Independence to the poor Individual who has sacrificed his all generously to obtain it for his Country, and has now nothing to depend upon for his own support but the mere good Providence of Heaven: not the Justice of his Country; for all regard to this prime attribute of God seems to be vanished from these Rising States. Empires founded upon Trick and Injustice can never prosper. If no restitution be made to injured friends who risked every thing to uphold a desperate cause, Divine vengeance will be and bye appear in some great unlooked-for & forcible Event. National Crimes, which cannot be punished in a future, must be nationally punished in this world, if there be a righteous God above. All past History verifies the truth of this Observation. And for abandoning the now wretched Loyalists, says Dr. Carlisle,⁴ "We ought all to be damned both in this world and ye world to come." Pardon, I write w[i]th some feeling.

The other day I suddenly met w[i]th a Freeman's Journal,⁵ in which was an acc[oun]t of a late disturbance in the Army, & of our Great General's Conduct upon that Occasion—a Conduct truly admirable.⁶ Superior to what the common principles of Human Nature would have dictated to a Soaring Genius. To a Soul endued w[i]th a spark of ambition, and pointing to Earthly Grandeur, the Opportunity then afforded was a fine one indeed! The writing dispersed among them was well done, shrewd, sensible, & artful, perfectly calculated to blow all up into a universal flame. Had an Oliver⁷ commanded a republican army at such a delicate and critical Juncture, his towering brain would have traced out instantaneously a very different Line of Conduct. But Washington is the Patriot of Patriots. Talk of

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your Catos,⁸ y[ou]r Brutus,⁹ & y[ou]r Cassius¹⁰—they are all meer Fools to him. In short, he is too good for an ingrate, base, degenerate world. Verily, Verily, I don't know whether it would not have been best for us all, had he lain hold of the Helm; for I am confoundedly afraid the Stupid Crew will sink the Ship, when escaped the Storm and got into safe Port. Words cannot express my Veneration for this Character, to which the late Action has given the finishing stroke. Each State ought to erect a Statue to him: and I would inscribe on the Pedestal: *Patriae Liberator.*¹¹ *Humani Generis Amator.*¹² *Humanistati Laudibusq[ue] Superior.*¹³ But alas, Alas! the God of this world has blinded their Eyes, and what they ought to do they know not.

It is truly very pious and very charitable in you, my very dear Friend, to talk as you do, of "trusting in the Almighty Protector of our grateful Country, that as he has brought us in sight of Jordan, &c., he will not suffer us now to sink, &c." As to this grateful Country, I, for my part, am grown so much of a Cynic of late, as to be filled with many uncharitable doubts ab[ou]t the gratitude of this same grateful Country. And with respect to trusting in God, 'tis a very pious Resolve; but here again I have so much of the Sceptic about me as to doubt whether the Almighty will help a People who refuse to put their own shoulders to the work. We know with respect to Individuals it is s[ai]d "Work out y[ou]r own Salvation, because" &c. Human Exertions and Divine Aid go together w[i]th Nations as well as individuals. This is my Creed, & I believe yours. However, God may save us miraculously, for aught I know, for the sake of a few righteous—for the sake of the few good men we have at the Head of our great Council—at the Head of our Army, and I must presume at the Head of our Churches. But I detain you too long. Forgive me this Wrong, and all my impertinent effusions w[i]th y[ou]r usual Candor: and be pleased to present my affec[tion]s and respectful Salutations to y[ou]r two daughters.

Every my excellent Friend's
Most Entirely,

W. P. S.

1. The Congress.

2. Out of the turmoil of the English Civil War arose the Commonwealth (1649-1660), a republican government with legislative power theoretically in the legislature but actually in the army and its leader, Oliver Cromwell; Cromwell's Protectorate (1653-1658) was a quasi-military dictatorship.

3. Between ourselves and in secret.

4. Probably Frederick Howard, fifth Earl of Carlisle, head of the peace commission sent to America in 1778. See Sec. X, Doc. 8, note 2.

5. *The Freeman's Journal: or, the North-American Intelligencer*, published in Philadelphia from 1781 to 1792.

6. Smith is referring to the so-called Newburgh Conspiracy. In early January 1783 a group of disgruntled army officers complained to Congress about arrears in pay, unsettled financial accounts, and the failure of the Congress to provide half-pay pensions for life for retired officers. When Congress rejected the pension scheme and failed to give assurances that the other problems would be soon rectified, an anonymous address (actually

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written by Major John Armstrong) was circulated in March among the officers at Washington's main camp at Newburgh, New York. While some officers and ranking civilians approved of the thinly veiled threat of a military coup, Washington condemned such talk and crushed the incipient mutiny with a stirring appeal to the patriotism of the officers.

7. Oliver Cromwell (see above note 2).
8. Cato the Younger or Cato the Elder. See Sec. XIII, Doc. 3, note 2.
9. Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 B.C.), leader of the conspiracy against the dictator Caesar in 44 B.C.
10. Gaius Cassius Longinus, coleader with Brutus of the assassination of Caesar.
11. Liberator of the fatherland.
12. Lover of mankind.
13. Superior in human praise.

14 David Bonnel, Sr., Inventory of Property Losses

[Damages by the British in New Jersey, 1776-1782: Essex County, Connecticut Farms No. 3, New Jersey State Library.]

Caught in the cockpit of the revolutionary war, Jerseymen suffered greatly from the ravages of warfare. The British and American forces that repeatedly traversed the state from 1776 to 1778 left an awesome wake of destruction. Thereafter cantoned armies and roving militia, not to mention the raiding parties that sporadically visited the state, continued the devastation. Especially hard hit were the residents of the geographic corridor in the center of the state which connected the strategic cities of New York and Philadelphia. At the behest of the Congress, the New Jersey legislature in December 1781 passed a law authorizing appraisers in each county to collect inventories of "Goods, Chattels or other Property, whether Real or Personal, damaged, wasted, spoiled, plundered, burned, or destroyed by the Troops in Service of the Enemy or their Adherents, or by the Continental Army, or by the Militia of this or of the neighboring States." The legislature was to use the damage claims, based upon prices current in 1775, "to devise Ways and Means for the Relief of those who have suffered, that equal Justice may be done to all the Inhabitants of this State." Although detailed inventories were systematically collected throughout the state, claimants never received any compensation from the government. Nonetheless, the inventories are valuable indexes of the personal financial losses endured by individual citizens during the war. Representative is a claim submitted by David Bonnel, an Essex County farmer of modest means, for losses sustained during the British raid on Connecticut Farms in June 1780 (see Doc. 8). Bonnel is typical of his countrymen not only in the kinds of possessions he owned but also in the arduous task he faced in rebuilding after the war.