

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

will do all in their Power, in their private Capacities, to prevent the consumption of British Manufactures in the Colonies, that the Mother Country may thereby lose more in her Commerce than she can possibly gain by way of Revenue. . . .

I have the Honor to be, with the greatest Respect,
My Lord, Your Lordship's
most obedient & most humble Servant
WM. FRANKLIN

1. The Declaratory Act of 1766.
2. The Townshend duties.
3. On October 1, 1768, two regiments of infantry with artillery arrived in Boston to aid civil authorities in quelling the growing disorders.

6 Residents of Gloucester County to Robert Friend Price and John Hinchman

[New Jersey Miscellaneous Manuscripts, 336, Frank L. Stewart Collection, Glassboro State College Learning Resource Center.]

The tendency for constituents to "instruct" their elected representatives on imperial affairs indicates the intensity of popular opposition to the Townshend duties and the degree to which the people looked to the legislature for leadership in protesting the exactions. (The assembly did not act on this appeal; it was not a petition to the house but "instructions" to legislators.) Such action on the part of residents of Gloucester County is especially revealing because of the predominance of Quakers in the area, a group that theoretically shunned active involvement in secular contentions. Robert Friend Price of Gloucester Town was the foremost political figure in the county prior to the Revolution. Besides representing Gloucester in the assembly from 1761 to 1776, he held the posts of justice of the peace, high sheriff, and judge of the county court of oyer and terminer. Although he was conspicuous in the extralegal protest movement prior to 1776, he balked at independence and charted a neutral political course with the onset of the Revolution. John Hinchman, like Price, was a wealthy landowner and a member of the Society of Friends. A member of the Council of Proprietors of West Jersey, he likewise served as high sheriff, justice of the peace, judge of the county court of quarter sessions, and assemblyman from 1769 to the Revolution. He, too, was initially active in the popular movement, but became a Loyalist in the spring of 1776.

II TAXES AND TROOPS

October 3, 1769

Gentlemen

As We have Chosen You to ye most important of Trusts, Even that of Guardians & Defenders of our Liberties, Privileges, & Property, We think it expedient at this time to intimate what we shall expect from You at this Alarming Crisis; When ye other Colonys are Struggleing with ye utmost Ardour to preserve American Freedom, it is our desire that ye Representatives of New Jersey may Zealously Unite with them & not appear as unconcern'd Spectators, Therefore

That You Endeavour to have Resolves entered on ye Journals of ye House similer to those of ye Assemblys of divers other Colonys, with respect to raising a Revenue on America by Act of Parliament, Suspending Legislation, Sending for Persons from hence to England for their Tryals, Our Sole right of Taxing our Selves, And ye necessity of Uniteing with ye other Colonys in defence of our Rights &c. This is a Debt due to posterity, that should our Constitutional Privileges be Torn from us, it may appear not to have been with ye Approbation of our Representatives.¹

That You Countenance every Measure that will tend to Encourage & promote Industry. Frugality, & American Manufactures, & wean from ye Extravigant fondness people too generally have for foreign Comoditys, this appearing ye most probable means in our power of Transmitting Freedom to our Posterity². . . .

[Fifty-two signatures affixed.]³

1. In May 1769 the Virginia House of Burgesses adopted a series of resolves protesting recent imperial measures; copies of the resolutions were sent to the other legislatures in hopes that they would follow suit. Despite receipt of the Virginia resolves and the instructions of Gloucester residents, the New Jersey assembly, satisfied with its earlier statement of grievances (see Doc. 4), made no new resolutions.

2. Because of the post-1763 recession and the shortages caused by boycotts against Britain, Jerseymen after 1765 increasingly supported a program of economic austerity and increased domestic manufacturing.

3. The following notation is appended to the text: "At a Meeting of ye Board of Justices & Freeholders at Glo'ster ye day above mentioned Samuel Harrison Esqr. Reported ye above instructions which were read & approved of by ye sd. Board Neme:Con: & Ordered to be Signed by their Clerk, And a number of ye Principle Inhabitants of sd. County being allso present approved & signed it likewise."