

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

scandalous Insinuations to the contrary, has retained so much of her antient military Prowess, as to be able to subdue the whole Continent of No. America, although inhabited by a hardy Race of Men, sprung from its own Stock. And if she is able to conquer *her own People*; let *all others* continue to fear & tremble. Besides, it is supporting our antient Characteristic, that when we have none else to fight with, we will fight with one another.

But remember, they are *English Colonies* which have *fallen*; and those very Colonies too, by the Possession of which England has advanced from the Figure she made in the Days of Queen Elizabeth to her present Grandeur. America is fallen truly! but, as was said by a great Man the last Year, “she has fallen like a strong Man; she has embraced the Pillars of State,” and perhaps will pull down the Constitution of this Country about her Ears. Her Fall has rendered a great Part of the Shipping of this Kingdom useless, has ruined many industrious Merchants, and reduced to Beggary *one half* of the Manufacturers; has raised Insurrections among the Distressed; and completely fitted this delightful Island for the *devouring Paw* of its envious Neighbours. I have greatly exceeded the Bounds I proposed to myself, and have yet left the Subject unfinished. It is so important and so animating, that I could write a Volume upon it. But now I have only to assure you, that I am,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedt. hble Servt.

RICHD. STOCKTON

1. For a discussion of Britain’s economic problems and her efforts to obtain revenue from America, see Sec. I, introduction.
2. See Sec. I, Doc. 1.
3. The Currency Act of 1764.
4. The Revenue (Sugar) Act of 1764.
5. The proprietary colonies of Pennsylvania and Maryland.
6. Charles Davenant, author of the influential *True Picture of a Modern Whig* (1701).
7. The Stamp Act crisis of 1765-1766.

2 British Soldiers Riot in Elizabethtown

[*New-York Journal; or, the General Advertiser*, August 6, 1767.]

Arriving in New Jersey in September 1766, the Twenty-eighth Regiment, a unit with a well-deserved reputation for troublesomeness, resided in the colony for nine months without incident. But just prior to its departure, trouble broke out when the regimental commander, Colonel John St. Clair, demanded that the

II TAXES AND TROOPS

provincial government reimburse him and fellow officers who had secured private quarters in Elizabethtown because of an alleged lack of suitable facilities in the barracks. Governor William Franklin's refusal to absorb such personal expenditures provided the immediate background to the melee started by the angry officers in Elizabethtown on July 27. While the confrontation itself was relatively minor and stemmed from inadequate communication between the soldiers and local officials, the men of the Twenty-eighth Regiment left behind a citizenry that was deeply resentful and fearful of the military.

Elizabeth-Town, (New-Jersey) July 28, 1767

This town was last night alarmed by a riot committed by several of the officers of the 28th regiment (late from Montreal) the particulars of which are as follow, viz.

The officers being under arms to march with the troops quartered here, by 4 o'clock this morning, to join their regiment at Amboy, in order to embark for Europe. Between 12 and 1 o'clock at night they assembled in a body, and marched through the several parts of the town, with drums and fifes. As the inhabitants had used them so very ungentlely as to make them pay their debts, which they had generally been obliged to do according to law; the officers seemed determined upon revenge. They first broke a window in the meeting house, afterwards attacked the court house and gaol, by breaking the windows and endeavouring to break open the doors, swearing vengeance against the gaoler,¹ who was under-sheriff and constable, and had frequently been obliged to do his duty upon them. As they attacked the house in this manner, the gaoler got up, and desired them to desist, which they refused, he then, to deter them, pointed out of the window a fusee² loaded with small shot, the end of which was seized, and endeavoured to be wrested from him; upon which he fired among them, and wounded one of the rioters in both legs, as afterwards appeared. The gaoler then released the prisoners, for his assistance, and rung the bell;³ the officers then marched off, but soon returned with a body of soldiers, some with bayonets fixed. The Inhabitants by this time alarmed began to assemble. The gaoler finding some assistance had come, open'd the doors for their reception, when the officers and some of the soldiers entered with them, and a fray ensued, but happily no lives were lost. The inhabitants continuing to collect, the officers thought fit to abscond, and it being by this, near the time for their departing, they joined their companies, which began their march a little after four. Some of the magistrates however assembled, before they left the town, and demanded the assistance of the commanding officer, Capt. Johnson, then present, at the head of his men, but were refused. The Col. Sir John St. Clair, happily being at Amboy, the magistrates then proceeded thither, leaving the soldiers and their officers on their march behind them, the magistrates in expectation of their arriving soon after at Amboy, applied to the chief justice,⁴ for his warrant to apprehend the rioters. But were surprised to hear that they had deserted their men upon the road, and had in a private manner conveyed themselves on board one of the transports. Upon which the chief justice then applied to the commanding officer at Amboy, who immediately ordered them on shore, and being brought before the chief justice and magistrates of this town, it was thought proper, as they were then bound home, to accept of their humble submission and acknowledgment, and satisfying the persons particularly injured, with submission, which was made in a public humble manner. The said rioters

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after paying the damages at £25, and asking pardon of the gaol-keeper, were again set at liberty, and embarked for their voyage, tho' many thought the punishment not adequate to the atrociousness of the transaction that brought it on, yet it is a pity, that men, who call themselves men of honour, should leave a place with such an odious name behind them. The other part of the regiment who were quartered at Amboy, embarked on board the transports the same day, and to their honour be it said, that during their continuance there, they have in general behaved with honour and integrity.

1. An accepted spelling of "jail" in the eighteenth century was "gaol"; hence "gaoler" is "jailer." It was also commonly spelled "goal" and "goaler."
2. A fusee or fusil was a small flintlock musket.
3. The customary signal for an alarm.
4. Frederick Smyth (see Sec. III, Doc. 9).

3 Samuel Allinson to David Cooper

[Letter Book, Allinson Papers, Alexander Library, Rutgers University.]

Burlington attorney Samuel Allinson (1739-1791) had a keen interest in politics and the law. Commissioned in 1762 as one of the surrogates for West Jersey, his legal talents were put to good use in compiling a new edition of provincial laws, *Acts of the General Assembly of the Province of New Jersey 1702-1775* (Burlington, 1776). Adhering faithfully to the tenets of his Quaker religion, Allinson strenuously opposed both the institution of slavery and secession from the empire in 1776. David Cooper (1724-1795), who became Allinson's father-in-law in 1773, was also a member of the Society of Friends. A prosperous Woodbury farmer, he represented Gloucester County in the assembly from 1761 to 1768. Through measures sponsored as an assemblyman and pamphlets written as a private citizen, he worked for the manumission of slaves. As spokesmen for the sizable Quaker population in New Jersey, Allinson and Cooper consistently coupled criticism of imperial policies with disavowal of violent or extralegal protest measures.

1st 1st Mo. 1768¹

Dear Friend,

... The last Chronicle² has or will show thee that our most important & interesting political Matters are now handled in a pathetick & Masterly Manner by