2013

"Friendly Fire": Free Quakers, Fatherhood and Religious Identity in the Early Republic

Samuel S. Wells
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

"Friendly Fire": Free Quakers, Fatherhood and Religious Identity in the Early Republic

Samuel S. Wells

Fresno, CA

Bachelor of Arts, Brigham Young University, 2011

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the College of William and Mary in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Lyon G. Tyler Department of History

The College of William and Mary
May, 2013

APPROVAL PAGE

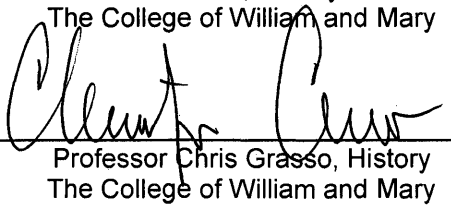
This Thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Samuel Spencer Wells

Approved by the Committee, February 2013

Committee Chair
Associate Professor Karin Wulf, History and American Studies
The College of William and Mary



Professor Chris Grasso, History
The College of William and Mary

Professor Lu Ann Homza, History
The College of William and Mary

ABSTRACT

The Society of Friends (Quakers) did not come through the American Revolution unscathed. Thomas Paine, suspicious of a religious group which refused to fight for their country, take oaths of allegiance to support the new government, and participate in national fast days, expressed his disapproval by questioning Quakers' masculinity and loyalty to their families and their new nation. Many disowned Quakers picked up on Paine's emasculating rhetoric, and employed tropes of Republican fatherhood to challenge Friends' right to claim the name of Quakerism exclusively for themselves. Ex-Quakers Samuel Wetherill Jn., Timothy Matlack, and Christopher Marshall went even further, establishing their own Quaker meeting in 1781. Called the Society of Free Quakers, these unorthodox Friends sought to distance themselves from former Friends' tarnished image as well as distinguish themselves as true Quakers, Republican citizens, and fathers in their own right. In forming their own sect, Free Quakers evidenced the importance which gendered expectations held in the creation and maintenance of religious identity in the new Republic.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer wishes to express his appreciation to Professor Karin Wulf, under whose guidance this investigation was conducted, for her patience, guidance and criticism throughout the investigation. The author is also indebted to Professors Chris Grasso and Lu Ann Homza for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript.

The writer also wishes to thank his cohort: Hannah Bailey, Cara Elliott, Casey Schmitt, Kathryn Snyder, Kaylan Stevenson and Elizabeth Wood, who have read numerous drafts, offered countless comments, and, more generally, provided the constant support and encouragement needed to finish this endeavor.

This master's thesis is dedicated to Samuel A. Wells and Kathleen V. Wells for being the parents who have always encouraged me to follow my passion and have never ceased in their prayers for my success.

"And Memory, ghost of ages flown/looked through the mists of seasons gone/and told of vanished men of might/and generations lost in light." So concluded William J. Allinson's 1826 eulogy for Timothy Matlack: merchant, patriot, and 'Fighting Quaker.' And what a memory Matlack had left behind. His full life of ninety-nine years assured that. But this venerable patriarch was more than a historical catalog, a hoary encyclopedia of names and dates. Through Allinson's pen, he found himself cast as an ideal American citizen. Not only had he withstood the dread "cannon's roar" at Princeton, he had walked with the very "patriots [and] sages" of the revolution. Throughout the bitter contest his unwavering strength "aided those who nobly broke/ the stern oppressor's galling yoke." Surely such a leader—this "mighty oak" of the Republic—deserved his praises sung, his "manhood's daring race" commemorated. Anything less, Allinson suggested, smacked of ingratitude.[1]

Matlack could not have asked for a better tribute—particularly from a practicing Quaker whose poetry regularly praised peace. Allinson and Matlack both understood that soldiering and citizenship marched side by side; martial valor defined ones dedication to family and nation. In proportion as one sacrificed for hearth and homeland one proved himself a man. Following the outbreak of revolution, likeminded Friends fell into rank. Clement Biddle, wealthy scion of a Philadelphian merchant family served as General Horatio Gates's quartermaster-general. Samuel Wetherill Jn., a noted Quaker preacher, provided General Washington's troops at Valley Forge with much needed supplies. And,

[1] W. J. Allinson, "Tribute to the Memory of Timothy Matlack," in A. M. Stackhouse, *Colonel Timothy Matlack: Patriot and Soldier*, (Haddonfield, NJ, 1910), 62-64.

like Matlack, Biddle and Wetherill both found themselves at odds with the Society of Friends. Biddle received his dismissal from the meeting in 1775 for "studying to learn the art of war." Biddle, orthodox Quakers made clear, did not measure up to Friend's pacific expectations. Wetherill fell from grace four years later.[2]

By 1780, a coterie of disowned Friends began meeting at Matlack's and Wetherill's residences for services of their own. In February of 1781, the small group officially organized themselves as the Society of Free Quakers. The meeting grew quickly, soon numbering over one hundred members. Within three years, a small worship house graced the corner of Fifth and Arch Street. The meeting made radical changes to Quaker beliefs. Tenets hostile to Patriot sensibilities fast became suspect. Pacifist teachings all but disappeared; disownments for martial activity were disavowed as a matter of conscience. In the end, however, Free Quakers did more than reject problematic Quaker practices. Hoping to gain the approval of like-minded revolutionaries, they portrayed their new faith as a bastion of republican masculinity and fatherhood. Critiques of orthodox Quaker men soon followed suit. Drawing upon political rhetoric portraying

---

[2] Arthur J. Mekeel, *The Quakers and the American Revolution* (York, England, 1996), 330; Charles Wetherill, *History of the Religious Society of Friends, called by some the Free Quakers, in the city of Philadelphia* (Washington D.C., 2002), 16-17, 19. In 1776 alone, the Society of Friends disowned 190 Quakers who expressed sympathy for the revolution. See Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism: 1748—1783* (Philadelphia, 1984), 233. It should be noted that Timothy Matlack was disowned from the Society of Friends before the outbreak of Revolution for debt and avoiding Quaker meeting. Nonetheless, Matlack remained a religious man throughout the remainder of his life. Speaking to the American Philosophical Society in 1780, Matlack reiterated his belief in God, while linking his belief directly with the fate of the new-formed nation: "While . . . the overseeing Eye of Providence is acknowledged to be upon us—while Agriculture is honored, and the great Republican virtues of Industry and Economy are duly respected—while the Owners of our widely extending Fields cultivate them with their own Hands—*while our Citizens of all Ranks remain armed and trained for Defence*—and while Learning is cherished . . . *Force can never conquer, nor Fraud enslave us. But, standing upon those mighty Pillars whose great Foundations GOD himself has laid,* a whole happy People with one voice shall triumph forever in 'Virtue, Liberty, and Independence.'" See Timothy Matlack, "An oration, delivered March 16, 1780, before the patron, vice-presidents and members of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge," (Philadelphia, 1780), 27. Italics added.

Quakers as unworthy fathers who refused to protect their families and their communities, Free Quakers portrayed themselves as Quakerism's rightful heirs, while concomitantly signaling their desire to "appear among their fellow citizens as men."[3]

In an effort to analyze the intimate connections between revolutionary manhood, Free Quakerism, and citizenship, this essay proceeds along three distinct but related tracks. The first section traces the rise of anti-Quaker rhetoric during the revolution. In order to grasp how Free Quakers deployed masculine rhetoric to sectarian advantage one must first understand Patriots' gendered view of Friends. From 1776 onwards, patriotic Pennsylvanians, encouraged by Thomas Paine's vitriolic writings, increasingly viewed Quakers as a Loyalist fifth-column. Many citizens began denouncing members of the Society as enemies of the state. The charge convinced Philadelphians who had witnessed Friends refusing to participate in national fasts or tender their allegiance to the new government. As suspicions rose, public critiques of Quakerism flooded Pennsylvanian papers. These diatribes often portrayed Quakers as unmanly Tories unable or unwilling to protect their homes or their nation. After 1783, Free Quakers would consciously employ similar tropes in an effort to garner public support for their particular sect.

---

[3] Charles Wetherill, iii, 37-19; In seeking to understand Orthodox/Free Quaker religious identity on its own ground this study draws heavily upon Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American Identity* (North Carolina, 2010). Rosenberg asserts that creating a binding sense of belonging within a nation is an endeavor fraught with ideological conflict. At its very root, the formation of an American self depended upon citizens "array[ing]" themselves "against [a] . . . series of threatening 'Others.'" In essence, "difference, perceived as dangerous, disdained as polluting, demanding expulsion, form[ed] a critical component of [the nation's] new . . . identity." Rosenberg's study, while aimed at explaining majoritarian views of nationhood, holds great potential for understanding minority communities as well. Because many of those who found themselves disowned from Quaker meetings desired to be seen as Americans, they sought to define national "Others" in conjunction with other mainline Christian denominations. As such Rosenberg's thesis may be seen not only as an agent of cultural assimilation, but also of religious creation. See particularly Rosenburg, x. For the importance of fatherhood to revolutionary conceptions of masculinity, see Michael E. Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language and Patriarchal Politics* (New York, 1998). For a historiographical discussion of Free Quaker identity, see appendix one.

After examining the gendered components of anti-Quaker rhetoric the paper then proceeds to interrogate how future Free Quakers Christopher Marshall, Timothy Matlack, and Samuel Wetherill Jn. drew upon anti-Quaker rhetoric to redefine Quakerism to serve their own masculine and patriotic ends. The final section builds upon the previous two by asking how anti-Quaker rhetoric and individual Free Quaker action gave religious and political direction to the "newest religious sect" to arise within the context of revolution. In doing so, it aims to show the entangled nature of gender, faith, and politics in the new Republic. Free Quakers did not easily distinguish between the three. Distinct views of manhood informed Free Quaker institutional belief, which bled over into the political sphere. In like manner, Free Quakers' public denunciation of Friends gave added currency to the sect's unique religious and gendered beliefs.

Before 1776, links between Quakerism and emasculation developed in a haphazard manner. They were learned connections, shifting form even as they developed. By tracing both their alterations and advances throughout the revolution, one may more easily understand how masculine rhetoric helped constitute Free Quakers as a community. For it was only as Free Quakers portrayed orthodox Friends as failed fathers that they began to feel comfortable with their own claims to citizenship.

Ironically, the most heated rhetorical salvos against Quakers burst from the pen of a onetime Friend: Thomas Paine. Under his father Joseph's watchful eye Paine gained a wide-ranging Quaker education. In a typical week Paine spent eight hours or more in worship. When not imploring the guidance of the inner light at the local Thetford meetinghouse Paine perused Quaker tracts at home. From these pages Paine not only

absorbed Quaker doctrines, but learned in harrowing detail of Friends' trials and persecutions in England. Paine's Quaker sympathies lasted well beyond boyhood. Removing to Lewes in 1768, Paine would receive a thorough grounding in Whiggism from workaday Quakers in his immediate social milieu.[4]

Both intellectual inheritances followed Paine to America. Disembarking at Philadelphia in 1774, Paine quickly made his name in publishing. His first articles, inveighing against the evils of slavery and dueling, drew upon his Quaker intellectual roots. At the same time, Paine developed friendships with former Quakers who shared his radical political views. As tensions flared between metropole and colony, Paine spent his time conversing and drinking with future Free Quakers Timothy Matlack and Christopher Marshall. And, while Paine never joined the Society of Free Quakers (though one biographer speculates he would have, had he still lived in Philadelphia in 1781), Matlack, Marshall and other Free Quakers eventually appropriated Paine's gendered depictions of Quakers and Quakerism to their own sectarian ends.[5]

Nonetheless, Paine's anti-Quaker vitriol did not appear at once. Even with war looming on the horizon Paine appeared loathe to turn his back on his formative beliefs. Three months after skirmishing erupted in Lexington and Concord, Paine published "Thoughts on Defensive War." Styling himself, "a lover of peace," Paine declared himself in agreement with Friends' ideals. "I am thus far a Quaker," he proclaimed, "that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms, and settle matters by negotiation." Unfortunately, he realized, the world did not always make allowances for

---

[4] William C. Kashatus, *A Conflict of Conviction: A Reappraisal of Quaker Involvement in the American Revolution* (Lanham, MD, 1990), 2-5

[5] Ibid., 7-9.

Quaker idealism. Worldly tumults and discontents often required citizens to step forward and defend their nation. If British soldiers refused to lay down their arms Americans must not hesitate to defend themselves. Continuing, Paine vowed his support. Should Britain invade Paine promised to "take up [his] musket" even as he "thank[ed] heaven [it was] put it in [his] power" to do so.[6]

Paine did not initially call for Quakers to join the fight against agitating Redcoats, or castigate them for their pacifism. Instead, he centered his denunciations on the British ministry. Paine's argument rang with characteristic verve. Painting for his readers a "portrait of a parent red with the blood of her children," Paine denied Britain's claim to colonial fatherhood. Rather than shelter its dependents, Britain reared a nation of "ruffian[s]" and "highway[men];" plunder—not parental protection—governed imperial policy. A related claim lay just under the surface. Unless Americans wished to be seen as servile "coward[s]," they must fight in defense of hearth and home. While Paine did not here equate Quakerism with loyalism, the seeds were nonetheless planted. Indeed, they only awaited only the right confluence of events to take root.[7]

1776 saw Paine's first real critique of Quakers ushered into print. Following the appearance of *Common Sense*, Friends expressed their disapproval of Paine's revolutionary tract by publishing a rejoinder of their own: *The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People Called Quakers Renewed.* The proclamation debuted during what Jack Marietta has styled the "Quaker Reformation." Following Friends' voluntary removal from politics during the Seven Years' War, Quaker discipline became evermore

---

[6] Thomas Paine, "Thoughts on Defensive War" in Moncure Daniel Conway, ed. *The Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1969), 55.

[7] Ibid., 55-56, 58.

fervid. Turning their gaze inwards Quakers sought to cleanse their Society of sin. Increasingly Quakers read members out of Meeting for contracting marriages with non-Quakers, military activity, or holding unorthodox views in general.[8]

Friends' *Ancient Testimony* displayed all the marks of a reformation text while also applying Quaker standards to the nation at large. The epistle opened by accusing Pennsylvanians of bringing the current crisis upon themselves. Their disloyalty to king and crown called down God's wrath on friend and foe alike. Repentance, Friends hinted, was in order. Colonists seemed to have forgotten that "the setting up, and putting down kings and governments, [was] God's peculiar prerogative." To declare otherwise implied blasphemy. Rather than seek to overthrow the monarch, colonists should again offer the king their devotion. Only by tendering "just and necessary subordination to the King" might they hope to regain God's favor.[9]

Paine's ensuing response (appended to the third printing of *Common Sense*) dismissed Quaker concerns even while labeling Patriots as manly defenders of hearth and home. Unlike British "highwaymen" and "housebreakers," Americans took their responsibilities as citizens seriously. As Republicans they fought to protect [their] own houses, and . . . [their] own lands." Yet, even while recognizing that Friends turned their back upon the martial duties of manhood, Paine once again refused to make the logical leap and dismiss Quakers as bungling patriarchs. Perhaps his decision stemmed from the

---

[8] Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Meeting for Sufferings, "The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People Called Quakers Renewed" (Philadelphia, 1776); Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism: 1748-1783* (Philadelphia, 1984). For an in-depth summary of the reformation see chapters 1-3, p. 3-72 inclusive.

[9] Marietta, 228;. Meeting for Sufferings, 1-4. In this regard Quakers agreed with many American Anglicans who also believed that rebellion against the crown constituted a crime against God as well as man. See Carla Gardina Pestena, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, 2009), 220.

fact that he did not yet see Quakerism writ large as the real problem. Though Friends refused to fight, Paine persisted in seeing the good inherent in the faith. For all their peculiarities, Quaker tenets still had a "direct tendency to make a man quiet and inoffensive." If Friends did not take up arms, at least they should not hinder the fight.[10]

For Paine, the real difficulty lay with male Quaker leaders who refused to act as Friends of their country ought. Rather than placing their confidence in God to dispose with "kings and governments" as He saw fit, they intruded into politics, cautioning meetings to "firmly . . . unite in the abhorrence of all such writings, and measures, as evidence of desire and design to break off the happy connexion . . . hitherto enjoyed, with the kingdom of Great-Britain." Despite assurances to the contrary, they actively sided with the enemy while working to stifle Patriot influence. Fortunately for the nation, this hypocrisy had not yet metastasized. Outside the factional politics of a choice few, most Quakers still devoted themselves to living their religion rather than policing government policy. They did not yet merit Paine's caustic prose.[11]

Before Paine could attack Quakerism as a whole, one final rhetorical move remained to be made. Quakers had to be associated directly with Loyalism. As of yet, merely dabbling in politics beyond one's ken did not a traitor make. The same could not be said of Tories whose opposition to patriots extended beyond self-righteous decrees. By actively supporting the king's cause, they risked becoming victims to Paine's pen. In the

[10] Thomas Paine, To the Representatives of the Religious Society of the People called Quakers, or to so many of them as were concerned in publishing a late piece, entitled "The ANCIENT TESTIMONY AND PRINCIPLES of the people called QUAKERS renewed" (Philadelphia, 1776), 122, 125.

[11] Ibid., 124-125 ; Marietta, 230-231.

end, Paine's anti-Loyalist prose would lay the groundwork for his assault against Quakerism.

Patriotism, fragile even in the heady days of '76, proved evermore elusive as the war continued. Weary soldiers deserted posts in increasing numbers; Congress engaged in endless cycles of bickering; Tories made inroads among anxious colonists. Though once able to give loyalists the benefit of the doubt (assuming their continued rapport with Britain an honest—if misguided—mistake), by late 1776, times had changed. Early Patriot victories gave way to defeat at Long Island. Washington's Continentals beat a hasty retreat into the Jerseys to escape the juggernaut of Lord Howe's army. In such dire circumstances, Tories began to be seen as dangerous turncoats.[12]

Tellingly, Paine's animosity towards Loyalists did not initially stem from a belief that they posed a military threat. Rather, their cowardice endangered the republic. "Servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism," he maintained. "And a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave." Fortunately, most Patriot men still demonstrated their mettle. Any militiaman worth his salt in battle might defeat one such traitor—or even ten—without fearing for his own life. If he ever happened meet one, that was. This last might prove might prove difficult, Paine joked, for even the foe questioned Loyalists' manhood. "'Tis soldiers, and not Tories, [the British] want," Paine sneered. The epithet spoke for itself. Weakness, both moral and physical, defined those who disavowed the Patriot cause.[13]

---

[12] For an account of the military campaign of 1776 in New York and beyond, see John E. Ferling, *Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence* (New York, 2007), 120-186.

[13] Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*, I, December 23, 1776, in Conway, 174.

But, if Tory's did not pose a military threat on the battlefield, why did Paine continue to malign them in print? The problem lay closer to home—indeed, revolved around it. Tories, by giving into cowardice, not only made poor soldiers, but threatened domestic foundations of republican fatherhood from which the nation drew its strength. As Paine alleged, they "shr[u]nk back at a time when a little [effort] might have saved the whole." He elucidated his position well in a now-familiar anecdote:

> I once felt all that kind of anger, *which a man ought to feel, against the mean principles that are held by the Tories*: a noted one, who kept a tavern at Amboy, was standing at his door, with as pretty a child in his hand, about eight or nine years old, as I ever saw, and after speaking his mind as freely as he thought was prudent, *finished with this unfatherly expression, "Well! give me peace in my day."* Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, "*If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace;" and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty. Not a place upon earth might be so happy as America.*[14]

Paine's hypothetical Tory repudiated nature by divorcing himself from his paternal instincts. Not only did he refuse to defend his children by taking part in the struggle against Britain, he placed his own comfort above that of kith and kin. Furthermore, he failed to pass on Republican principles to his children. Peace, in his eyes, triumphed over *patria*. The action called into question his very masculinity As Michael Kann once noted, republican men who failed "to respect . . . their birthright of liberty" were deemed unworthy of "procreating and nurturing sons." Because they did not "defend [or] extend [their] . . . liberty to new generations," they did not deserve the title of "father."[15]

---

[14] Ibid. Paine himself recounted his own growth into martial manhood thus: "However, I believe most men have more courage than they know of, and a little at first is enough to begin with. I knew the time when I thought that the whistling of a cannon ball would have frightened me to death; but I have since tried I, and I find that I can stand it with as little discomposure, and I believe, a much easier conscience than [General Howe]." See Paine, *The American Crisis*, II, January 13, 1777, in Conway, 185.

[15] Michael E. Kann, *Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York, 1998), 35; Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority* (New York, 1982), 44.

Paine took this last point seriously. By shirking the responsibilities of home—and by extension the country—he believed that Tory fathers implicated their sons' future manhood. Those who allowed "personal danger" to interfere with patriotic action risked passing the craven characteristics on to their progeny. Begotten in a "cowardly mood," Tories' sons would naturally refuse to bear arms or defend their country in its day of need. Paine here tapped into longstanding colonial anxieties. Much of Paine's adult readership subscribed to the belief that parents' emotional state during intercourse influenced their children's future temperaments. Just as Laurence Sterne's character Tristram Shandy believed his life's problems stemmed from his mother's distracted behavior during coitus, Paine believed that America's Tory sons promised to enter into life unfit for the duties that republicanism required of them. Paternal timidity assured their ruin; "the blood of his children" would justly "curse [the father's] cowardice."[16]

Furthermore, Loyalist men did not allow their children to mature into active patriot men and women. Paine made this point clear in his third installment of *The Crisis.* Never one for subtlety, Paine opened with a searching question: "is it the interest of a man to be a boy all his life?" The answer appeared obvious to all—except Tories. Instead of encouraging Americans to embrace personal and national maturity in their business enterprises, Loyalists sought to confine American trade to the British Empire alone. Rather than allowing the young nation to "exchange Britain for Europe—shake hands with the world . . . and trade to any market where she can buy and sell," they "cramped and fettered" American trade with the "laws and mandates" of a foreign power. In so

[16]Paine, *The American Crisis,* I, 176. According to Fliegleman, 64, "Tristram's mother had committed what amounts to the primordial parental sin" when she "unsetl[ed] [her] husband at the very moment of ejaculation by asking whether or not he had wound their clock." For quoted passage, see Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, vol. 1 (London, 1832), 1-3.

doing, they violated a core responsibility of fatherhood disseminated by 18th century philosophers: "preparing [their children] *for* the world, rather than keeping them *from* it."[17]

Paine expanded his indictment in following paragraphs. Here, however, Paine imagined the nation as a young woman on the cusp of her majority. Unlike his previous analogy, Paine now began by arguing that Britain had spurred, rather than stunted, the nation's maturation. Corrupt leaders had caused a "menstruum [which] effected a separation" of colony from empire. Unfortunately, Britain had only managed to do so through "the sharpest essence of their villainy," and "the strongest distillation of [their] folly." Here Paine referenced both colonial conceptions of chemistry as well as womanhood. Among its other meanings, "menstruum" was synonymous with "solvent" in colonial minds. Thus, Britain had provoked the separation which now pitted Americans against their onetime kin. Paine, however, also made the gendered component apparent. Early in the struggle against Britain, many Americans—including the Continental Congress—had doubted the nation's ability to stand independently. Not knowing her strength, they attempted to staunch the bloody flow of "separation" with an "abortive medicine."[18]

That Paine's menstrual imagery found itself employed in contexts of revolution would have come as no surprise to fellow colonists. In early America the onset of a woman's period, ("generally . . . about the age of fifteen"), signified a step towards maturity. At this important moment, the young female body underwent a rapid

[17] Fliegelmman, 50.

[18] Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 212-213.

transformation, blossoming into womanhood. According to medical professionals of the time, a woman's "future health and happiness" at this crucial moment hinged in no small degree upon her guardian's actions. In order to combat the ill-effects of menstruation—paleness, loss of energy, and apathy—doctors urged women to become more vigorous and independent. Remaining cooped up within the confines of their homes at menarche promised to cause women great harm. To avoid "chlorosis," or anemia, (fittingly termed "king's disease" in colonial vernacular) physicians encouraged parents to allow them to walk in the "open air as [much as] possible." Elders who sought to discourage physical activity failed to act in their charge's best interest.[19]

When coupled with Paine's earlier arguments, such gendered imagery held potentially revolutionary import. To stop up "independence" promised to make the nation insipid. As Paine made clear, America must leave her youth behind and walk in the bracing air of liberty. The very "vigor and purity of [the] public body" demanded it. Furthermore, though Britain remained to blame for inducing the American menses, its arrival was not to be deplored. For all its sordidness, it presaged the arrival of American maturity. As such, separation must be allowed. To block menarche promised to further damage the nation. If obstruction continued for an extended period of time, the nation would experience "despondency" as well as "stomach pains, headaches and melancholy." A break must be sought. Loyalists who frowned upon American freedom held no place within the new nation. Like unobservant parents they harmed—rather than healed—their republican charges. [20]

---

[19] William Buchan, *Domestic Medicine; or, the Family Physician*, (Philadelphia, 1778) 373.

[20]Susan Klepp, *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 182-183 In the end, even Paine's move to define "independence" as female

Neither did Loyalism's threat end there. Tory rejection of republican fatherhood also endangered families beyond hearth and home. Through their "cowardice and submission" they had recently allowed General Howe's army to "ravage" Patriot homes throughout "the defenseless Jerseys." At times they even assisted the enemy by "spread[ing] false alarms through the country." Employing these images, Paine shifted rhetorical gears. Instead of labeling Tories as craven fathers, he marked them as libidinous men. Rather than fight, they looked the other way as British soldiers emptied cities and "turned" citizens' "homes . . . into bawdy houses for Hessians." This, in turn, helped introduce illegitimate children onto the streets who entered the world with little or no knowledge of their parentage. In so doing they not only upset paternal order, but made "a whore of their soul by swearing allegiance" to an empire that cast republican norms of manhood (and womanhood) to the wind.[21]

As 1776 ran into 1777, Paine grew more suspicious of Quakers' loyalty. While he still considered a "religious Quaker" to be "a valuable character," and a "political" one "a real Jesuit," the discursive line separating the two increasingly blurred. Many Friends refused to participate in national fasts, declined to take oaths of allegiance to the country, and supported disowning Quakers who engaged in military activity (190 Quaker men received word of their forthcoming excommunication in 1776 alone). Quaker intransigence now appeared to Paine to spread well beyond "weighty Friends" in

---

served male purposes. Though she might grow stronger through independence, it nonetheless remained true that male physicians (in this case the Continental Congress), closely monitored her actions. She remained free to act for herself in proportion as she followed male advice.

[21] Mark E. Kann argues that the founders who failed to take into account the needs of their posterity naturally developed immoral tendencies: "they were presumed to be selfish individuals....They lived in the present where they unleashed lust, played out passion, and indulged impulse to disgrace their fathers' memory and procreate nothing better than bastards." See Kann, 35.

positions of power. The Quaker rank and file had thrown their support behind the king—or so it appeared to Paine. With this connection made, the caustic patriot could now associate Quakerism with Loyalism. As Paine himself described it, he now viewed Quakers as "three-quarter kindred" with their Tory brethren. The majority proved the rule. Cast in this light, Paine found it all the easier to transfer his gendered attacks against Loyalism to Quakers themselves. And, like their counterparts, Quakers would forfeit all claims to American manhood in the process.[22]

Paine, however, was not the first to connect Quakerism with sexuality run amok. Rather, he tapped into a rich, if not quite respectable, tradition. In 1768, Philadelphia's own Robert Bell published a series of English witticisms under the title of *The Macaroni Jester*, for the amusement of his readership. Throughout, Friends came in for their fair share of mockery. As one anecdote related

> A Quaker having picked up a wench, carried her to a tavern and treated her with burn claret, of which they both drank very plentifully: the lady told the Quaker, that she must beg of him to look out at the window while she made water, for her modesty would not permit her to do it before a man. He gratified her. In the interim she run down stairs with the silver boat in which they had their wine, and he was forced to pay for it.—sometime after going with another Quaker he said to his friend, it begins to rain hard, so we had best take a coach---Ay, says a gentlewomen, who heard him, and knew the story, a coach will be cheaper to thee than a boat.[23]

---

[22] For Quaker resistance to patriot urgings, see Marietta, 232-237; Paine, *The American Crisis*, II, 188, 193; Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 208. It should be noted that in 1776, when the second installment of *The Crisis* came off the press, Paine still qualified his attack of Quakers. Only "some of them" could be seen as out-and-out Tories. By 1777, however, Paine's diatribe against Quakerism would begin to conflate Quaker leaders with Quakers themselves. Wetherill would make the connection more specific still in 1778. "You must know that, Quakers and Tory, are words often applied together," he reminded Friends charged with disciplining him for taking an oath of allegiance. See Samuel Wetherill Junior, Samuel Wetherill Junior, "Letter to Owen Jones, Isaac Lane, Edward Jones, James Pemberton, John Pemberton and David Bacon," [1778], in Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennnsylvania, 11.

[23] Robert Bell, *The Macaroni jester, being, a select series; of original stories---witty repartees---comical and original bulls---entertaining anecdotes, &c. &c. The whole collected from a great variety of company in the world, and never before published to the world. To which are added, Brown's Quaker sermon and grace. By a gentleman of the world, who when he sat with certain people, mentioned and not mentioned, in this book, had always a pencil and pocket-book* (Philadelphia, 1768), 70.

Quakers, while still possessing a modicum of modesty (refusing to gaze on a woman as she "made water") nonetheless kept company with women of questionable repute. Moreover, common wenches took advantage of their wealth, while presumably airing their capers within hearing of the country's better sort.

Sly digs at Friends' expense continued at pamphlet's end. Appending a piece entitled "Mr. Brown's Sermon at a Quaker's Meeting," Bell compromised Friends' virtue further. "Brown's Sermon" waggishly detailed a Quaker minister's effort to excuse Friend "Azarius" before fellow Quakers for alleged sexual misconduct. One fine morning Azarias had decided on a quick jaunt on London. On passing "Turnham Green," his eyes unavoidably wandered. In the distance he espied fair "sister Ruth." Her "obliging glances" and "commanding eyes" soon overpowered the unfortunate Quaker's scruples. As they began conversing, Azarius began to desire her. "Dear Sister Ruth," he confessed: "The spirit moveth me to lay thee down, that I may fructify upon thee." Sister Ruth agreed without hesitation, coyly encouraging her hopeful Friend to "resist not the spirit, for from thence proceedeth no ill." Azarius obliged without second thought, "[laying her] flat on her back," and "follow[ing] the motions of the spirit." Brown then took a novel approach. Rather than ask Azarius to acknowledge his sin, he himself condoned it. "Our dear brother," Brown testified, had long "liv'd in good fame and reputation amongst his neighborhood." He did not deserve Friends' moralistic censure. Moreover his purpose remained laudable. Had he not sought to bring choice spirits into the Quaker fold? Would that all Quaker men might live up to his noble example.[24]

Both anecdotes, while questioning Quaker morality, differed markedly from Paine's gendered assertions. The *Macaroni Jester* placed Friends on the fringe of polite

[24] Ibid., 97-98.

society. They caroused with abandon which precluded them from "gentlewomen['s]" society. Their meetings followed radical policies to populate their pews. And yet, in the end, none of it really mattered. One could merely laugh away Quaker oddities. In the former case, the Quaker was made harmless through his ignorance. Even a "wench" might take advantage of his naiveté. Regarding the latter, Friends' unorthodox views, in addition to appearing so laughable as to prove innocuous, stayed within the bounds of their meetings. They did not spread into the larger society.

Paine's indictment of Quaker masculinity, however, was no laughing matter. Though, like *The Macaroni Jester,* he indicted Friends for their perverse sexuality. Writing in the third installment of *The Crisis* (published four years to the day after the battles of Lexington and Concord), Paine questioned Quakers very identity as Christians. Britain, Paine declared, had lost its virtue. Like "Sodom and Gomorrah," the nation had turned its back on God. Its fallen nature caused the country to revel in war and bloodshed. Did not history back this claim? After all, "Britain, for centuries past, [had] been nearly fifty years out of every hundred at war with some power or other." And yet Quakers refused to sever their ties with the mother country. They continued to chain Americans to a nation bent upon drawing them "through all the miseries" and mires of their "endless . . . wars." [25]

The "young country's" subservience rankled Paine. Like a man on the eve of his majority, the nation deserved independence. Only thus might he escape British carnage and study the art of peace; only then might he enjoy the liberty of trading with all the world. While Quaker loyalists continued to "dip" the country's "hands in the bloody

[25] Paine, "The American Crisis, III," 210.

work of Europe," the goddess of liberty would never mature. The blood of war would never become the blood of menarche, the life-giving fluid of independence. The "young country" promised to remain young to the last. Quakers, like their Tory brethren, failed the demands of parenthood.[26]

Sodom and Gomorrah's resonance as a symbol went deeper still. Colonists familiar with the Bible knew of the cities' sins. Lot, Abraham's brother, provoked divine wrath while offering "two angels" room and board. Sodom's residents did not share Lot's notion of hospitality. Pressing upon Lot's door they demanded sexual access to his heavenly guests. Fearing for his life Lot sought an easier way out. Rather than sacrifice God's chosen messengers to the dissolute crowd he offered up his daughters—or at least he attempted to do so. The mob persisted in their original desires. Only the timely intervention of Lot's angelic visitors swayed the throng and saved the daughters he had declined to protect. Filled with the power of God they "smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great." And still greater punishment lay in store. On the morrow, as Lot's family fled into the wilderness, the Lord received his revenge. From "out of heaven" a bright light lit the sky; "Brimstone and fire" rained upon Sodom's inhabitants. One imagines that they never saw it coming.[27]

Quakers, like Sodomites and Tories, lived in sin while failing to protect their families. So said Paine. Rumors abounded in the press. Many Philadelphians believed that King George III had recently made a mistress of the beautiful Quaker sister Hannah Lightfoot. Friends, it was rumored, did not feel this to be an indecency. Rather than

---

[26] Ibid.

[27] For the story of Lot, see the King James version of Genesis 19. Quoted material found in verses 11 and 24.

protest the violation of Quaker womanhood, they continued to support the king's reign with continued "testimonies" on his behalf. Quakers, it appeared, confused their faith. Though outwardly proclaiming to abide by Christian standards, their men happily submitted to "being cuckolded by a creature called a king." By inference, they also misplaced their loyalty. Any ruler that did not protect a young maid's virtue did not hold the right to sit in judgment over American homes. By allying themselves with a corrupt throne, Quakers not only threatened the purity of their own kith and kin, but the nation at large.[28]

Paine's attack, if less ribald than the anonymous wit's, engendered more concern. To Paine's discerning eye, Quaker venality no longer appeared harmless. Nor could he dismiss Friends as a harmless minority. Their Society loomed large in public imagination. The sins of a few, Paine argued, might infect all. In league with Tories, they promoted their "schemes" with reckless abandon. Such plans compromised republican virtue as they often arose in the darkened rooms of "common bawdy-houses." Moreover, Quakers did not defend their own homes. In this, they went further than men who merely desired peace. They actively legislated against it in their meetings. "If a Quaker, in defense of his just rights, his property, and the chastity of his house, takes up his musket," Paine exploded, "he is expelled [from] meeting." Not only did Friends allow their women to become the consorts of kings, they employed verbal coercion to stop male children from embracing martial duties of republicanism. Either way, by aligning with Britain, they forced their children to become dependent upon the king's whims. And, as all good republicans knew full well, such dependency implicated masculinity. By "conform[ing]

[28] Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 215-216. Italics in original.

to group norms or defer[ing] to authority" dependents lost control of their individual will, the very motor of manhood. By contrast, patriots asserted, masculinity resided in defense of liberties, both personal and familial. This last, Free Quakers would emphasize with particular relish in the coming decades.[29]

However, Paine's criticism of Quaker manhood embraced far more than Friends' political violations. It also compassed their refusal to contribute funds to freedom's cause. In this regard Quakers were doubly to blame. Not only did they possess great wealth, but they acted the part of "miserly [men] whose only thought revolved around making [their] mammon safe." Avarice defined and defiled them. In essence, Paine argued that Quakers failed to measure up to economic norms of fatherhood. Republican men, he hinted, must eschew ostentatious displays of wealth. Though often reminded that virtue depended upon living within one's means, Americans also expected well-off citizens to demonstrate disinterestedness. To horde ones earnings by refusing to support local militias or pay substitution fees cut republicanism off from its very lifeblood: sacrifice. Only one solution remained. Taxation. If virtue failed to sway men's hearts, a "heavy tax laid upon covetousness" might.[30]

Such parsimony, while prolonging the war effort, also stopped American soldiers from performing the martial duties required of them. A contemporary occurrence between Miers Fisher, a local Quaker suspected of harboring loyalist sympathies, and an anonymous American citizen provides one telling example. Taking a stroll "during the early part of the American Revolution," Miers happened upon a Patriot "dressed as an

---

[29] Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 216; Mark E. Kann, A Republic of Men: *The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics*, (New York, 1998), 47.

[30] Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 201, 225.

officer in the American army." The meeting quickly took a turn for the worse. Disregarding all common etiquette Miers grabbed for the man's sheathed saber while brusquely querying "where [he was] hurrying so fast with this thing dangling by his side." Like any good patriot, the man responded with fierce pride: "I am going to fight for my property and liberty." Miers countered the man's response with disdain. "As for property, thou hast none—and as for thy liberty thou owest that to the clemency of thy creditors, me amongst the rest." In one swift move, Miers brought the man's penurious state to the fore. For all his patriotism, the citizen remained tied to an avaricious Quaker merchant. In effect, Friends, already seen as cowards in and of themselves, posed a still greater threat. By damaging citizens' claims to property, Friends underscored patriot dependence. In effect, these citizens' very ability to wage battle and protect their home (both physically and fiscally) hinged upon Quaker clemency. Were Quakers such as Miers to call such men to account, their days in the field would become numbered.[31]

At the same time, Paine also implicitly censured Quakers for disregarding the parental demands of their own faith. Friends viewed fatherhood as a divine responsibility. Throughout the colonial period Quaker men received repeated admonishment to bring their children up in light and truth, to protect their charges from "temptations," and stem any penchant for "rudeness and wildness" they manifested. In like manner, Friends urged fathers to physically provide for and protect their children. Good Quaker patriarchs apprenticed sons out to knowledgeable and kind merchants and artisans to learn a trade for themselves. They checked up on their sons' progress, and complained to monthly meetings should masters abuse their children. Following marriage, many Quaker fathers

[31] Stackhouse, 23.

bestowed property upon their male progeny. From the outset, Quaker fathers were expected to provide for their children both physically and spiritually, that they might become capable of meeting the world on their own once they reached the age of maturity. But, by Paine's light, Quakers did not measure up even here. They refused to protect the sanctity of their homes by actively encouraging Loyalist depredations. Furthermore, Quakers charged with sexual indiscretions did not provide their children with the spiritual direction their tender years demanded. Finally, they overstepped bonds of parenthood by refusing to allow mature sons to decide to defend the patriot cause for themselves. Rather than act as Quaker fathers ought, they displayed marked tendencies of tyrannical control and moral ignorance.[32]

Non-Quaker Patriots agreed with Paine's anti-Quaker diatribes. Shortly after General Howe's invasion of Philadelphia in September of 1777, newspapers began providing evidence that Quakers threatened Patriot homes. On October 9, 1777, The *Connecticut Courant* recorded that, as Redcoats entered the city, Quakers assisted the army in "taking up Whigs, and shewing them . . . [their] houses." Only the timely intervention of patriot "galleys" put an end to Quaker mischief. Two months later, the *Courant* reported that Quakers who refused to support the patriot war effort freely donated their funds to the king's service. As one American officer wrote to a friend in Baltimore: "the Quakers made friend Howe a free gift of 6000l. upon his entrance into Philadelphia." The *New-York Gazette* and *Weekly Mercury* cynically noted Quaker hypocrisy. Despite their alleged pacifist principles, Philadelphia Quakers "mount[ed]

[32] J. William Frost, *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends* (New York, 1973), 133-140; Barry Levy, *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley* (New York, 1988), 150.

guard every night" in order to safeguard personal belongings. Lutheran minister Henry Muhlenberg saw this last as particularly egregious, as he believed Quakers had received securities for their estates from the king. Quakers, it appeared, could play the man. They might stand up in defense of their property (if not their families), but only by violating their own religious convictions and casting Patriot beliefs to the wind.[33]

With time, the army also began to question Quaker loyalties. On August 24, 1777, General Sullivan wrote to John Hancock with news of Quaker treason. In a soldier's belongings Sullivan reputedly discovered directives from a nearby Quaker Meeting apprising General Howe of American military strength. The general reacted with anger. Quakers, he fumed, were "the most dangerous enemies America knows." Sullivan's reasoning echoed Paine: "while they are themselves in no kind of danger" they yet "always covered [themselves] with the hypocritical cloak of religion under which they have with impunity so long acted the part of inveterate enemies of their country." By now, equating Quakerism with effeminacy required little imagination; Paine's template evidenced remarkable adaptability. In handing their nation over to the enemy, Sullivan argued, Friends played the role of harlot. Quaker leaders "prostituted" their gatherings "to the base purpose of betraying their country." Once again, responsibility fell upon American men to right Quaker wrongs. Patriotic soldiers, those "guardians of . . . freedom," remained responsible for putting an end to Friends' seditious gatherings—thereby protecting their families and their nation. Like Paine, they agreed that Quakers

[33] *The Continental Journal*, November 27, 1777, 1; *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, April 21, 1777, 3.

held no claim to citizenship in the new Republic. They had, in effect, "read themselves out of the continental meeting."[34]

Even before Free Quakers organized in 1781, future members expressed their sympathy with Paine's anti-Quaker depictions. In the process, they also implicitly enhanced their own claims to manhood in the new Republic. Following the Society's birth similar rhetoric would assume sectarian significance. In an effort to prove religious legitimacy as the "youngest religious [group] in the empire," the language of manhood would become increasingly entrenched in the faith's communal psyche.[35]

As early as 1774, Christopher Marshall, began placing Quakerism at odds with republicanism. Like Paine, Marshall's opinions took shape gradually. For, even after being disowned in 1751 (on charges of counterfeiting), Marshall continued attending Quaker meeting. As Marshall began sympathizing with his "suffering brethren in the common cause of liberty," however, his respect for former Friends waned. On September 24, 1774, Marshall recorded in his diary that Philadelphia's "Quaker Yearly Meeting" had dispersed an epistle which gave "great offense to the friends of freedom and liberty in America." By playing on the word "friend," Marshall signaled his desire to redefine Quakerism. True Quakers, or "friends," defended their nation. All others were imposters.[36]

---

[34] General Sullivan to John Hancock, Aug 24, 1777 in *Letters and Papers of Major General John Sullivan*, ed. Otis G. Hammond, 2 Vol (Concord, N. H., 1930), I:443-444; Paine, *The American Crisis,* III, 225.

[35] [Society to Free Quakers to President Washington], Philadelphia, March 4, 1790, in *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008.

[36] Christopher Marshall, Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall, Kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster, During the American Revolution 1774-1781, edited by William Duane (Albany, NY, 1877), 10.

Even so, Marshall did not repudiate his Quakerism. Quite the contrary. Instead, he opted to identify Quakerism with the nascent revolutionary government itself. As the Yearly Meeting continued its business throughout the week, Marshall noted their increased hostility towards the Continental Congress. Threatening disownment, they called upon all members in good standing to resign from local assemblies espousing Patriot ideals. In all this, Marshall argued, Quakers moved to "pacific proceedings of the . . . Congress" who still sought to avoid war. By focusing on the body's actions, Marshall made his meaning clear. The Continental Congress followed Quakers' peace testimony better than Friends themselves. Marshall made similar moves over the next few days. On Feb 28th, 1775, he recorded approvingly that the "Quakers' interest" called for the "suspending of [immoral] fairs in our city." Yet, at the same time, Marshall documented that a public committee on which he served had also submitted a proposal meant to ban the importation of slaves into Philadelphia. While Quakers might live up to their religion in some aspects, American institutions might also carry on their work.[37]

Furthermore, Marshall began noting that some Quakers now questioned Patriot masculinity. After receiving news that a "meeting of merchants" had convened in London on February 10 to discuss the American rebellion, Marshall recorded that an attendant Quaker boldly "declared [that] however lightly and contemptuously [Britain's] petitions were treated, he was fully satisfied that the Americans would, to a man, die, if the act in his hand, which he held up, was not repealed." Shortly thereafter, Marshall began noting that at least some Quakers still behaved as men ought. On April 3rd Marshall noted in his journal: "There was a company of young men, Quakers, who this

---

[37] Katushas, 10, 30; Marshall, 13,14, 51.

day asked leave . . . to learn the military exercise . . . which was granted, and they began this evening."[38]

The following day, Marshall appeared continued along similar lines. Writing as if responding directly to the anonymous British Quaker, Marshall remarked, "The Quaker company, Humphries, captain, about thirty exercised in the factory yard, and such is the spirit and alacrity of them, that few, if any, will sooner learn the military art and discipline, and make a handsomer appearance, nor be ready to assert, at the risk of their lives, the freedom of America on Constitutional principles." Not only did these Quaker men evince their willingness to shed blood that their rights might be secured, their martial abilities equaled if not outshone Patriots of other religious denominations. Even as the political foundations for Paine's Quaker diatribes solidified, Marshall began to redefine Quakerism in terms with which fellow Patriots might identify.[39]

For a time, Patriot strength appeared to chasten Quaker opposition. Shortly after viewing Friends' martial activities, Marshall noted with approval that "many . . . stiff Quakers" appeared "ashamed of their proceedings." Republicanism, he implied, cleansed Friends' of effeminacy even as it carried on Quaker aims.[40] His optimism proved short-lived. In June of 1775, the Continental Congress set aside July 20th as a national day of fasting and prayer. True to form, Quakers opposed the move. During a monthly meeting held June 10, a particularly weighty Friend arose and urged fellow Quakers to keep their businesses open. That Quakers had traditionally done so in the past (as a testimony

---

[38] Marshall,17, 22.

[39] Marhsall, 22.

[40] Marshall, 22; Marietta, 159.

against coerced worship) scarcely crossed Marshall's irate mind. Rather than excuse Friends on religious grounds Marshall complained that their refusal to recognize Congress's directives struck at the very foundations of Quakerism. In a remarkable lapse of brevity, Marshall exclaimed:

> This was, in plain terms, saying, You may frolic as much as you please on that day, but don't, by any means, suffer yourselves to be humble or pray on that day, because it is appointed by the delegates [of the Continental Congress] for that service, to pray and worship God. This he pressed them to observe, that so they might not be like the world's people. Here is another flagrant testimony to the decay of primitive Christianity, viz. 'Pray without ceasing,'—"In the time of trouble, call upon me,' &c., &c.[41]

Many Friends thus contradicted tenets of Christianity and patriotism. By refusing to "frolic" on a day of national humiliation, those who supported the revolution met Marshall's definitions of Quakerism—definitions which Free Quakers would begin to claim in succeeding years.

Indeed, Marshall now started praising Quakerism only when it upheld personal ideals. On July 9, Marshall joyfully noted that some Friends still held to their Christian (read revolutionary) convictions. "It is said," he noted, "that some day last week there was a meeting of the Quakers in this city, wherein it was agreed that a collection should be set afoot in that society, for the relief of the necessitous of all religious denominations" who suffered from the Boston Port Bill. Yet, even so, Marshall here evidenced his growing political distance from Quakerism. Even as he praised Quakers for their patriotic zeal he admitted he did not remember the day Friends had met to discuss providing aid to Massachusetts. In the same entry he referred to "Quakers" as "that society," evidencing his growing estrangement from their community of believers.[42]

---

[41] Marshall, 30.

[42] Marshall, 30-31.

As Marshall redefined Quakerism in his mind to embrace republican conceptions of patriotism and masculinity, he also took particular care to record his efforts to inculcate similar sentiments in his progeny. Days after receiving word that King George III aimed to quash the American rebellion, Marshall walked with "son Benjamin" (aged 38) to John Hancock's residence. The jaunt stemmed from a desire to view enemy flags recently taken from a Patriot raid on Fort Chamblee in Ontario, Canada. Two weeks later Benjamin once again accompanied Marshall on his daily peregrination. After viewing a new gaol on the corner of Sixth and Walnut, father and son paused to welcome "Lady Washington" into Philadelphia. One can almost imagine the two trading insights on the state of her military train.[43]

Like Christopher Marshall, Samuel Wetherill Jn. (the future clerk of the Religious Society of Free Quakers) also evinced a proclivity to redefine Quakerism to meet demands of republican masculinity. Born in 1736, Wetherill found himself drawn to the Quaker ministry. Yet, by 1778, he found himself on the verge of disownment. Though no admirer of war, Wetherill nonetheless took part in "public commotions [then] prevailing" by affirming his allegiance to the national government. Friends considered this a deviation from the Quaker discipline that required all members to follow biblical precedent and subject themselves "to the powers that be." As Quakers believed that the new American government had not demonstrated its legitimacy, proffering allegiance to the state remained a disownable offense throughout the war. [44]

---

[43] Ibid., 50-51. Marshall writes that Martha Washington was "escorted into the city . . . by the Colonel and other officers, and light infantry of the Second Battalion, and the company of Light Horse, etc.," 51.

[44] Charles Wetherill, 16; Marietta, 267-268. Wetherill was also eventually disowned for "distributing a book tending to promote dissension and division among Friends." Though what this book contained scholars have not been able to discover.

Months before becoming estranged from the Society he still longed to call his own, Wetherill provided a rare glimpse into his decision to cast his fortunes with the American cause. In an epistle directed to Friends "Owen Jones, Isaac Lane, Edward Jones, James Pemberton, John Pemberton and David Bacon," Wetherill defended his decision to violate the Quaker Discipline. Never one for brevity, Wetherill began his defense by recurring to "first principles." Quakers, he argued, must decide just how far "Kings, and all men in power" deserved their loyalty. In typical Lockean fashion, Wetherill claimed that government existed to defend the governed. When government stepped beyond its legitimate purpose it no longer merited the people's respect or allegiance. [45]

Wetherill, however, went beyond common political parlance to make his point. Choosing to forego knotty questions concerning taxation, Wetherill evinced his Quaker leanings by broaching the subject of familial relations. Unlike Paine, Wetherill did not argue against British authority based upon supposed American maturity. Rather, he called to mind empire-wide suffering. "The history of the East and West Indies, Africa and America is written in characters of blood," Wetherill moaned. But the British took no cognizance of such suffering. In so doing, they shirked their fatherly duties. A recent

---

[45] Samuel Wetherill Junior, "Letter to Owen Jones, Isaac Lane, Edward Jones, James Pemberton, John Pemberton and David Bacon," [1778], in Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennnsylvania, 2. Though respecting Wetherill for his learning, Marshall at times became annoyed by Wetherill's loquacity. Listening to Wetherill preach in the Free Quaker Meeting House on August 22, 1784 he noted in his diary: Samuel Wetherill appeared introducing his discourse with Acts 5.34-35 to 40. He then instead of pursuing the advice given entered into a discourse of defaming vilifying and traducing and in order to strengthen as he apprehended, he compared, by introducing the system of Mahomet, in the early age of Christianity, its progress and numbers etc as to the moderns . . . he introduced David George, David the little warrior who would give himself no name, having received new name etc. etc. after many hems, haws . . . *sat down expressed he found himself not clear, so introduced Luther, Calvin, etc then shewed notwithstanding Calvin's zeal and pretences to piety he called Michael Severetus to be put to death and the auditory then grow impatient so that he broke up the meeting ½ after 11.*" See Christopher Marshall, *Christopher Marshall Rembembrancer Vol H, July 13, 1783-December 18, 1785*, HSP, 130, italics added.

famine in India underscored Wetherill's point. Any good parent sheltered his offspring from the storms of life. Not Britain. Under its government Wetherill saw only pain:

> Women perishing for want of food, with their little ones clinging round them weeping, and in the plaintive language of infantine years begging for a morsel of bread, whilst their parents far from having it in their power to satisfy the cravings of their hunger, tho perhaps willing were it possible to nourish them with their blood: but alas, blood they have none, it is all wasted, and they and their children perish with famine together, and why is this so? Has the bountiful creator withheld his blessings upon the land! Is this famine singly an act of Providence? Not so, for the produce of the country is monopolized by the King and Parliaments emissaries, with a view to enrich some dignified sinners that they may wallow in wealth, and be enabled to put golden chains round the necks of their domestic animals.[46]

The allusion referenced incidents well-known to literate Pennsylvanians. Seizing the port of Calcutta in 1761, Robert Clive assisted the British Empire in their quest for control of the Indian continent. Capitalizing on his position, Clive politicked his way into power. Within years he controlled the Bengal *diwani* which afforded access to the province's civil infrastructure. Influence soon begot wealth, much to the detriment of Indian society. When famine devastated the country, Clive continued to demand his subjects' labor and lives. Or so Wetherill and fellow Philadelphians believed. As Wetherill reminded his accusers, Lord Clive succeeded in "destroy[ing] by war, starv[ing] to death by famine, and [driving] out of the country, a number of persons, equal according to the lowest computation to one half of the inhabitants of North America." In the process he severed familial bonds. Indian parents, though wishing to provide for their children, had nothing left to give. Want of food caused by an uncaring and acquisitive empire left father and mother alike "wasted." Unable to offer sustenance, they watched in horror as their children "perish[ed] with famine together." Britain not only forfeited its paternal claims, but caused Indian parents to do the same.[47]

---

[46] Wetherill, "To Owen Jones," 3.

[47] J.M. Opal, "Common Sense and Imperial Atrocity: How Thomas Paine saw South Asia in North America," http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-04/forum/opal.shtml; Wetherill, 3.

Referencing Clive's abuses served two additional purposes. First, it allowed Wetherill to attack prevailing Quaker views of Providence. Many orthodox Friends during the Revolution saw the war as God's punishment for sin. Only after Americans humbled themselves might the Lord see fit in his mercy to end the war. Thus, Quaker leaders called on Friends to repent rather to submit to the new government. Wetherill turned such thought on its head. By his reasoning the current struggle revealed God's displeasure with Britain, not American colonists. God, in his infinite wisdom had decided to rend "out of the hands of King and Parliament this mighty continent." In this, Wetherill agreed with Paine who, in 1775, predicted that abuse of Indian families had paved the way for God to "curtail the power of Britain." Too, these bold assertions allowed Wetherill to assert his own claims to spiritual legitimacy. Though his accusers might disown him, Wetherill still argued that his interpretation of events resonated with Quaker views of loyalty. And, if Providence approved Patriot efforts to right Britain's familial wrongs as well as assert her natural claim to liberty, Quakers might in good conscience affirm loyalty to the nation. At the same time they might assume the position of model citizens who fought—rather than faltered—in the fight for liberty and all mankind. [48]

Wetherill's critique of the British Empire did not end here. He also pushed it to embrace the horrors of slavery. Again Britain's penchant for compromising Indians' abilities to care for their families occupied the foreground. "The poor African," Wetherill posited, was "stolen from every connection." Because of greed, slavers separated

---

[48] Wetherill, "To Owen Jones," 4; Paine, "A Serious Thought," October 18, 1775, 65. Paine called Britain to account for "the wailing widow, the crying orphan, and the childless parent['s] . . . lament." See Paine, "Reflections on the Life and Death of Lord Clive," March 1775, in *TWTP*, 29.

"husband from wife, and wife from husband, parents from children, and children from parents; perhaps [even] whole village[s] desolated, and all [their] inhabitants taken together and sold into an unredeemable captivity." In this he also mirrored Paine's rhetoric. In his essay "African Slavery in America," published in 1774, Paine had also lamented the practice which sold "husbands away from wives, children from parents, and from each other in violation of sacred and natural ties."[49]

Whether or not Wetherill read Paine's essays is beyond the ken of historians. Nonetheless, the similarity remains important. For, while Wetherill agreed with Paine in the aggregate, he also went further in one particular. Paine, for all his passion, never moved beyond blaming Britain for the offense of slavery. Wetherill, however, implicated Friends themselves. "Oh! My friends are ye so fond of a further connection in government with this people," he queried wistfully, that ye will deny Christian Communion to all who are weary of their cruelty?" Quakers, Wetherill claimed, were guilty by association. Through affirming loyalty to a country which sundered the paternal bonds of Indians and African slaves, Friends renounced their own claims to manhood. By asserting that Providence now decreed the time ripe for separation from such an empire, Wetherill not only proved himself a defender of family, but also linked his brand of Quakerism directly with Patriot ideology then in currency.[50]

---

[49] Wetherill, "To Owen Jones," 3 ; Paine, "African Slavery in America," 7.

[50] Wetherill, 3; Paine, "African Slavery in America," 7. Indeed, when Paine wrote "A Serious Thought" in October of 1775, he sympathized with Indians precisely because they mirrored Quakers by refusing to fight: "When I read of the wretched natives being blown away, for no other crime than because, sickened with the miserable scene they refused to fight-When I reflect on these and a thousand instances of similar barbarity, I firmly believe that the Almighty, in compassion to mankind, will curtail the power of Britain." 65.

War also provided Timothy Matlack, acting clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly, with opportunities to to prove his manhood *vis-à-vis* Quaker opponents. Like Marshall and Wetherill, Matlack no longer belonged to the Society of Friends. Disowned in 1765 for contracting excessive debt while managing his "hardware store" as well as "manifesting a disposition of frequenting [non-Quaker] company," Matlack nevertheless made a name for himself in Pennsylvania politics. Less than a month after General Gage's soldiers marched on Lexington and Concord, the Continental Congress appointed Matlack as their clerk. Shortly thereafter Congress also placed him in charge of "military supplies."

Various other responsibilities ensued. In each, Matlack evidenced continued devotion to the revolutionary cause: Pennsylvania Council of Safety Member later in 1775; commander of a battalion during the harsh winter of 1776; Secretary to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in 1777. The latter body expressed their thanks for Matlack's devotion by awarding him an urn fashioned from silver. It was given, they noted, "as a token of their appreciation of [Matlack's] patriotic devotion to the cause of the Colonies in their struggle for Freedom and the many and valuable services rendered by him during the entire period until the acknowledgement of their Independence." In all this, Matlack appeared the Patriot as well as the man, anxious to defend family and nation. At times, this occurred at the expense of Quakers unfortunate enough to raise his ire.[51]

In early 1779, Thomas Fisher and John James, two Quakers known for their exceptional piety, visited Matlack's son in order to condemn his "having taken Arms

[51] Stackhouse, 5-6, 9-11.

under some of the present usurpers against the King and Government." Though showing little interest in their message, the son treated the request politely. Matlack on the other hand showed no such reserve. As Fisher and James prepared to depart, Matlack accosted them at the door. Angered at their effrontery, Matlack grabbed a nearby "Hickory Walking Stick" and commenced beating their "head and shoulders." The drubbing only ceased after Matlack's stick broke over the bodies of the unfortunate visitors in the street beyond his residence. Matlack, it appeared, had taken *The Crisis's* advice to heart. At all costs he aimed to fulfill his role as patriarch and protector. Nothing, under his watch, would violate the sanctity of home or family. Matlack's recourse to violence underscored the point. When seen as a phallic symbol, Matlack's "walking stick" denotes mastery of hearth and home. With it, Matlack secured his own rights as well as his sons'. Where Wetherill identified with Paine through his pen, Matlack enforced his agreement with the sword.[52]

Gathering at Samuel Wetherill's residence on a frigid February evening in 1781, "a small number of men" (eight in all) agreed on the "propriety of establishing a religious society separate from the Society of Friends." In many regards, Free Quaker worship resembled that of orthodox Friends'. Indeed, Free Quakers themselves did not see their sect as a departure from their old faith. Like their brethren they worshipped in silence, seeking the guidance of the inner light. Though never numerous enough to hold yearly meetings, they continued to hold both meetings for business as well as monthly meetings.

[52] Samuel Rowland Fisher, *Journal of Samuel Rowland Fisher*, in The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography , Vol. 41, No. 2 (1917), 146.

Even their epistles to Free Quaker sympathizers mirrored traditional form, focusing more on inner spiritual realities than worldly exigencies.[53]

Yet, while a desire to worship as Friends influenced Free Quakers' inner governance, more than faith directed their outward actions. The fate of Free Quakerism did not rest upon the inner light alone. Hoping to lay claim to the Quaker name as well as garner the respect of fellow citizens, Free Quakers sought to institutionalize republican norms of manhood within their meeting. In the process, Marshall's, Matlack's and Wetherill's redefinitions of Quakerism became entrenched within the new faith's memory. In essence, Free Quakers began where Paine left off. Where Paine's writings employed republican tropes to tear down Friends' pretensions during the revolution, Free Quakers now employed the rhetoric of masculinity in building up their sect.[54]

Still, anti-Quakerism coursed through Free Quaker documents. In order to appear as men, Free Quakers felt the need to cast their Quaker brethren in an unfavorable light. From the outset Free Quakerism built their faith upon foundations of exclusion. In this regard, Free Quaker discourse operated on numerous levels. Like Paine, the sect questioned Friends' loyalty to the current government. This was made all too clear within the year, when, following Free Quakers' first meeting, Friends forbade them use of their meetinghouses and records. The new society reacted swiftly. In an effort to gain access to their one-time property, the society sought out state assistance. Their petition reached the General Assembly in 1782.

---

[53] Religious Society of Free Quakers (hereafter cited as RSFQ), *Minutes*, 2.20.1781, Box 1, American Philosophical Society (hereafter cited APS).

[54] Religious Society of Free Quakers, "An Address to those of the People Called Quakers, who have Been Disowned for Matters Religious or Civil, in Charles Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers*, 47;RSFQ, "Minutes of the Free Quakers," 3.1781, box 1, APS.

Though toning down Paine's cutting prose, Free Quakers nonetheless employed similar rhetorical strategies. Seeking to paint Friends as Tories, Free Quakers laid incriminating rumors before Pennsylvania's legislative body. Did not Quakers refuse to "defraud the king of his dues," they queried? If so, they compromised their loyalty to the new nation. Nor was this all, they maintained. Friends refused to recognize the jurisdiction of local authorities. Seeing American leaders as usurpers of British prerogative, they condescendingly referred to them as "men 'who are [merely] in the exercise of the powers of government,'" rather than as legitimate directors of a new polity. To add insult to injury, Quakers refused to acknowledge their own wrongdoings. Instead they sought to disown Free Quakers and "deprive . . . them of their rights descending from their ancestors." At the same time, Free Quakers built upon such imagery to bolster their own image in the eyes of their countrymen. From the start they portrayed themselves as Patriots. Though few in numbers, they continued to serve the country; though disowned for fighting as well as paying taxes to support the war, Free Quakers continued to stand firm in their loyalty. Was not their call for state protection evidence enough of their allegiance? Quakers, after all, did no such thing. Though at times petitioning the Assembly for redress of personal grievances, they refused to recognize the body's authority. By calling Pennsylvania's government into question, Friends not only revealed their Tory leanings, but also removed themselves from the pale of patriotic Quakerism.[55]

[55] Religious Society of Free Quakers, "To the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly Met," 8.21.1782, in Charles Wetherill, 73, 79; RSFQ, "To Those of our Brethren who have Disowned Us," 53;

At the same time, Free Quakers made no effort to hide the fact that traditional Quakers threatened their role as fathers and husbands in the republic. After being excommunicated, Free Quakers found themselves "scattered abroad," strangers and "aliens in a strange land." While still welcome to attend Quaker worship (Friends allowed excommunicants to sit in on meetings), they could not use Quaker property to worship as a distinct body. With no meetinghouse to call their own, Free Quaker "children and families" could not receive the word of God as the Lord desired. Thus, by divesting Free Quakers of a physical location to worship Friends made it difficult for the new body to perform its paternal duties. What kind of parent, after all, deprived children of spiritual sustenance or compromised fathers' abilities to act as spiritual providers themselves? With such duties hanging over their heads, it became evermore urgent for Free Quakers to join together as an official body. Only by bonding together as a distinct religious denomination might they rehabilitate their claim to parenthood. In this regard, the Free Quakers' "Discipline"—a set of rules agreed upon in 1781 by Free Quaker members—proved instrumental. By agreeing upon set policies, Free Quaker men asserted their ability to define worshippers' relation with the divine, as well as their social bonds with each other.[56]

Within the "Discipline," Free Quakers re-inscribed parental authority in a variety of ways. Regulation of familial affairs, including marriage, figured chief among these. After receiving word that a Free Quaker wished to wed, the meeting's leaders stepped into action. They were to dictate the process whereby a marriage gained acceptance in the eyes of the society. To begin, a male "committee" assembled in order to ascertain that no

[56] Ibid., 27-28.

prior "marriage engagement" marred either person's history. This done, Free Quaker overseers sought parental agreement for the match. Familial ties continued through the marriage ceremony. While directing that marriages might be "solemnized at a public meeting for worship," the "Discipline" also allowed for the ceremony to take place "at the house of either of the parties; or at the house of their parents or friends." While Quaker (as well as Puritan) practice allowed marriages within members' homes, for Free Quakers the practice held the added advantage of allowing Free Quaker men to secure familial relationships in a manner which had not been open to them since their disownment years before. Furthermore, by following orthodox Quaker marital practices, Free Quakers tacitly acknowledged their continued claim to the Quaker name. In so doing they subtly critiqued Friends for hindering them from exercising their rightful parental prerogatives in years past.[57]

As clerk of the society Samuel Wetherill took care to note Free Quaker reliance upon the "Discipline" in matrimonial affairs. On December 6, 1798, Free Quakers learned that Sarah Wetherill Jn. (daughter of Samuel) intended to wed Joshua Lippincott, a fellow Free Quaker. After the requisite discussion the meeting appointed Benjamin Say and Moses Bartram to "enquire concerning the clearness of other marriage engagements" as well as gain the elder Wetherills' permission. Satisfied on both fronts, the meeting allowed Joshua and Sarah to marry a month later at Samuel Wetherill's home. The minutes approvingly record that the ceremony proceeded with "good order and decorum." Much to Wetherill's approval, Free Quaker belief would reach the next generation intact. But Wetherill and other Free Quakers also broke with tradition.

[57] RSFQ, "Discipline," 29.

Whereas orthodox Quakers allowed women to interview female matrimonial candidates, Free Quakers shifted the responsibility to male believers alone. Whether Free Quakers made this decision consciously or not (Free Quaker numbers may have made them reticent to allow women their own meeting for business) the result reiterated the importance of fatherhood in the faith.[58]

Regard for proper masculine deportment also pervaded discussions regarding the admittance of potential members to meeting. As the "Discipline" stated, anyone desiring to join in fellowship with the Religious Society of Free Quakers must appear to the "meeting of business" to be possessed of "good character." Invariably such traits mirrored the qualities expected of a citizen. When a George Kemble sought to join the society in April of 1786, Christopher Marshall and Jehu Eldridge received permission to interview the hopeful member. During a meeting for business the following month Marshall and Eldridge expressed their approval of Kemble's character. He "appear[ed]," by their lights, "to be a sober orderly man." When the society officially adopted Kemble as a fellow member in July of the same year, they expressed similar sentiment, while also praying "that his conduct may be so circumspect as to be a useful member in fellowship with us" for years hence. In like manner, Free Quakers noted with particular joy when families, under the influence of sober husbands (such as the Alcions in 1795), entered the fold.[59]

---

[58] RSFQ, *Minutes*, 12.6.1798.

[59] RSFQ, "Discipline," 31; George Kemble appears to have met with continued Free Quaker approval, for, according to their minutes he began taking a leading role in the society, visiting widows, managing meetinghouse rents, and executing legacies. See Free Quaker minutes, 4.3.1800, 2.2.1804 and 7.19.1804. For admittance of families see, Free Quaker Minutes, 4.6.1795. As previously noted, Free Quakers abided by Quaker practices in many regards. In one area, however the differed markedly. Women did not maintain their own meeting for business. Indeed, Free Quaker women rarely figure in the minutes at all. When they do, they usually appear as brides or new members (One notable exception being the society's decision to

The Free Quaker "Discipline" also recognized the debt their Meeting owed to Pennsylvania's acceptance of religious minorities. Within its introduction, they thanked political leaders for defending their rights to worship "Agreeably to [their] sentiments." At the same time, they recognized other denominations' rights to worship as they saw fit. Their reasoning was as much practical as spiritual. To them, "Christian principles" supported tolerance. However, religious forbearance was also in the best interest of the state. Because government, "confined to the great objects of ascertaining and defending civil rights," could not hope to rectify all injustice, churches of all denominations played a crucial role in supporting communal virtue.[60]

In their unapologetic defense of religious toleration, Free Quakers drew upon their Quaker roots. Yet, even as Free Quakers mirrored Friends' sentiments, they modified theological underpinnings to suit their masculine ideals. Throughout the course of revolution traditional Quakers castigated the American government for taking their property and imprisoning their members. Such actions violated Quakers' natural rights. They also flew in the face of the Charter of Liberties established under William Penn. As a Philadelphia Quakers explained it in 1776, the Charter guaranteed that "so long as [Quakers] lived peaceably and justly under the civil government , they should in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their religious persuasion or practice, nor be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place, or ministry contrary to

---

borrow "one thousand pounds" from one "Anne Dorothea Walker" in 1786. See RSFQ, "Minutes," 4.6.1786). Throughout Free Quaker minutes, men make their presence known. When Free Quakers wrote to sympathetic Friends in Massachusetts in 1781, they addressed each other as "brethren." Three years later, while debating whether to discipline a member for an unknown cause, the society forbore, citing as their reasoning that their "Discipline will not allow us to intermeddle in differences merely personal between man and man." See RSFQ, "Minutes," 8.20.1781 and 11.4.1784.

[60] RSFQ, "Discipline," 27.

their religious persuasion." In a word, to oppress innocent Quakers was to turn ones back upon Pennsylvania's rich tradition of religious tolerance.[61]

Free Quakers posited a radically different conception. "When we contemplate the long and earnest contest which has been maintained," the Society's "Discipline" maintained:

> and the torrents of blood, which, in other countries, have been shed in defense of this precious privilege we cannot but acknowledge it to be a signal instance of the immediate care of a divine providence over the people of America, that he has in the present revolution, thus far established among us governments under which no man, who acknowledges the being of a God, can be abridged of any civil right on account of his religious sentiments[62]

To Free Quakers, bloodshed in defense of rights, not charters, secured spiritual freedoms. Religious tolerance depended upon struggle. God himself decreed it so—both in America and abroad. It appeared a universal truism that those who hoped to enjoy liberty must first prove themselves deserving by sacrificing for the cause. They, not pacifists, enjoyed Providence's favor. And many Free Quakers made it clear that they had so sacrificed. Timothy Matlack provides a case in point. In an oration to the American Philosophical Society only months before joining the Free Quaker movement Matlack praised patriot combatants. American soldiers proved they merited freedom by forgoing personal comfort. Though unused to the "rigors of the seasons" or the "unusual hardships of war," these "hardy sons of America" evidenced their courage through their "firmness,

---

[61] Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, *An apology for the people called Quakers, containing some reasons, for their not complying with human injunctions and institutions in matters relative to the worship of God. Published by the Meeting for Sufferings of the said people at Philadelphia, in pursuance of the directions of their Yearly Meeting, held at Burlington, for Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, the 24th day of the ninth month, 1756*, (Philadelphia, 1776), 1.

[62] RSFQ, "Discipline," 27.

magnanimity and perseverance." Indeed, some—such as Matlack's seventeen-year-old son—gave their very lives.[63]

Unlike Matlack, however, not all Free Quakers gloried in war. Wetherill, for one, never expressed a desire for martial fame. More to the point, he shuddered at the mere thought of "shed[ding] blood." While he subscribed to Free Quakers' "Discipline," Wetherill preferred to cast religious tolerance as an essential attribute of a cosmopolitan Christian citizen. Tellingly, even as late as 1793, Quakers did not fit the bill. Wetherill's tolerance for religious difference stemmed from his belief in a universal church. Reacting against Quaker purists, Wetherill asserted that true Christianity crossed denominational lines. In the grand scheme of things the injunction to "love the Lord" mattered more than "any verbal assent to the established doctrines of [any] sect or party of Christians to which [members] may belong." Agreement among members, while "very desirable," was not "absolutely essential to Christian fellowship." God's true church—a church so expansive as to embrace "all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people"—recognized that differences in men's opinion often hinged upon their diverse interactions with the world. It easily followed that excommunications based upon doctrinal divergences ran against everything the Lord taught.[64]

---

[63] Timothy Matlack, "An oration, delivered March 16, 1780, before the patron, vice-presidents and members of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge," (Philadelphia, 1780), 9; For "Christian Liberty" see RSFQ, "To those of the People Called Quakers, who have Been Disowned for Matters Civil or Religious," in Wetherill, 47.

[64] This is not to say that Wetherill saw doctrine as relative. While he did not believe men should be excommunicated for heterodox opinions, he continued to argue that denominations held the right to espouse their particular doctrines. Those who did not agree were to be treated with Christian love, even as the church attempted to correct their views. Wetherill himself employed this tactic often, publishing pamphlets against John Murray and Unitarianism throughout his later life.

Religious liberality denoted spiritual maturity. Only "childish . . . Christians" retained a "partial attachment to their particular sect." Rather than love their neighbor, such denominations built their faith upon narrow-minded doctrinal syllogisms. Wetherill himself had encountered such sentiment among Quakers. On one occasion Wetherill found himself engaged in a heated debate with an intolerant Friend. During the course of conversation Wetherill posed a pointed hypothetical. He asked the unknown Quaker whether or not "Thomas A Kempis" (noted Catholic theologian and author of *The Imitation of Christ*) could be seen as "a great Christian." The Friend's reply shocked Wetherill. He refused to recognize Kempis as such. Continuing, he fumed that "Kempis was an erroneous man." And, as this Friend believed: "all error is sin, and all sin is of the devil." Wetherill made his point clear. Quakers often divorced themselves from the very Christian fellowship they purported to uphold. They refused to see members of other denominations as religious men. In so doing, they evidenced a reactionary turn which stunted their own growth. They did not mature in their faith. And yet, remaining children, they found the audacity to question their betters. By Wetherill's lights, such spiritual infants held no place in true Christian circles.[65]

Years later Wetherill continued to see many Quakers as an illiberal breed. In November of 1793, more than a decade after the final shots at Yorktown faded away, Wetherill sent a biting letter to Philadelphia's "Second Day's Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders." Wetherill's anger revolved around a run-in with Friends at a recent funeral. Though feeling compelled to speak his mind he succeeded only in gaining Quaker disapproval. According to Friends, Wetherill's words infringed upon Quaker

[65] Wetherill, "To Owen Jones," 14.

rights. As an excommunicate he held no right to speak by the graveside of one of their own.[66]

Wetherill imbued his reply with incredulousness. The funeral, he reminded Friends, was a public event. Not only Quakers, but also "Jews, Turks, and heathens" might attend if they so desired. Yet, even as Wetherill again defended religious tolerance, he shifted tactics. Rather than drawing exclusively upon theological grounds, Wetherill invoked his natural rights as a republican citizen. Because "death [was] common to all men," and its "awful consequences" left none untouched, "all [had] an equal right in his fear to express their wish for their fellow creatures, or to exhort them to prepare for [the] awful change." Neither the laws of the land, nor the Lord granted Quakers their "unwarranted authority" over citizens—especially "sober men" of Wetherill's ilk. By refusing to open themselves to Christian cosmopolitanism, Quakers not only portrayed themselves as "Scribes and Pharisees, who bid the Apostles be silent, and excommunicated men for believing in Christ," but further compromised their claim to republican manhood.[67]

Perhaps partially because Free Quakers saw religious tolerance as proof of manhood and citizenship (as well as part of their original Quaker heritage) they made concerted efforts to gain the respect of other faiths. Christopher Marshall himself noted with approval that when Free Quakers laid the cornerstone of their meetinghouse on July 29, 1783, a "numerous body of spectators, both friend *and other*" looked on. After the building's construction Free Quakers continued to cultivate interfaith amities. On

---

[66] Samuel Wetherill Jn., "To the Second Day's Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders of the People Called Quakers in the City of Philadelphia," in Charles Wetherill, 97.

[67] Wetherill, "To the Second Day's Morning Meeting," 101-102.

December 17 of the same year Marshall recorded with pleasure that he "spent some time in conversation with William White minister." Marshall apparently felt little compunction sharing a friendly chat with an Episcopalian divine. Months later Marshall joined Quakers Robert Parrish and John McKim in soliciting various "Presbyterian . . . Dutch and English" churches to signal their disapproval of "theatrical exhibitions" by signing a "petition" against the same.[68]

Yet, while espousing tolerance, Marshall's interactions also upheld patriotic views. William White, though an Episcopalian, remained loyal to the American cause throughout the war. So popular did White become among his fellow citizens that Congress appointed him as their chaplain seven years later. Marshall walked a slightly more perilous line in recording his association with Friends Parrish and McKim. On the one hand, Marshall believed that theater exerted a corrupting influence upon society. Allying with Friends in such a situation appeared commendable. Even so, Marshall took care to note that he did not work only with Quakers. Nor did his beliefs uphold their tenets alone. Indeed, Marshall noted that his actions accorded with the "honest and uprighted [sic] citizens" of all denominations. Perhaps this was not enough for Marshall. For, in succeeding entries, he once again challenged Quakers' public spirit. On March 21, 1784, Marshall recorded with dissatisfaction that his son Christopher attended Quaker meeting on Market Street where "Charles Howell....a noted Whigg" who served under General Washington in the late struggle was disowned. Days later Marshall again underscored Quaker intransigence. Market Street Meeting continued their run of intolerance. Having disposed of Howell, they now exerted their authority by excommunicating "Mary Gray . . . for marrying a man of another persuasion." Marshall's

[68] Marshall, *Remembrancer*, 5, italics added.

tolerance only reached so far when confronted with Quaker decisions to meddle in familial affairs. In short, Free Quaker forbearance remained deeply imbued with republican sensibilities.[69]

As time progressed, the Society of Free Quakers made the limits of their toleration all the more explicit. On August, 13, 1784, Marshall welcomed Jemimah Wilkinson—purported prophetess and onetime Quaker—into his home. Wilkinson had long created a stir up and down the Atlantic seaboard. Soon after receiving word of her disownment from Rhode Island's Smithfield Lower Meeting in February 1776 (for refusing to address other Quakers in "plain speech" and continued absence from meeting), Wilkinson contracted Typhus. The resulting illness left her bedridden and susceptible to visions. In the midst of her illness Wilkinson witnessed "the heavens . . . open'd." Within moments "two archangels" arrayed in white descended. Their message struck Wilkinson to the core. She, among all women, was to become an earthly tabernacle for the "Spirit of Life," come a "second time" to "warn a lost and guilty, perishing dying world to flee from the wrath to come." Arising days later, Wilkinson believed herself to be a resurrected being sent to declare God's word.[70]

While contemporary Americans claimed that Wilkinson saw herself as Christ reincarnate, the prophetess remained vague about her calling throughout her subsequent ministry, preferring instead to preach extempore from scripture to all who would listen. By 1782, her peregrinations led her to Philadelphia. Her preaching reaped a mixed reaction. On one occasion a mob of "unruly" characters to throw "stones [and] brickbats"

---

[69] Marshall, *Remembrancer*, 88,94.

[70] Herbert A. Wisbey, *Pioneer Prophetess, Jemima Wilkinson, the Publick Universal Friend* (New York, 1964), 9-13.

at the home where she spoke. Yet, during her time in Philadelphia, she also made Marshall's acquaintance. Both felt themselves better off for the meeting. Marshall found in Wilkinson an absorbing conversationalist; the Prophetess gained a staunch defender and able promoter. When Wilkinson again journeyed through Pennsylvania in 1784, Marshall came to Jemimah's aid by helping convince Free Quakers to allow her access to their meetinghouse. Wilkinson's subsequent preaching drew curious onlookers from around the city. Over "three hundred" attended her first sermon on August 15th. Twice the number congregated to hear her speak days later. Following the prophetess's departure, however, Free Quakers soon began to question their former liberality. For when Wilkinson's disciple James Parker arose to speak in their meetinghouse the following year, members did not allow him to complete his message.[71]

What accounts for the abrupt about-face? The historical record is remarkably silent regarding the matter. But subtle hints remain. When Jemimah Wilkinson first preached in 1784, Free Quakers may have welcomed the opportunity to hear her speak. For all her unorthodoxy, she held much in common with the Religious Society of Free Quakers. According to contemporary accounts, she preached in the plain style lauded by Quakers and Free Quakers alike. Her previous disownment also argued in her favor. To turn away an excommunicate sister went against everything for which Free Quakers stood—particularly if the meeting knew her brothers received similar treatment at the hands of Rhode Island Quakers for fighting in the late war. Moreover, weeks before Wilkinson's arrival, Free Quaker leaders reemphasized their liberal sentiments in meeting. Leading Quakers had recently decided to revise their minutes. They hoped to "give an account" to fellow members "of the reasons for establishing this society." In

[71]Wisbey, 20,27, 84, 87.

doing so they felt the need to stress their society built "upon the laudable principals of universal love and good will to all mankind." Allowing an ill-treated woman to speak may have served to reiterate the divide between Friends and Free Quakers as well as providing further evidence of their tolerance and good citizenship.[72]

Wider public perception did not always smile so favorably upon the prophetess. Besides claiming that "the divine spirit re-animanted [her] body" following her fevered delusions, her appearance upset colonial gendered norms. One critic writing in the *American Musuem* made Wilkinson's sexual oddities explicit. Though attractive in many regards—from her "brilliant" eyes to the raven-colored "hair" which coursed in "beautiful ringlets" down her "neck"—Wilkinson refused to allow societal expectations to cramp her personal sense of style. Among other things, Wilkinson committed the unpardonable sin of tying her "neckcloth" and fastening her "shift-sleeves" like a man. Her outer garments complicated matters further still. Accoutered in a "loose robe" of a make worn by both sexes, Wilkinson appeared to blur the lines between man and woman. Even more disturbing, Wilkinson did not speak like a typical woman. She insisted in delivering her words in an "austere, masculine, authoritative tone of voice." To the author, Wilkinson's clever words and uncertain gender promised to upset both the religious and sexual order around which Philadelphians defined their lives.[73]

Wilkinson's acolytes fared no better in the public mind. Her confidante James Parker came in for especial censure. While Wilkinson undermined societal norms through her sexual ambiguity, Parker did not even merit the title of man. The *American Museum*

---

[72] RSFQ, "Minutes," 8.2.1784.

[73] "Account of Jemimah Wilkinson, styled the Universal Friend, also of her Doctrines and Followers" in Matthew Carey, ed. *The American museum, or Universal magazine*, vol.1 (Philadelphia, 1787), 166-168.

saw him as "artful, conceited, and illiterate"—a perfect "religious imposter." Yet, so weak did Parker appear that he could not even carry out his deceptions with the requisite skill. "Varnished over with an apparent candor and freedom in conversation," he held "none of the fire of a divine enthusiast." He did not "possess . . . that zeal which is necessary to complete the character of an imposter." In the end, James Parker was little more than a "crafty, but cold and unanimating man" who sought to convince others of his own divine nature while living an "indolent" life.[74] And convince them he did. At least the lesser sort. Those who, while "simple and sincere," did not possess the requisite intelligence to ignore his insipid words. Parker's critic saw this as the real problem. In addition to impugning his own manhood, Parker encouraged the masses to live accordingly. In a state which increasingly relied upon religious ties to inculcate the tenets of citizenship in its populace Wilkinson and her followers appeared more than a passing threat.

Endorsing a movement which Philadelphians equated with gendered disorder would have detracted from the public image which Free Quakers had worked so assiduously to craft for themselves. As public opinion turned against Wilkinson so did the society. While individual Free Quakers like Christopher Marshall and Jehu Eldridge might continue to sympathize with parts of Wilkinson's message without fear of disownment, the Society of Free Quakers made clear their determination to keep their worship free from the likes of Parker and Wilkinson. Tellingly, Parker's intended visit may have helped spur long-lasting change in the internal structure of Free Quakerism itself. In spare detail the society's minutes of August 4, 1785, record that

[74] Ibid., 169; *The Pennsylvania Herald,* March 3, 1787, p. 3.

> as strangers [had] intrude[d] their doctrines amongst us, inconsistent with the precepts of holy scripture, it [was] thought that good order should be preserved amongst us, and for that end, suitable persons may be appointed to rebuke such intruders in private or otherwise in public with decency, where strangers undertake to preach and teach contrary to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.[75]

By February of 1786, Christopher Marshall, Moses Bartram, Isaac Howell, Peter Thomson and Benjamin Say found themselves installed as the societies new overseers. The "good order of the meeting" would be preserved from the like of Wilkinson and her protégés.[76]

While Free Quakers placed limits upon their Discipline's espousal of religious tolerance, they also sought to imbue its unabashed defense of property with a masculine shine. Calling upon the "great preserver of men" for protection, Free Quakers implored heavenly aid in "establish[ing] and support[ing] . . . public meetings for religious worship". The statement held particular meaning for fathers no longer welcome to worship on Quaker grounds. By refusing to open their meetinghouses to the Free Quaker leaders, they placed the spiritual health of their families at risk. Furthermore, Free Quaker fathers felt it their republican duty to claim a propertied stake in a meetinghouse which Friends claimed as their own. They attempted to do so by claiming the Quaker name for themselves. Because they refused to fight or pay taxes, Free Quakers argued, Friends could no longer be considered Quakers in good standing. In effect, they had disowned themselves from meeting. As rightful heirs of the Quaker name Free Quakers felt entitled to their onetime property. As shocking as Free Quaker claims appeared, they had a point.

---

[75] RSFQ, "Minutes," 8.4.1785.

[76] RSFQ, "Minutes," 2.9.1786. After Parker's unfortunate showing in 1785, Marshall continued to defend Wilkinson. According to Wilkinson's biographer Herbert A. Wisbey, he may also have been an instrumental link in introducing Wilkinson to the Pietists at Ephrata, from whom she would draw many of her ideas in forming her own Utopian community in New-York. See Wisbey, 94-96.

Quakers, after all, had not always shied away from violence. During the English Civil War many Friends fought for Oliver Cromwell. Not until James II came to power did Quakers officially renounce war, and even then many New World Friends continued to fight when occasion demanded. Nor did Quakers always appear so quick to put down dissenting opinions. In a word, Free Quakers saw Friends as hijackers of the faith. By asserting their right to property Free Quakers also claimed to speak for Quakerism as a whole.[77]

Like any good republican citizen, Free Quakers attempted to rectify the perceived injustice. They decided to confront their erstwhile brethren directly and assert their "right . . . [to] all the real estate now held and claimed by the people called Quakers" in the vicinity. After putting their request to paper, the society appointed Peter Thomson, Moses Bartram, and Timothy Matlack to present the appeal before three local meetings. The threesome met with a chilly reception. Refusing to allow the committee floor time, Henry Drinker rose, and calmly noted "that some person[s] were then present who did not belong to [the meeting]." He then concluded his peroration by demanding that Matlack and his retinue leave before the meeting "proceed to business."[78]

The trio refused to be cowed. After facing Drinker down, they handed him their appeal, and walked out. In typical bureaucratic fashion the petition found its way to a committee of five, who after consulting with outside meetings (to whom Free Quakers had sent identical requests), decided to call a separate assembly to discuss the

[77] RSFQ, "Discipline," 47; For early Quaker reactions towards the Peace Testimony in North America, see Meredith Baldwin Weddle, *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century* (New York, 2001).

[78] RSFQ, "Minutes," 8.6.1781.

proposition. After its own back and forth the gathering chose to table the matter. "We have considered the contents of the papers presented to the last meeting by Timothy Matlack and others," the meeting declared, "and are of the judgment that it is improper to be read in the meeting, of which we the parties concerned will have grounds to be convinced on a cool and dispassionate reconsideration of the nature and tendency of the requisition they make."[79]

The decision did not promote good will between the societies. Failing to convince the Society of Friends, Free Quakers Isaac Howell and White Matlack twice appealed to the Pennsylvania Assembly to grant them joint access to Quaker property. In the process they went beyond the rhetoric of rights to assert that Friends implicated republican manhood. Unsurprisingly, their memorials emphasized Free Quaker masculinity. Howell and Matlack began the first remonstrance by reminding the Assembly of their dedication to the Patriot cause. In addition to "bearing arms in defense of [their] invaded country," they paid taxes and served in the highest levels of government. As their loyalty evidenced, they deserved the protection of the state against those members of society who refused to meet the demands of citizenship.

But Free Quaker demands for Quaker property went beyond assertions of personal patriotism. Taking a line from Paine, Free Quakers also argued for their right to worship in Quaker meetinghouses by casting Quakers as Tories who abused their privileges of property ownership. Unlike Free Quakers, Friends desecrated houses of worship by allowing Loyalist sympathizers to preach against the state. This they showed time and again throughout the war. In "1778" Quakers throughout Pennsylvania threw

[79] James Pemberton, "Memoranda," in "Free Quakers," *The Friend. A Religious and Literary Journal*, Vol. 51, no. 15, 117.

open their doors "to a preacher from England." Catering to the society's whims, he insisted upon speaking of the "revolution as rebellion." Yet later, when Timothy Davis, a disowned Quaker from Massachusetts, sought occasion to speak, local Friends sabotaged the meeting. Prior to Davis's arrival resident Quakers locked the meetinghouse doors and absconded with the key. This last reiterated Free Quaker claims while underscoring their allegiance. For Timothy Davis was no ordinary disowned Quaker. Though he had not fought in the later war, he had assisted the cause by publishing a pamphlet arguing that, contrary to popular opinion, Friends might pay taxes while remaining true to the inner light. By holding Davis up to the Assembly's gaze, Free Quakers solidified their argument: Free Quakers—not Friends—made proper use of the meetinghouses entrusted to them.[80]

Similarly, the society heaped acrimonious charges upon Quaker funerary practices. Like Friends, Free Quakers allowed that men and women of diverse faiths could, upon request, be interred in Quaker cemeteries. Free Quakers soon found, however, that Friends' liberality was more shadow than actual substance. Here again Quakers played favorites; or so Free Quakers asserted. Recently, they claimed, Friends had refused to bury an American soldier "because he had borne arms and been concerned in war." Yet, true to form, the society bent their rules to favor the King's government. With particular ire, Free Quakers related that Friends allowed a British sympathizer indicted—and subsequently hung—for "attempt[ing] to bribe the pilots of the State to conduct the British fleet into . . . harbor" to rest easy in their churchyard. The fact that

[80] Isaac Howell and White Matlack, "To the Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly Met," in Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers,* 79-80

Quakers denied taking any such action meant little to Free Quakers bent upon gaining a share of Quaker property.[81]

Years later, Samuel Wetherill described another graveyard gaff with similar ire. In 1793, Wetherill arrived at a Quaker funeral without permission. Believing that a man, whatever his faith, possessed "a right to give his advice" at a public event, Wetherill addressed the gathering. Assembled Quakers did not take kindly to the interruption. Wetherill soon received word from Henry Drinker that Friends found his behavior unacceptable. Still an estranged Quaker, Wetherill held no authority to preach before Friends, he explained. By pretending to a right he did not possess, he had "given" much "pain to friends" who desired him "to be quiet in the future. Wetherill responded along two lines—as a Christian citizen and as a father. Regarding the former, Wetherill continued to maintain that any "sober man" might preach before his neighbors. To assert otherwise not only narrowed "the rights of all Men," but "infringed upon the prerogative of the Lord." By rebuffing Wetherill, Quakers "circumscribe[d]" the Lord's power and "limit[ed] his Divine Light."[82]

At the same time, Friends' abuse of Free Quaker political rights called to mind their disrespect of domestic bonds. In both they exercised "unwarranted authority." Wetherill made the link explicit as he continued. In years past Friends had overstepped their bounds by trying to convince Wetherill's sons to deny their Free Quaker heritage. Happening to be "accidentally present" on one particularly trying visit Wetherill took

---

[81] Free Quakers made their decision to allow members not of the faith to be buried within their own cemetery explicit in 1785 when they noted in their minutes "that any person not a member of this society . . . who shall subscribe seven pounds so shall have a common right with their family of burial therein." See RSFQ, "Minutes," 5.5.1785.

[82] Samuel Wetherill, "To the Second Day's Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders, of the People Called Quakers in the City of Philadelphia," in Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers,* 100-101.

umbrage with his guests' words. Though exercising more restraint than Matlack at the time, Wetherill now made his anger known. "If it be an intrusion of an aggravated kind for a person not of your Society to walk into your burying ground to attend a funeral and there express a wish that all might be serious and prepare to die," Wetherill queried:

> How much greater is that intrusion you are guilty of, when after you had been decently received in my house, and a clear and full answer given you to your advice, you still repeat[ed] it too, to give your advice again and again, and tell myself I had no business there, that my children should take your advice, and not their Father's, for this they ought not to regard[?]"

Held up to the actions of Friends, Wetherill's "impropriety"—if such it could be called—paled in comparison. Whereas Wetherill merely offered "advice" upon a public occasion, Friends consistently intruded upon men's property in an attempt to root out the unorthodox religious opinions of their former brethren.[83]

Familial allusions did not end with Wetherill. In addition to interrogating Quaker loyalty, Free Quakers questioned Friends' virtue. Again taking a leaf from Paine, Matlack and Howell represented Friends as immoral practitioners of their religion. In refusing Free Quakers access to "houses of worship," they "violated" their rights. Like any true friend of liberty, Free Quakers refused to submit. Recognizing that "property [was] peculiarly valued by all men," they resolved to fight for their share. To allow Friends to walk over them would be to render themselves "more tame and submissive than the most abject of mankind."[84]

In the end, the Free Quakers lost out yet again. Loathe to encroach upon the Quaker's own rights, the Assembly tabled the remonstrance. Not to be outdone, the Free Quaker leadership reconciled themselves to their legislative loss and took matters into

---

[83] Ibid., 103.

[84] Howell and Matlack, in Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers,* 80.

their own hands. Within the year the society determined to erect a meetinghouse on land of their own. From its inception Free Quakers imbued the property with nationalistic meaning. Throughout construction the society's leaders sought funding from prominent citizens such as Washington. Upon completion, they placed a plaque in their churchyard which read: "By General Subscription, for the Free Quakers erected, in the year of our Lord, 1783, of the Empire 8." The final clause spoke volumes. Unlike orthodox Quakers who refused to recognize the authority of the national government, Free Quakers openly expressed their allegiance. This they made all the more explicit by equating the "empire's" beginning with the nation's birth in 1776. In so doing they signified their continued desire to be seen as Americans worthy of their fellow citizens' approbation.[85]

Construction of a republican image continued long after the meetinghouse's completion. Though built primarily for worship, Free Quakers soon began to lease their space to civic-minded organizations and individuals. In addition to renting out their newly-completed cellar to Anthony Metzger, a responsible merchant in the area, members also allowed a local chapter of Masons to hold meetings on their upper floor. For the greater part of six years local members, including George Washington, made the space their own—even going so far as to assist Free Quakers in "running up a chimney" in 1791 . Additionally, Free Quakers supported education by letting out room within the meetinghouse to qualified schoolmasters. And Free Quaker efforts paid off. By the time George Washington took office members had succeeded in portraying themselves as consummate American citizens. Indeed, Washington himself made the nation's acceptance explicit. Soon after taking office, President Washington received a letter of

[85] Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers*, 3

congratulations from the society. Responding in kind, Washington concluded his epistle by "add[ing] the tribute of [his] acknowledgement, to that of the country, for those services which [your] members . . . rendered to the common cause in the course of our revolution." The President's words spoke volumes. Free Quakers were not only accepted by God—but also of men. [86]

The Religious Society of Free Quakers did not long outlast the life of its first clerk. Following Samuel Wetherill's death in 1829, his son Joseph Price Wetherill took over management of the society, only to discontinue its meetings for worship seven short years later. The second generation did not feel the same pull of revolutionary faith. Some returned to the Quaker fold. Others moved or wandered away. Joseph organized the few remaining members into a charitable society. For many years members leased the meetinghouse to several "public-spirited citizens" who turned the building into Philadelphia's first "free library." Rent received by the society went to "the deserving poor of Philadelphia."[87]

It is easy to view the Religious Society of Free Quakers as just another American religious minority. The body flickered only briefly as an avowed religious movement; membership never spread much beyond the confines of Philadelphia. And even within the "City of Brotherly Love," evangelizing never proved the society's forte. Its followers did, however, bring to light important interconnections between gender, politics, and religious consciousness. As Free Quakerism shows, no religious movement hoping to

---

[86] For Anthony Metzger see, Minutes, 2.9.1786; regarding Masons and chimneys see 10.6.1791, 5.3.1792 and 11.2.1799; "Washington to the Religious Society of Free Quakers," [March, 1790], in in The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008.

[87] Charles Wetherill, *The History of the Free Quakers,* 43-44.

retain a lasting following in the early American Republic, could safely ignore society's gendered expectations. Free Quakers met such demands in various ways: emphasizing fatherhood and its ties with martial masculinity, defense of hearth and home, and respect for republican government. Yet, Free Quakers did not feel these strategies to be enough. In order to claim Quakerism's name as their own, they felt the need to implicate the masculinity of orthodox Friends. Republican fatherhood, far from being confined to domestic or political realms, helped govern the rise and fall of religious movements during and after the American Revolution.

Appendix:

While histories of the Free Quaker movement exist, they often elide questions of identity construction. For instance, while the earliest account of the sect's rise, Charles Wetherill's *History of the Religious Society of Friends Called by Some the Free Quakers* (Philadelphia, 1894) provides an invaluable compilation of primary source material, its analytical body reads like an apologist's tract. This is largely owing to Wetherill's desire to illustrate the society's continued relevance (as a charitable foundation) in the early nineteenth century, as well as the need to portray his grandfather Samuel Wetherill Jn. (the recognized founder of the movement) in a patriotic light. In 1902, Isaac Sharpless gave a more balanced account. The Quakers in the Revolution provides significant biographical information on the movement's founders, as well as providing a judicious account to the Free Quaker's legal entanglements with the Society of Friends following the Revolution. Neither work, however, addresses Free Quakerism's larger cultural implications.

Arthur J Mekeel's *The Quakers and the American Revolution* (1996) went significantly further. While relating the society's basic history, Mekeel also explored Free Quaker sympathy outside Philadelphia proper. In particular, Mekeel shed further light upon Free Quaker organizations in Massachusetts. Yet, much like Wetherill and Sharpless's accounts, Mekeel's interpretation proves more functional than analytical. Chronology of the movement is privileged over its broader cultural import. As such, Free Quakers are mainly examined in respect to their religious leanings.

In the cultural vein, Jack D. Marietta's account, *The Reformation of American Quakerism: 1748—1783* (Philadelphia, 1984) is more useful. Though only devoting a

handful of pages to the Free Quaker movement, Marietta explores the movement as an attack upon reformist elements within Quakerism proper. Matlack and others are portrayed as Quakers themselves saw them: enemies of the inner light. Yet, Marietta, like Mekeel, examines the group as a momentary oddity rather than a dynamic movement rife with social and cultural agendas. That "the radicals would never regain their earlier eminence" following the close of war may be true as Marietta maintains, but this does not consign their movement to cultural or societal irrelevance. Indeed, adherents showed one path whereby Quakers might be considered Friends as well as citizens following the revolution.

William C. Kashatus's *Conflict of Conviction: A Reappraisal of Quaker Involvement in the American Revolution* (New York, 1990) goes significantly farther than previous work. Taking the Free Quaker movement as a legitimate denomination in its own right, Kashatus argues in his chapter "The Lambs' War Ethic of the Free Quakers," that Free Quakers saw themselves as returning to Quakerism's early tenets by hearkening back to Quaker practice in Cromwellian England which emphasized the Inner Light over formality and countenanced "defensive war" (112-114). In so doing, they argued that their blend of Quakerism constituted Quakerism in its purity and fullness. Kashatus, however, errs in assuming that Free Quakers looked only backwards in time, believing that they did not introduce any new doctrine into the discipline. Free Quakers, while devout Quakers in many of their doctrines nonetheless introduced new tenets when they refused to disown their brethren for heterodox opinions.

Bibliography:

Secondary Sources:

Ferling, John E. *Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Fliegelman, Jay. *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Frost, William J. *The Quaker Family in Colonial America: A Portrait of the Society of Friends.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973.

Kann, Michael E. *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language and Patriarchal Politics*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

Kashatus, William C. *A Conflict of Conviction: A Reappraisal of Quaker Involvement in the American Revolution.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990.

Klepp, Susan. *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America 1760-1820.* Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

Levy, Berry. *Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Marietta, Jack D. *The Reformation of American Quakerism: 1748—1783* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984.

Mekeel, Arthur J. *The Quakers and the American Revolution.* York, England: Sessions Book Trust, 1996.

Opal, J.M. "Common Sense and Imperial Atrocity: How Thomas Paine saw South Asia in North America," http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-04/forum/opal.shtml.

Pestena, Carla G. *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American Identity* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Stackhouse, A. M. *Colonel Timothy Matlack: Patriot and Soldier.* Haddonfield, NJ: Higginson Book Company, 1910.

Weddle, Meredith B. *Walking in the Way of Peace: Quaker Pacifism in the Seventeenth Century.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Wisbey, Herbert A. *Pioneer Prophetess, Jemima Wilkinson, the Publick Universal Friend* New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Primary Sources:

"Account of Jemimah Wilkinson, styled the Universal Friend, also of her Doctrines and Followers." In *The American museum, or Universal magazine*, vol.1. Edited by Matthew Carey. Philadelphia, 1787.

Bell, Robert. *The Macaroni jester, being, a select series; of original stories---witty repartees---comical and original bulls---entertaining anecdotes, &c. &c. The whole collected from a great variety of company in the world, and never before published to the world. To which are added, Brown's Quaker sermon and grace. By a gentleman of the*

world, who when he sat with certain people, mentioned and not mentioned, in this book, had always a pencil and pocket-book. Philadelphia, 1768.

Buchan, William. *Domestic Medicine; or, the Family Physician.* Philadelphia, 1778.

Sullivan, John. General Sullivan to John Hancock, Aug 24, 1777. In *Letters and Papers of Major General John Sullivan.* Edited by Otis G. Hammond, 2 Vol. Concord, N. H: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1930.

Howell, Isaac and White Matlack, "To the Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly Met." In Charles Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers.* Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Fisher, Samuel Rowland. *Journal of Samuel Rowland Fisher.* In *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1917.

Matlack, Timothy. "An oration, delivered March 16, 1780, before the patron, vice-presidents and members of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge." Philadelphia, 1780.

Marshall, Christopher. *Extracts from the Diary of Christopher Marshall, Kept in Philadelphia and Lancaster, During the American Revolution 1774-1781.* Edited by William Duane. Albany, NY: 1877.

Marshall, Christopher. *Marshall Rembembrancer Vol H, July 13, 1783-December 18, 1785.* Philadelphia, PA, 1785.

New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, April 21, 1777.

Paine, "African Slavery in America." In *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Paine, The American Crisis, I, "The American Crisis, I. In *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Paine, Thomas. "*The American Crisis, II*, January 13, 1777." In *The Writings of Thomas Paine, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway*. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Paine, Thomas. "Reflections on the Life and Death of Lord Clive," March 1775. In *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Paine, Thomas. "Thoughts on Defensive War." In *The Writings of Thomas Paine*. Edited by Moncure Daniel Conway. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Paine, Thomas. "To the Representatives of the Religious Society of the People called Quakers, or to so many of them as were concerned in publishing a late piece, entitled 'The ANCIENT TESTIMONY AND PRINCIPLES of the people called QUAKERS renewed.'" In *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, ed. Moncure Daniel Conway. New York: B. Franklin, 1969.

Pemberton, James. "Memoranda: Free Quakers" In "*The Friend. A Religious and Literary Journal*, Vol. 51, no. 15.

The Pennsylvania Herald, March 3, 1787.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. *An apology for the people called Quakers, containing some reasons, for their not complying with human injunctions and institutions in matters relative to the worship of God. Published by the Meeting for Sufferings of the said people at Philadelphia, in pursuance of the directions of their Yearly Meeting, held at Burlington, for Pennsylvania and New-Jersey, the 24th day of the ninth month, 1756*. Philadelphia, 1776.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends. Meeting for Sufferings. "The Ancient Testimony and Principles of the People Called Quakers Renewed." Philadelphia, 1776.

Religious Society of Free Quakers. Minutes, 2.20.1781, Box 1, American Philosophical Society

Religious Society of Free Quakers. "An Address to those of the People Called Quakers, who have Been Disowned for Matters Religious or Civil, in Charles Wetherill, History of the Free Quakers." In Charles Wetherill. *History of the Free Quakers*. Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Religious Society of Free Quakers, "The Discipline of the Society of Friends, by some styled the Free Quakers." In Charles Wetherill, *History of the Free Quakers.* Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Religious Society of Free Quakers. "To the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly Met." In Charles Wetherill. *History of the Free Quakers*. Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

RSFQ, "To those of the People Called Quakers, who have Been Disowned for Matters Civil or Religious." In Charles Wetherill. *History of the Free Quakers*. Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Sterne, Laurence. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, vol. 1.* London, 1832.

The Continental Journal, November 27, 1777.

Wetherill, Charles. *History of the Free Quakers*. Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Wetherill, Samuel Jn. "Letter to Owen Jones, Isaac Lane, Edward Jones, James Pemberton, John Pemberton and David Bacon," [1778]. In *Etting Papers*, Historical Society of Pennnsylvania

Wetherill, Samuel Jn. "To the Second Day's Morning Meeting of Ministers and Elders of the People Called Quakers in the City of Philadelphia." In Charles Wetherill *History of the Free Quakers*. Washington D.C.: Ross & Perry, 2002.

Washington, George. [Society to Free Quakers to President Washington], Philadelphia, March 4, 1790, in The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008.