AT THE SAME TIME as the colonial assemblies came to play an increasingly prominent role in provincial government, and as New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians came to assign great importance to public declarations of popular rights, the ways in which groups of elected representatives organized themselves and tried to project collective identities became an equally important defining feature of colonial political structure. During the early decades of colonization, a continual, if variably expressed, popular determination to use assembly power to contain prerogative and proprietary privilege, and an acceptance (even among the Dutch of New York) of the norms of British constitutionalism had to some extent counterbalanced the tendencies toward political fragmentation in colonial New York and Pennsylvania. Common objectives and principles of cooperation, however haltingly expressed, brought some order to public affairs. But once the assemblies became the primary foci of provincial government, the major problem for elected politicians was how to create, and sustain, sufficient political coherence among themselves to maintain control of the legislature.

The problem of popular political organization was particularly acute in New York. As the eighteenth century wore on, traditional localisms and regionalisms grew sturdier roots, and as population grew, the topography of provincial society became more complex. The filling in of the Hudson
Valley counties, the growth in the number of Albany County residents, and
the rapid expansion of New York City (and to a lesser extent of other long-
settled townships and villages) increased the range of communities that
required some degree of political inclusion. There were important develop-
ments in the province’s ethnic and religious composition as well. In New
York City, clusters of Germans, Scotch-Irish, Irish, and Scots appeared
alongside the older Dutch, English, and French communities to further
complicate the social profile of this polyglot port town. In the countryside,
communities had always ranged from narrow, national-group enclaves to
culturally interspersed neighborhoods, but immigration increased both the
number, ethnic variety, and complexity of these. Simultaneously, New York
experienced a parallel process of religious complication. Mainline churches,
such as the Dutch Reformed, the Anglican, and the Presbyterian, became
stronger in the midst of a growing array of minor congregations owing
allegiances to such denominations as the Quakers, Moravians, German
Reformed, and Dutch and German Lutherans. Any major coalition of pro-
vincial politicians had to be able to accommodate, perhaps to neutralize,
possibly to use to advantage, but at least to avoid antagonizing, a broad
spectrum of New York’s ethnoreligious groups.

As New York developed greater complexity, the relationship between
recognizable ethnoreligious groups and the structure of provincial politics
became, if anything, more problematic. Ethnically, the segmentation be-
tween Dutch and English that gained obvious expression at the turn of the
century in conflict between the “English party” and the “meer Dutch,” and
that was potentially of great importance because of the Dutch plurality in
New York, either moderated or was largely ignored in later decades.1
Sweeping political appeals to either were never again the centerpiece of
political debate. Although the Dutch maintained their plurality in New
York for some time, and although a large number of them continued to hold
elective provincial posts throughout the colonial years, the weakness of
Dutch high culture and the comparative strength of anglicizing pressures in
the public world led them to assume a subsidiary role in provincial politics.2
When Anglo-Dutch tensions began to build under conditions of intense
political competition, contemporaries acknowledged such stress by either
subsuming them beneath other idioms of conflict or expressing them in the
context of interdenominational competition, in which Dutch Reformed
interests were understood to speak for the domestic-centered, vernacular
New Netherlands culture that remained the vital center of Dutch commu-
nities throughout New York.3 Understandably, given the importance of the
Dutch Reformed church for the survival of Dutch culture, and the marked
need of all New York’s major denominations for continuing institutional
development and growth, religious divisions possessed greater potential for
political conflict than did ethnic or national distinctions. When Lord Corn­bury, for example, spearheaded an effort to strengthen the Anglican church in the four counties in which earlier law had created a church establishment, to support its pretensions to privilege in other parts of the province, and to exercise the power to license the Dutch Reformed clergy (who felt that the conquest had brought them promise of an autonomous, if not quite equal, “Sisterhood” with the Anglicans), there were political ramifications. Dutch Reformed antagonism to imperious Anglicanism strengthened New York’s early eighteenth-century legislative resolve to clip the wings of its governors and fly the assembly to greater heights. In succeeding decades, other religious conflicts occurred. Dutch Reformed congregations divided both internally and among themselves over clergy and lay attitudes toward evangelical preaching; they chose sides between those who wished to continue close Dutch oversight of provincial ecclesiastical affairs (conferentie supporters) and those who wanted the colonial church to be more autonomous (coetus supporters); and the large New York City congregation began slowly to pull apart when some church members began to lobby for English-language worship over the objections of those who felt a Dutch service was an essential part of their religious identity. In addition, the Presbyterian church came to be distinguished by both an intermittent anti-Anglican aggressiveness, and by some strong internal disputes over church doctrine and the place of evangelical preaching. These differences did not, of course, automatically or immediately gain sharp expression in provincial politics. They were simply part of the social matrix of ethnoreligious plural­ism within which politicians had to work. And their effect depended on the politicians themselves—how these public figures perceived their needs and opportunities, what ends they wished to effect, and to what extent religious concerns ranked high among their personal priorities.

The changes that accompanied rapid growth in Pennsylvania were every bit as dramatic as those in New York. There, too, frontier areas were continuously pushed back and the regular incorporation of new townships within the existing political system complicated a provincial polity already distin­guished by considerable variation in local character. Contrary to the situa­tion in New York, late seventeenth and early eighteenth century divisions in Pennsylvania were mainly religious rather than ethnic; Quakers themselves were a fractious bunch and when they were not arguing among themselves, Anglicans supplied a ready opposition. The most bitter of the internecine Quaker squabbles were over by the early 1700s; after another decade and a half, the worst Quaker/Anglican disputes had been laid to rest. That, however, was precisely the point at which Pennsylvania experienced un­precedented immigration that by midcentury had swollen the small late seventeenth-century German component into a major linguistic group in
the province, and the early clusters of Scotch-Irish into a sizable ethnic minority.\footnote{11} Structurally, Pennsylvania’s diverse communities took shape in much the same way as New York’s—as a patchwork of cultural enclaves that underwent continuous change in extent, strength, and composition, and that often shaded into sizable areas of considerable diversity.\footnote{12} Not surprisingly, ethnic tensions did appear, most noticeably among Anglophilic Philadelphians, in reaction to heavy German immigration.\footnote{13} But as in New York, the Pennsylvania conflicts that had the greatest relevance for political affairs were religious ones. Presbyterian antagonism toward Quakerism, divisions within various churches over evangelicalism and pietism, and disagreements among Friends over the future of their Society, all had potential political implications.\footnote{14} While the historic centrality of Quakerism in Pennsylvania, and the deliberate underrepresentation of those backcountry areas in which the most uniform German and Scotch-Irish settlement took place, simplified political considerations in a way that could not occur in New York, the milieu in which Pennsylvania politicians had to organize themselves was, like New York’s, a vigorously pluralistic one.

It was within this social context of dynamic growth and marked change, of noisy conflict and quiet accommodation, that New York and Pennsylvania politicians put together two of the most effective political coalitions that ever developed in British North America. The DeLancey/Jones coalition and the Quaker Party dominated midcentury politics in their respective provinces. Each of these political organizations found ways of encompassing the kaleidoscopic social pluralism that distinguished their colonies. In addition, each was challenged by the circumstances of war, which membership in the British overseas empire brought to their doorstep, and religious conflict, which their own distinctive patterns of religious organization occasioned. The way in which the DeLancey/Jones coalition and the Quaker Party responded to these challenges and dealt with the problem of political ossification that their respective long-term success created illustrates the fundamental difference between New York’s factional mode of political behavior and the politics of party that characterized Pennsylvania.

\textbf{The Rise and Fall of the DeLancey/Jones Coalition}

Throughout the late 1740s and the 1750s, a political faction led by James DeLancey and David Jones dominated provincial politics in New York. The best known of this duo, Provincial Councillor and Chief Justice James DeLancey, had learned an important lesson a decade earlier in the Zenger
imbroglio: the only sure way to sustain personal political power in New York was to secure as much autonomy as possible from the royal overseers Britain sent to the province, and simultaneously to cultivate strong public support. During the short period subsequent to the Zenger trial when the Morris/Alexander coterie held the initiative in public affairs, and when Lieutenant-Governor Clarke headed a conciliatory administration, James DeLancey kept a relatively low profile. He avoided confrontation with the Morris/Alexander politicians and more than repaired whatever damage the Zenger trial had dealt his reputation. As circuit-riding chief justice, he came into close contact with large numbers of provincials, both county men of influence and the many ordinary New Yorkers who appeared before his court. DeLancey's affability, quick mind, air of considered judgment, and the power he could wield in both his public and private capacities, soon gave him an enhanced reputation that rippled out beyond his circles of direct contact. In his political activities he always seemed to champion popular measures. As councillor during Clarke's concessions to the assembly, DeLancey shared credit for the chief executive's willingness to heed popular legislative demands. When Governor Clinton replaced Clarke in 1743, DeLancey became his chief advisor and immediately fattened his reputation as a popular rights advocate. DeLancey persuaded Clinton to accept yearly appropriations and other legislative innovations, danced the graceful minuet of principled Whiggism when he inveigled and/or bribed Clinton into issuing a new chief justice commission for good behavior, and carefully cultivated his legislative friends through the convenient joint council/assembly committees established to facilitate public business. No New Yorker could match DeLancey's ability to raise a toast to the offices of government with one hand while stroking the belly of a none-too-supine provincial community with the other.

The New York Assembly was not an easily managed body, however, and although DeLancey had substantial influence with key residents of New York, Westchester, Albany, Schenectady, and the manors of Rensselaerswyck and Cortlandt, that was not enough. The late 1730s and early 1740s saw the development of a strong legislative interest, centering on Queens and Suffolk counties, with some sympathetic support from Kings, Richmond, and the mid-Hudson constituencies of Orange and Ulster. It was in these areas that the demand for assembly rights was most strenuously voiced; and the leading tenor in the chorus was David Jones of Queens. Jones, a lawyer about whom we know very little, combined his apparent rights consciousness with a studied sensitivity to the parsimony and parochialism of his constituents. He was acutely aware that what united such disparate places as Bushwyck in Kings, Brookhaven in Suffolk, and Goshen
in Orange was their interest in how responsive the provincial government was to local issues and how effective provincial politicians were in keeping the cost of government low.\textsuperscript{18}

While Jones's and DeLancey’s political interests coincided at a number of points during the early 1740s, there is no reason to believe that a close working relationship had developed between them at that time. DeLancey liked to bask in the rays that popular legislative gains reflected back on him, but in a number of instances Jones and his supporters clearly turned their backs on the chief justice. Their own interests came first.\textsuperscript{19}

The events that altered this relationship came in a rush. In 1744, when France joined with Spain in the latter’s war against Britain, DeLancey recognized the difficulties he would face trying to deal with the divergent attitudes toward war that existed, perhaps most markedly in the upper Hudson Valley and in New York City, but also throughout the province. If he was to manage colonial war efforts successfully, he needed support from Long Island and mid-Hudson Valley representatives, whose relative safety and concern for economy would be difficult to reconcile to British wartime demands. Decisive at this point in his career, DeLancey quickly took advantage of the 1745 election. Because the current speaker of the house, the septuagenarian Adolphe Philipse, often went his own way and was a difficult individual for DeLancey to get along with,\textsuperscript{20} the chief justice worked hard and underhandedly to defeat this old friend of his father’s.\textsuperscript{21} DeLancey’s success paved the way for a grateful David Jones to succeed to the speaker's chair, and also opened the way to a more effective consolidation of his own personal influence in the New York City and upper Hudson regions.

From the brief 1745-1746 record of relations between the council and assembly, it is difficult to say what the long-range prospects for a continuing close association between DeLancey and Jones actually were.\textsuperscript{22} But in late 1746, for reasons that are not altogether clear, Governor Clinton and DeLancey had a falling out; Clinton turned largely to Cadwallader Colden as his chief colonial confidant during the next three and a half years of his governorship.\textsuperscript{23} As a result of his decision, Clinton isolated himself along with the loner Colden, facilitating the consolidation of the extensive and popular DeLancey/Jones coalition.

Uncritical acceptance of Clinton's and Colden’s testimonies on the events of the 1740s may easily lead to the conclusion that DeLancey was an éminence grise who controlled the assembly through a joint council/assembly committee and superintended council activities from a favorite tavern.\textsuperscript{24} These were, however, the exaggerations of men who needed a villain to explain their own ineffectiveness. They were also the ratiocinations of two individuals determined to prove DeLancey unfit for the commission of
lieutenant-governor he succeeded in obtaining in 1747, an honor that Colden coveted and Clinton had promised to procure for his new friend. Unquestionably, DeLancey was the senior partner in the popular coalition. He had the prestige of council office, the independent power of the chief justice's commission for good behavior, the connections in Great Britain that could bring him the office of lieutenant-governor, and the stature that members of wealthy families could gain through ability and public service. But none of these could provide legislative leadership in an assembly jealous of its rights and independence.

That was where David Jones fitted in. From 1745 until 1759, Jones was speaker of the New York Assembly, and as Robert Livingston, Jr., pointed out after his long service in the legislature, "a Speaker always has & will have great Influence." Perhaps no one had more than David Jones. As another contemporary testified, "Mr. Jones is one of those extra-ordinary Genius's, to whom Nature both made ample Amend's for the want of a liberal Education." He understood the mechanics of politics and the importance of looking after the small details that could make a large difference in the way in which the public perceived those who served the body politic. And he knew how to use his power in the legislative assembly to manipulate the composition of crucial committees, to speak for the assembly on financial matters, to centralize all correspondence with the legislature's British agent in his own hands, and to maintain a persuasive voice in all deliberations on public policy. It was no accident that when those opposed to the DeLancey/Jones faction raised some sporadic opposition in the early 1750s, the man they most vigorously opposed was David Jones.

If one characteristic of the DeLancey/Jones faction was that the strengths of its co-leaders proved complementary, another was the breadth of electoral support that the coalition enjoyed. Many Anglicans found it easy to keep company with the Anglicans DeLancey and Jones; the bulk of the Dutch Reformed followed along both in the legislature and out-of-doors; constituencies heavily peopled with Presbyterians supported the popular party; and on both Long Island and the eastern side of the lower Hudson Valley, Quaker voters broadened the coalition. What William Smith, Jr., observed of DeLancey, that he was "A Man who laid deep Foundations for Power in his Popularity, . . . who . . . studied to please all Sects, and made the Dissenters confident of his Protection," might equally have been said of David Jones. To be sure, there were always some who resisted the DeLancey/Jones faction, but that opposition had no ethnic or religious monopoly within any one county and no obvious ethnocultural consistency from one county to the next. A few pockets of Dutch Reformed, Quaker, Presbyterian, and Anglican voters sporadically defected from coalition support in the outlying areas of the province, and there was apparently some
tension between the wider provincial concerns that frequently monopolized the attention of the DeLancey/Jones leadership and specifically urban interests in New York City in the late 1740s. But that opposition was clearly of a mixed ethnic and religious character and had little prospect of long-term life. By 1752, a rueful Governor Clinton concluded that Oliver DeLancey, James’s brother and chief political organizer, could “Sett up his Four Coach Horses” and easily carry any New York City election.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the formation of the DeLancey/Jones alliance was that it coalesced during wartime. When clouds began to gather with British/Spanish hostilities in 1739, and finally broke with the engagement of Britain and France in 1744, New Yorkers were a divided lot. Their interests led them to view the conflict in a multitude of ways. In New York City, leading merchants were concerned about the dangers war presented to commerce and the opportunities it brought for privateering. Insofar as city residents turned their thoughts to defense, they were preoccupied with the dangers from a French fleet and with the need to strengthen the harbor’s fort and batteries. And insofar as they thought about the overland French and Indian threat, they were far less concerned about any disruption to the old Montreal fur trade than they were with protecting the upriver supply of lumber and agricultural products, in making sure that northern residents and those fur traders directly involved in the Indian trade picked up garrison and fortification costs in Albany, Schenectady, and Oswego, and in avoiding any compulsory militia service on the northern frontier.

The provincials who lived on Long Island and in the mid Hudson Valley felt more secure than any other New Yorkers during the war, and their attitudes reflected that. Although some became more concerned about war once New France’s Indian allies bloodied both the New York and Massachusetts frontiers in 1745, many residents of these secure areas were, according to the Albanian Philip Livingston, “Narrow lac’d souls that . . . care not what becomes of our frontiers.” The “Gentry” who had “their Estates in the Center of ye Country . . . [were] no more Concern’d about ye murdurs above Albany than I am to Kill’d a fatt pigg.”

If the feeling was unanimous among northern New Yorkers that the rest of the colony did not pay enough heed to the province’s frontier travails, that was also where agreement among them ended. Beyond believing that their defense should be a high provincial priority, Albany County and Livingston Manor residents were deeply divided about what was most worth protecting and who was most capable of speaking for upriver concerns.

Aware of the diversity of opinions in their province, the most influential provincial politicians tried to find some middle ground that would be safe for the moment. The assembly responded selectively to the newly appointed Governor Clinton’s requests for defense-related expenditures and fre-
sequently bargained what support it gave for greater legislative power.\textsuperscript{39} Although it fell short compared to that of the aggressive Massachusetts legislators, New York’s record of defense expenditures during 1744–1745 was an acceptable one compared with many other colonies.\textsuperscript{40} Despite the conflicting views that different perspectives provided, there was enough willingness to compromise through the summer of 1745 that, in his capacity as provincial councillor, even the irascible Cadwallader Colden remarked on the absence of “parties or disputes among us.”\textsuperscript{41}

That situation, however, had already begun to change. Governor Clinton resented the fame and booty his provincial councillor, Admiral Peter Warren, won at Louisbourg; the leading role Massachusetts’s governor, the civilian William Shirley, was playing in the war; and the New York Assembly’s “Untowardness” and “Thirst of Power.”\textsuperscript{42} When the French and Indian foe overran the frontier fort of Saratoga in November 1745, Clinton laid full blame on the assembly and tried to become the forceful captain-general of his gubernatorial fantasies.\textsuperscript{43}

But the legislators with whom Clinton had to deal during these months were a wary lot.\textsuperscript{44} True, they had been prepared to make some efforts to defend the province prior to the sack of Saratoga, but only within limits. Most representatives wanted to off-load as much wartime expenditure as possible—in the case of protection for the northern frontier, on the fur traders and local residents, and in that of the monies for Indian diplomacy, on the Crown. Mindful of the financial burdens that had come with King William’s and Queen Anne’s wars, and aware that they were still paying for the financial debacles of those years, New Yorkers were not inclined to rush headlong into heavy new commitments. They insisted that Great Britain pledge to pay a sizable share of any costly campaign against New France, “for unless the Charge is repaid by the Crown, we shall be almost ruined.”\textsuperscript{45}

In addition, many of New York’s popular politicians were just as knowledgeable of public affairs in Massachusetts as Clinton was, and their response to those developments was ambivalent. While New Yorkers were happy to have the Bay province fight New France for the benefit of all, they also looked askance at the gubernatorial patronage and influence that accompanied William Shirley’s leadership. Cognizant of these tendencies in contemporary Massachusetts politics, aware of Clinton’s avaricious ambitions, and mindful of the ways in which prerogative power had abused wartime budgets during earlier times, the New York Assembly determined to keep its governor on a short leash. The fact that in Great Britain, colonial administrators were currently considering ways to strengthen the prerogative in the colonies stiffened the legislators’ resolve to give nothing away to executive leadership.\textsuperscript{46}

Yet when the situation became perilous in November 1745 with the
collapse of Saratoga, the assembly was ready to reinforce the garrison at Oswego, strengthen the fortifications of New York City, build blockhouses above Albany, and support a British-sanctioned expedition against New France. Between July 1745 and July 1746, New York legislators appropriated "something over £70,000 for the defense of the colony." Despite regional differences and parsimonious proclivities, "our Assembly was never more zealous or unanimous than on this occasion to promote the interests of His Majesty." With regard to mounting an offensive against New France, popular provincial politicians were "very hearty in the thing." And among their ranks was James DeLancey, who remained committed to aggressive military action through the summer of 1747. Once the British indicated their intention of sharing the cost of a large-scale offensive against the Canadians, New Yorkers were more than willing to go along.

Just at this point, when there seemed some possibility of cooperative action between Clinton and New York’s leading provincial politicians, the reverse happened. Determined to take the leadership role in the war away from Massachusetts, and believing that he should, as much as possible, serve as the sole arbiter of New York’s military needs and obligations, Clinton asserted himself as never before. He undercut the province’s Indian commissioners and, through the good offices of Sir William Johnson, tried to establish his own reinvigorated Indian policy. He fought with both the provincial council and the assembly over such issues as the allocation of expenses between Britain and New York, the provisioning of the independent companies of British soldiers stationed in New York, the responsibility of the province to advance payment to cover wartime expenses chargeable to Britain, and the deployment, payment, and continued enlistment of provincial troops. As he committed himself to this course, Clinton increasingly relied on the support, advice, and penmanship of Councillor Cadwallader Colden, whose reactionary views of the prerogative and rights of royal officials like himself were extremely impolitic. By trying to assert gubernatorial power and claiming the right to "put Bounds and Limitations, upon . . . [the assembly’s] Rights and Privileges, and alter them at Pleasure," Clinton and Colden raised the opposition of every provincial politician who felt either the desirability or the necessity of staying in tune with New York’s predominantly Whiggish popular politics.

For its part, once it had committed itself to sizable military appropriations, the assembly was doubly determined to keep a tight rein on expenses, to push as much of the cost of war as possible onto the Crown, and to exercise as much administrative oversight of wartime activities as it could. The more Clinton pressed for an open-ended financial commitment to the war, and the more he emphasized the prerogative, the more the legislators stressed the limits of provincial largesse, the duty Clinton owed, as royal
surrogate, to shoulder expenses on behalf of the British government, and the right of the assembly to participate in the administration of the colony on the assembly's own terms. There public affairs remained stalemated during the remaining months of King George's War.\(^5^4\)

The result of these developments in the mid 1740s was the complete isolation of Governor Clinton and his advisor Cadwallader Colden.\(^5^5\) True, of course, there were numerous other divisions among New Yorkers during these years, among the most marked of which were differences over the allocation of wartime taxes.\(^5^6\) But the most significant feature of these conflicts, whether they were fiscal, economic, regional, ethnic, personal, or ideological, was that none was sufficiently strong to give structural definition to popular politics through the creation or perpetuation of major factions.\(^5^7\) Despite their differences, assemblymen cooperated unprecedentedly to oppose Clinton and Colden. The governor even alienated the majority of his council, including the crucial James DeLancey, but also the important Philip Livingston, who by January 1746 was meeting “Eveningly with [the] Chief Justice & a few others” when Livingston was in New York City.\(^5^8\) And, as Clinton became more assertive and antagonistic toward the province’s representatives, they submerged their various differences to the point where prior to the 1747 election, the assemblymen “a Greed [in] case of a Dissolution to Set up & Joyn so al to Come again in the same body if possible."\(^5^9\) Solidarity against a threatening governor took precedence over other concerns.\(^6^0\)

The antagonism that Governor Clinton generated should not, however, blind us to the political acumen of James DeLancey and David Jones. During the early Clinton years, they did not force the pace of politics, but allowed dissatisfaction with the governor to progress at its own gait. Meanwhile, they associated themselves with a mix of policies relating to the war, the province’s relationship with Great Britain, the development of assembly powers, and the general concern for governmental austerity, all of which had some breadth of appeal. By the second half of 1746, their light touch had brought them provincewide influence, and as the tension between Clinton and the assembly grew in the ensuing weeks, they gained even greater preeminence as power brokers among New York’s county notables. Once the war ended, the DeLancey/Jones coalition continued to broaden its base, capitalizing on disgust with Clinton’s continued efforts to shore up the prerogative, and using the advantage popularity conferred to consolidate (frequently in a much more heavy-handed manner than heretofore) their power in various regions of the province.\(^6^1\) When Clinton finally looked beyond Colden, to try to enlist some provincial politicians to take on the DeLancey/Jones juggernaut, his few supporters met with dismal defeat.\(^6^2\) James DeLancey and David Jones had done their work well.
By the early 1750s, the DeLancey/Jones coalition seemed unshakable. Clinton finally handed over DeLancey’s lieutenant-governor’s commission in 1753, after keeping it undelivered for six years (in hopes of gaining its revocation), and carried his complaining tongue back to England. With David Jones firmly in control of the assembly, DeLancey had the opportunity to accomplish what few governors were capable of—composing the rift between assembly and governor in a way that would reasonably reconcile both popular demands for legislative power and perceived needs for executive responsibility in the interests of loyalty, colonial obedience, and good order. But just as DeLancey began confronting this task, the political coalition that would facilitate it was suddenly challenged.

The issue that upset the existing political equilibrium was the establishment of a colonial college. The conflict that took place over the founding of such an institution in New York City was not over the merits of higher education—most civic leaders agreed that the fast-growing mid-Atlantic colonies required their own colleges—but over what religious denomination should control the college administration. Pennsylvania offered one answer. There, Benjamin Franklin’s commitment to utilitarian education, and belief that nonsectarian education best suited a society committed to liberty of conscience, produced an experiment in cooperation between Old Light Presbyterians and Anglicans when the College of Philadelphia was grafted onto the Philadelphia Academy in the mid 1750s. But the New York environment was markedly different. There, a group of Anglican clergymen, who had defied their Congregational upbringings to become churchmen, and who served congregations in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut hinterland close to New York City, were determined to have an Anglican college. They had failed to crack the Congregational monopolies at Harvard and Yale, and they had been caught flat-footed by a group of energetic Presbyterians who had secured provincial blessing for the College of New Jersey, an institution that genuflected toward that province’s ethnic and religious pluralism by promising “free and equal liberty . . . of education . . . notwithstanding any different sentiments in religion,” but which, in fact, was run by clergy uncompromisingly committed to New Light standards. The Anglican priests were strongly supported by a group of prominent New York laymen, including vestrymen of Trinity Church and such provincial councilors as Cadwallader Colden, John Chambers, and Joseph Murray, all of whom saw an Anglican college as an essential part of the anglicized social order they hoped would eventually predominate amid New York’s diversity.

In addition to the financial support that Trinity Church members could provide, what recommended New York City to these hopeful Anglicans was that alone among the colonies north of the Chesapeake Bay, New York had
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an Anglican establishment. Granted, it was a truncated and bastardized establishment; but it was the best that existed. Although the English had acknowledged the need to accommodate non-Anglican religious worship immediately after the conquest, in 1693 the ardent Anglican Governor Fletcher succeeded in persuading the assembly to adopt a law that created parishes in New York, Richmond, Westchester, and Queens counties. Non-Anglican legislators accepted the law because they felt they could exploit its vague wording to reinforce the strength of their own denominations in the designated counties. Governors Fletcher and Cornbury, however, used their respective powers to try to consolidate Anglican influence in the four southern counties. They were so successful, particularly once the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel made its resources available to Cornbury, that in later decades some leading New York Anglicans continued to cherish the notion that a more orthodox establishment might eventually encompass much of the province. The proposed Anglican college strengthened such hopes.

If the creation of a limited establishment in New York earned the approval of most Anglicans, it aroused different reactions in other major denominations. Although some Dutch Reformed in New York City resented the taxes that the 1693 legislation required them to pay to support an Anglican clergyman, and others detested Lord Cornbury's high-handed interference in their religious affairs, most Dutch lived in counties unaffected by the Ministry Act. Moreover, various governors, beginning with Fletcher, bought them off with exemptions from the executive's collating power and a willingness to incorporate their churches. The Dutch Reformed church thus gained a privileged position that set it apart from other non-Anglicans, "the next best thing to an establishment of their own." The Presbyterians, however, were far more antagonistic. Cornbury's persecution of a clergyman, Francis Makemie, for preaching without permission in New York City, became a notorious part of Presbyterian folklore. And his placement of Anglican clergy in strong Calvinist parishes brought congregational disobedience in Rye and a bitter dispute in Jamaica, which continued intermittently until the Revolution.

The point is that none of New York's three major denominations interpreted the "liberty of conscience" Governor Slaughter promised in 1691 as the kind of broad-based, voluntaristic religious liberty Pennsylvanians came to associate with the term. During the seventeenth century, the Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians had accustomed themselves to supporting their ministers by community taxation. That practice continued into the eighteenth century in heavily Dutch and Presbyterian communities. And it coexisted in some areas with the local Anglican establishment that the 1693 law brought to the four southern counties. The result was that, unlike
Pennsylvanians, who became accustomed to religious voluntarism, the majority of New York religious leaders retained some taste for coercive church practices. Anglicans hungered for more territory to feed a sharpened appetite for dominance and place. Devout Dutch Reformed adherents thought kindly of any friendly establishment that would promote coherence in the Dutch communities. And numerous Presbyterians both admired the narrow paths of New England Congregationalism and harbored the heat of religious imperialism that fired the souls of so many colonial Calvinists. All of the major New York denominations had their forceful leaders, who coveted the advantages even a weak establishment could provide. That attitude could quickly develop into a deep suspicion of any apparent privilege one denomination might gain over another.

It was against this backdrop that plans for a New York college developed. By mid 1752, the New York legislature had authorized lotteries that raised nearly £3,500 toward the cost of opening the institution, and leading college promoters had persuaded their friends in the assembly to appoint an overwhelmingly Anglican board of trustees to manage the lottery monies and oversee the settlement of the college on New York City lands donated by the Trinity Church vestry board. Throughout the late 1740s and early 1750s, leading Anglicans simply assumed that the New York institution would be an “Episcopal College.”

One of the trustees of the college was the lawyer William Livingston, whose interest in promoting higher education in New York had led to his appointment. Unlike his fellows, however, Livingston was a Presbyterian. And he was not one to remain silent when the course of public affairs displeased him. “There is a thing,” he wrote to his former Yale classmate Noah Welles, “which has long been the Subject of my thoughts and which I should be glad to transmit to the Reflector in a course of letters . . . . The case is this—Our future College . . . . is like to fall without a vigorous opposition, under the management of Churchmen. The Consequence which will be universal Priestcraft and Bigotry in less than half a Century.”

The “Reflector” that Livingston mentioned was an essay magazine series entitled the Independent Reflector, which he and his fellow Presbyterians and lawyers William Smith, Jr., and John Morin Scott had begun to publish on November 30, 1752. For some time, Livingston, with the fitful help of his two friends and an occasional contribution from others, had built up a series of essays and list of promising topics long enough, he hoped, to sustain a weekly commentary on public affairs. Throughout his early years, the precocious Livingston had been developing a facile, if not diarrhetic, pen. With that went a streak of unshakable intellectual and moral self-confidence broad enough to support his future habit of writing incendiary social criticism. Socially a shy, private individual, Livingston found the essay to be the
one way he could best fulfill his intense ambition to instruct, to lead, to correct, and to criticize.

In Livingston's *Independent Reflector* essays, two somewhat contradictory characteristics stand out. One is a rare willingness to hold up established customs for examination and expose their absurdities and inequities; the result was a clear, instructive, but often unsettling commentary, a compelling eighteenth-century version of investigative journalism. The second is a strong ideological derivativeness that mimicked English radical-Whig ideas about the form and dangers of political and ecclesiastical power. At their best, Livingston's ideological writings were well tailored to fit local circumstances and made a telling point; at their worst, they were shrill invectives and formulaic descriptions that reinforced the very type of closed mind that in other circumstances, Livingston prided himself on exposing.

When the *Reflector*’s series of six essays on the “intended” New York college began on March 22, 1753, they included both elements of Livingston's writing. Pointing out that New York was a remarkably diverse society and that many groups had “taxed” themselves through the lotteries, Livingston asserted that such public money should be used like any tax money, for the “Emolument of the Whole,” not for some narrow sectarian purpose. Moreover, preference to any denomination in college governance would precipitate widespread social dissension as the favored sect used its power over “tender” student minds to inculcate orthodoxy, thereby stirring others to oppose such efforts to “strengthen and enlarge” its place in provincial society. The way to avoid this predicament was to make the college “a mere civil institution” in which constant questioning and reference to reason would promote true education. Along with this striking approach to New York’s college problem went a good measure of anti-Anglican bombast. Livingston castigated the Church of England for its “Thirst for Dominion” and scaremongered with supposed threats of tithes, test acts, and even “Peter-Pence.” “Behold,” he projected, “the Province overrun with Priest-craft and every Office usurped by the ruling Party.” The Anglicans represented power on the loose and, if possible, the Presbyterian Livingston would deprive the churchmen of their New York victim.

Stung by Livingston’s sharp tongue, and particularly incensed by his reference to the College of New Jersey as an example of nonsectarian education (when the atmosphere there was more intensely denominational than anything Samuel Johnson, a leading churchman, had in mind for the New York college of which he was soon to be president), a half dozen of Johnson’s clerical friends counterattacked. They swung away at Livingston et al. in the pages of the *New-York Mercury*, declaring *The Reflector* an “atheist” and a “Bigot,” guided by the principles of independence and republicanism. Suppose all religions were equal. “What a Scene of Confusion . . . ! What
dreadful Convulsions . . . !” The British constitution deliberately preferred one religion above the rest in order to keep a proper “Balance.”

Unable to shout Livingston into silence, the Anglicans leaned on his printer, and by November 1753, the “reflector” was left, screeches in his hand, with no place to publish. But a year later the two sides were at it again, filling the pages of the New-York Mercury with invective. By this time, however, the issue had changed focus slightly. In November 1754, Lieutenant-Governor James DeLancey had granted King’s College its charter, and from that point on, legislative support for the free college bill that William Livingston and his allies had offered as an alternative, and that he had entrusted to his brother Robert, Jr., to shepherd through the assembly, “began to flagg.” Thereafter Livingston and his friends hoped to play spoilers. They wanted to stir up sufficient opposition to inhibit the assembly from voting public money to support the Anglican college. They would deal King’s College as crippling a blow as possible by blackening its reputation and curtailing its resources.

At this juncture, William Livingston’s co-instigator, William Smith, Jr., undertook the most important initiative. Hopeful he could mobilize enough support through public petitions to affect the actions of New York legislators, and aware that any network of contacts he established might be useful in developing an anti–DeLancey/Jones election campaign (should the appointment of a new governor bring dissolution of the assembly), Smith set to work with diligence. More than Livingston, Smith represented orthodox, militant Presbyterianism. He deeply resented the past and present transgressions of New York Anglicans, and while fighting for nonsectarian education in his own colony, could urge New Lights to keep a tight hold on the College of New Jersey in order to secure its place as the “Bulwark of the Presbyterian Interest.” What intensified his commitment to the anti-Anglican cause in New York was his deep personal and familial hatred of James DeLancey.

While Smith’s puritanically tinged, upper-crust tastes always gave him a hearing among the more educated of New York City society, the parochialism of New York sophistication brought him some decided disadvantages in provincial politics. In his 1754 effort to collect petitions, Smith demonstrated some of these: in his approach to Friends, he evinced no sensitivity whatsoever to the Quaker language of public discourse; initially, he thought that the Anglican Queens County assemblyman Thomas Cornell was a member for Suffolk County; despite its proximity to New York City, he had no contacts in Kings County, which was predominantly Dutch; he failed to find an effective lieutenant in Westchester County, where he had a sizable audience of Presbyterians and Congregationalists; his contact of influence in Richmond was a Clinton supporter who had recently been repudiated by
the electorate; he and William Livingston entrusted the task of collecting signatures in the Albany area to a pettifogger, “the Ridicule and contempt of the County,” who quickly discredited the cause; and only by accident did he trip over a Congregational minister willing to undertake petition-signing responsibility in Suffolk County.93

Yet Smith persevered. His and his father’s strong Presbyterianism gave him access to a network of ministers receptive to his message—particularly in Dutchess, Ulster, and Orange Counties. As time went by, he also won the confidence of an occasional Dutch Reformed minister.94 Gradually, too, he became adept at using what purchase he had through Presbyterian/ Congregational sympathy to move members of the legislature. Thomas Cornell tried to appease the large numbers of Presbyterians and Quakers in his county by supporting the Livingston/Smith initiatives.95 In Suffolk County, where there were “not 20 Church Families,” the Anglican William Nicoll (whose nephew, the Anglican lottery trustee Benjamin Nicoll, was the stepson of King’s College’s future president, Samuel Johnson) took a more moderate line than his relatives might have wished.96 Smith benefited too, from the lobbying that Philip Livingston carried out in September and October of 1754 among the New York City Dutch Reformed. As a result, Dominic DeRonde used his pulpit to warn attending Dutch Reformed assemblymen from the countryside that Anglican Arminianism could only be checked by the mobilization of the province’s Calvinist forces.97

Partly by appeal to what contemporaries perceived as the issues, partly by dint of hard work and manipulative politics, and partly by the accident of divisions among the Dutch Reformed, Smith and Livingston put together a block of assembly votes that held at bay those who wanted to support King’s College with public money. Because the Dutch Reformed members of the assembly constituted the majority of that body, they held decisive votes in their hands. Before 1755 they had played their usual retiring and supportive role in provincial politics, in this case largely reacting to Anglican and Presbyterian initiatives; by 1755, however, they began to stir in response to forces within their own communities. With the conferentie/coetus split becoming sharper in the late 1740s and early 1750s, the conservative New York City–centered Dutch clergy successfully petitioned to have a Dutch divinity professor added to the King’s College faculty.98 In the meantime, their evangelical opponents had gained considerable support among a group of city Dutch who felt that only the adoption of English-language services could stop their uncomprehending children from deserting their church.99 This coetus-sympathizing group began to argue that only a sectarian college of their own, albeit an English-language one, could preserve their separate identity. Some of their leaders, most notably Theodore Frelinghuysen of Albany, therefore began publicly to condemn any cooperation with the
Anglicans. The result of this convergence of diverse forces was a fairly even split among New York legislators. The hard core of the anti-college coalition consisted of six Dutch Reformed members, two Anglicans, one Dutch Lutheran, and one Presbyterian. On the other side of the question were an equal number, composed of seven Anglican and three Dutch Reformed. Both groups drew on a third six-man contingent of swing voters, consisting of four Dutch Reformed and two Anglicans. It was by successful appeal to members of this group, along with the either purposeful or fortuitous absences of some of their opponents at critical votes, that allowed the anti-college-aid group to push its opponents to a dispiriting compromise in November 1756. At that time, the jaded parties agreed to divide the lottery proceeds between King’s College and the City of New York. When the latter decided to use a portion of its share to build quarantine quarters for immigrants and mariners, it seemed a fitting resolution, thought the sour-tongued William Smith, Sr., to divide the money “between the two pest houses.”

The Livingston/Smith initiatives clearly shook the DeLancey/Jones coalition. Moderate Anglican and infrequent churchgoer that he was, James DeLancey hated being painted into a corner by the zealots who forced on him the appearance of being an Episcopal stalwart in the context of his approval of the King’s College charter in 1754. David Jones, in turn, felt pressured enough by his Quaker and Presbyterian constituents to seek out a public-testimonial by several assemblymen that he had never promoted King’s College, an endorsement of which William Livingston made political capital by suggesting that Jones spoke simultaneously out of each side of his mouth. The swell of petitions from the countryside against public support for King’s College seemed to impugn DeLancey’s and Jones’s leadership, and the fracturing of the assembly along unprecedented lines over the same issue signified a loss of coalition coherence where the DeLancey/Jones faction had recently been so strong.

Yet the Livingston/Smith opposition were never able to push their advantage. The general election they hoped for on the arrival of Governor Sir Charles Hardy in September 1755 never took place, and when a New York by-election occurred a year later, the city and county sent James DeLancey’s brother Oliver to the assembly. Philip Livingston tested the wind, but feeling no favorable turn, kept his sails furled and watched Oliver DeLancey launch his assembly career “unanimously.” When the next general election took place in 1759, in compliance with the terms of the Septennial Act, the turnover was heavy enough (63 percent) to draw notice in the press, but if that result represented any referendum on the King’s College brawl, it indicated a repudiation of the Livingston/Smith stance. Of the ten hard-core opponents of public aid for King’s College, only one gained reelec-
tion; among the ten committed supporters of the college, five were returned; The heaviest turnover took place in precisely those areas in which the anti-college forces had enjoyed greatest support.

There were other indicators, too, that despite Livingston's and Smith's efforts, the Presbyterian/Anglican conflict central to the college dispute was not easily transferred into provincial politics. The New York City Presbyterians were so divided among themselves that William Smith, Jr., could not elicit one petition against college aid from the congregation, while William Livingston complained of their "unnatural feuds which . . . rendered us contemptible to our Enemies." And rural Presbyterians found an alliance with the idiosyncratic William Livingston and the enigmatic William Smith, Jr., somewhat discomforting. Livingston's rationalism and Smith's private touting of Anglican friends, while publicly libeling their religion, was less than reassuring.

Although the divisions among the city Dutch Reformed briefly played into Livingston's and Smith's hands, these self-appointed Presbyterian champions were never convincing in arguing the existence of an "English and Dutch Presbyterian" community of interest. Far more English-speaking Dutch were opting for membership in the Anglican church than in the Presbyterian, and no amount of rhetoric proclaiming reformed unity against Anglican tyranny could offset the long-standing Dutch distaste for their Massachusetts and Connecticut neighbors and the association of Presbyterianism with New England Independency. As for William Livingston's notion of a free college, neither hard-nosed Presbyterian nor Dutch Reformed found it any more acceptable than their Anglican counterparts. Still thinking of colleges as quasi-religious corporations and of the edge that establishment-tinged institutions might give their respective churches, they thought a nondenominational college either an absurdity or a Trojan horse. And those denominations, such as Quakers, Moravians, and some Lutherans, who largely accepted religious voluntarism, had no particular interest at this juncture in higher education and little temperamental affinity for Presbyterian zeal.

Finally, it is not at all clear, despite the apparent success of the Livingston/Smith petitioning campaign, that the college issue did much to shape public opinion other than in one or two exceptional areas in which Presbyterian/Anglican conflict had a historic place in the local social geography. As Smith's New York City opponents charged, his petitions were "forced Petitions, from distant Counties, signed by ignorant People, that know not what they are about." Recognizing that the question of the college was a single issue with restricted appeal and a limited life, Livingston and Smith tried to broaden the base of their faction by raising the staple radical-Whig fears of the misuse of power. But in the early to mid 1750s, that was a difficult case to make. The DeLancey/Jones leadership had
proven itself repeatedly in the popular antiprerogative wars of the prior
decade, and had drawn electoral support from across a wide religious spec-
trum. Moreover, the major politicians within that faction shared some sense
of larger loyalty to their accustomed leaders.

By late 1755, veteran New York assemblymen were anxious to leave be-
behind the religious issue. The two Anglicans who had consistently supported
the anti-college position had no desire to fight additional battles for Presby-
terians. Unlike their priests and one or two provincial councillors, the
Anglican assemblymen were moderate, secular-minded men who deeply
disliked the divisiveness of the college dispute and wanted a quick return to
normalcy. As for their Dutch counterparts, who often represented areas in
which both cootus and conferentie supporters lived, they had no incentive to
continue a battle that had originated within the English-language commu-
nities. Most Dutch assemblymen, no matter how they voted on the college
issue, continued to share political friendships with their longtime Anglican
allies. Both country Dutch and rural Anglican representatives were happy to
get back to local issues—the “Destruction of Blackbirds and proclaiming
war against Crows and rattlesnakes”—that affected their constituents more
directly than any New York City college ever could. Rather than being
slowly buried under bucolic concerns, however, the idiosyncratic divisions
the college debate occasioned were quickly obscured by the renewal of war
in 1755.

The outbreak of the French and Indian War immediately offered the
Livingston/Smith duo some opportunity to broaden and reinvigorate their
faction. Early in the war, when the college-money question was still unre-
solved, the anti–King’s College legislative coalition used its power in the
assembly to establish a new ratio of taxation quotas among the various
counties. But the tug and pull of particular interests and the commit-
ment to wartime cooperation engendered by hostilities substantially ended
college-inspired legislative divisions. Outside the assembly, fortune mo-
mentarily shone on the Livingston/Smith faction. Lieutenant-Governor
James DeLancey reacted badly to Massachusetts Governor William Shirley’s
renewed military prominence in 1755–1756. And capitalizing on their earlier
ties with Shirley, a number of William Livingston’s relatives and political
allies landed the lucrative military supply contracts for the general’s northern
campaigns. But supporters of DeLancey and Jones took over wartime
supply contracts shortly after the British sacked Shirley in mid 1756, and
when James DeLancey again became chief executive on Governor Sir
Charles Hardy’s departure in 1757, the Livingston/Smith campaign trailed
off into wordy justifications of its past actions.

As for the DeLancey/Jones wartime policy, it was never as limited as it has
sometimes been portrayed. Although neither James DeLancey nor his
assemblymen friends had any use for the reforms of the Albany Plan, DeLancey did offer his “own Plan” for the fortification of the New York frontier and some strategic offensive action against the French. The brief interlude of their opposition to Shirley aside, the DeLancey/Jones coalition pursued the war effectively within their understanding of the realities of New York politics and financial resources. Overall, DeLancey adopted a sufficiently aggressive policy in the former case to placate and in the latter to draw to him two of his most vocal critics from King George’s War, Cadwallader Colden and Sir William Johnson. And despite the parsimonious hearts of their constituents, the David Jones—led assembly appropriated over £63,000 for defensive and offensive action before war had even been declared in Great Britain. Once it became clear that the British were determined to devote a major effort to the North American theater, once the supply and paymaster contracts were firmly in friendly hands, and especially once the prospects for victory improved, the dominant faction pushed the war effort with vigor, even at some cost to incumbent popularity in county politics.

The wartime effort was the last hurrah of the DeLancey/Jones coalition, however, for the 1759 provincial election cleaned out the assembly on a scale reminiscent of other major shifts in New York politics. Unquestionably, the most important feature of that election was the defeat of David Jones—and there we must acknowledge the local salience of religious conflict. The bitter dispute between Anglicans and Presbyterians in Jamaica parish, which had begun under Lord Cornbury and had calmed down in the 1730s and 1740s, began “to rise” again coincidentally with William Livingston’s anti-Anglican diatribes. By 1754, Queens County Quakers were predicting that unless there was “a Miraculous change in the Minds of the People he . . . [“Mr. Speaker”] never will be Chosen again.” But it is important to understand the full range of reasons for that sentiment. The “Clamour” against Jones was not only “in Relation to the College” but also to “some other Matters Respecting this County in Particular.” The complexities of local opinion were further underlined by the defeat of Thomas Cornell, Jones’s longtime running mate. The Anglican Cornell had been one of the chief contacts on Long Island of William Smith, Jr., he had an impeccable anti-college legislative record, and he was the only assemblyman whom William Livingston openly praised in his polemics as worthy of Presbyterian support. Despite this, Cornell’s long association with Jones and his record on local issues were sufficiently distasteful to the bulk of Presbyterian and Quaker Queens County voters for them to send Cornell packing. The Jones/Cornell case demonstrated that large provincial issues centering on religious conflict could have an impact on county politics provided a direct connection could be established between those issues and local affairs. Once
set loose and integrated into county perceptions, however, those issues
could easily develop an unpredictable logic of their own, depending on the
dynamics of the local social environment. But in 1759, with respect to the
religious issue, Queens County stood out as the exception.

Of more general concern were considerations related to legislative in­
cumbency and local wartime concerns. New Yorkers repeatedly proved
themselves hostile to legislators who strung out their mandate as long as
possible, and the big turnover in 1759 certainly owed something to that
prejudice. But equally important were the great difficulties representa­
tives had faced in satisfying their constituents during war. Conflicts over
taxes, the recruitment of provincial troops, the operation of the militia, the
purchase of supplies, the relative need for rangers, guards, and blockhouses,
and a number of local issues or special-interest demands not only pitted
representatives of one county against those of others but also frequently
prompted multiple intracounty interests to raise their voices. Dissatisfac­
tion frequently centered on individual assemblymen, regardless of their
record on other provincial issues, and that led to a legislative purge despite
the larger wartime success the British and colonists were beginning to enjoy
against New France by early 1759.

Important as the 1759 election was in ending the period of DeLancey/
Jones hegemony, it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the demise
of the faction was a protracted event that had begun much earlier, not just in
the gradual alienation of various New Yorkers, but in the loss of key person­
nel. James DeLancey's old associate Frederick Philipse had died in 1751;
another reliable friend, the influential Paul Richards, followed Philipse to
the grave in 1756; three years later, the New York merchant and De­
Lancey/Jones stalwart Henry Cruger resigned from the assembly; and out
in Dutchess County, Henry Beekman, a longtime supporter and DeLancey
relation, turned over his interest in county politics to his son-in-law Robert
R. Livingston. Along with the attrition of age went that of ambition.
Between 1758 and 1761, three DeLancey/Jones veterans, John Watts, Wil­
liam Walton, and Oliver DeLancey passed through the influential New York
City and County assembly seats to places in the council. The loss of contin­
uity in the city delegation, coupled with the weakening of David Jones's
influence among country members, left Lieutenant-Governor James De­
Lancey without much legislative clout by the time he died in 1760.

Despite the overwhelming importance of the DeLancey/Jones coalition
as a political entity in mid-eighteenth-century New York, it had the crucial
limitation of all factions. It was the product of a peculiar mix of personalities
who could not transcend themselves. Their concerted opposition to Gover­
nor Clinton had forged a common understanding of how New York govern­
ment should work, of the relative places the legislature and executive should
hold, of what was tolerable in interregional and interreligious relationships, and of what was an acceptable range of broad goals for New York's wartime efforts. But such agreement was time- and personality-bound. There was no direct spillover into a new generation of ready replacements. Ultimately, the life of the DeLancey/Jones coalition was determined more by the life cycles of its principals than by the viability of its principles.

The Consolidation and Transformation of the Quaker Party

Pennsylvania's Quaker Party first emerged as a recognizable force in provincial politics with the election of 1739. Immediately prior to that event, Andrew Hamilton, the speaker of the Assembly and hero of the Zenger trial, had led a small but important group of Quakers and non-Quakers in retiring from the legislature. Hamilton resigned because of ill-health, but his son James, son-in-law William Allen, and a small number of moderate Philadelphia Quakers apparently did so because they thought that all the knotty public issues of the day had been untangled. No sooner had they announced their intentions, however, than a sizable lobby of “stiff” Philadelphia Friends took over preelection negotiations to settle on candidates for that county. According to William Allen, these activists “were for choosing none but people of that perswasion.” Hence the name Quaker Party.

Although the rapidity with which the Quaker Party coalesced caught William Allen and his friends flat-footed, the foundations for the Quaker edifice had, in fact, been laid over an extended period. As Friends became seriously outnumbered in the 1720s and 1730s, they gradually realized that they could no longer afford major political fragmentation if they were to maintain their hegemony in public affairs. And most believed that the Quaker experiment should continue. What facilitated Friends' coming together was the appearance of Thomas Penn in Pennsylvania in 1732. As Penn reorganized proprietary affairs, collected past debts, raised both quitrents and the price of land, and demanded compensation for accepting depreciated Pennsylvania currency for pre-1732 quitrents, the numbers of “grumblers and malcontents” increased throughout the colony. Andrew Hamilton and his allies kept them at bay for some time, because Hamilton's reputation as a popular-rights man allowed him to insist that the Penns' property interests deserved some protection. But once the Penns and the Calverts agreed to settle their dispute over the Maryland boundary, and the Pennsylvania Assembly passed a law compensating the Penns for accepting depreciated provincial currency for their pre-1732 quitrents, there was little
to check the ill feelings of discontented provincials. By 1738, these boiled to the surface of Pennsylvania politics with great vigor, finally predisposing many rural Quaker assemblymen (who a decade earlier had been the anchor of the proprietary forces against Sir William Keith's city-based faction) to turn irrevocably away from proprietary influence. At the same time, as an older generation of proprietary Quaker political leaders and administrators died or retired, they left few strong replacements. Fed on tales of a fair and benevolent William Penn (compared to his grasping son), younger Friends saw the new proprietary initiatives as a series of betrayals. Ever opportunists, Quaker politicians began to exploit these feelings, quick to claim that the antiproprietary Friends had inherited the torch of idealism Penn had carried on behalf of all Pennsylvanians.

While Friends were drawing together among themselves, they were also developing a practice of including recent immigrants in Pennsylvania politics. As Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and both German sectarians and German church people interspersed themselves among pockets of old settlers and took up whole townships in frontier areas, Quaker leaders reached out to influential newcomers, connecting them with the existing political framework. In taking the initiative in defending local property rights (as they did against the incursions of Marylanders into southeastern Pennsylvania), and in acting as intermediaries between the proprietor and local settlers, county Quakers built up strong associations with members of other religious groups. In consequence, Friends frequently enjoyed the political support of both Scotch-Irish and Germans. And as the majority of politically active Quakers began to define themselves more clearly as a popular political coalition, German sectarians, who had played only a peripheral role in the earlier factionalized politics of the province, became more active. A Quaker interest tinged with pacifism and Whiggism was one that could easily find sympathy among Mennonites, Dunkers, Moravians, and other religious splinter groups scattered throughout the province.

Coincidental with the emergence of a strengthened, popular Quaker political presence came Britain's War of Jenkins' Ear with Spain, a circumstance of great importance in the consolidation of the Quaker Party. The outbreak of hostilities brought local demands for adequate defenses, including a militia, along with British orders for Pennsylvania to contribute to an expeditionary force against the Spanish West Indies. An enthusiastic Governor Thomas pressed the assembly to respond favorably, and by 1740 was at loggerheads with that body over what he believed was the unwillingness of the Quaker legislature to provide for wartime needs. Popular opinion provided a very different explanation of the dispute, which lasted through 1742. According to this view, the assembly proved its willingness to honor the Crown's request for imperial defense by a conditional grant to support the
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military campaign against Spain's colonial possessions, and there was no need for any further public action. It was Governor Thomas who, under the guise of providing wartime leadership, was trying to destroy the fabric of provincial society. He disregarded the property rights of masters when he accepted the enlistment of indentured servants for the Cartagena expedition; he threatened the very idea of a Quaker colony when he pleaded to the Crown that Friends should be disqualified from government; and he mounted a frontal attack on the Pennsylvania constitution when he argued that he needed a militia with his own appointed officers in command, a chancery court beholden to himself, power to prorogue and dissolve the House of Representatives, and joint control with the assembly over all appropriations. What made Governor Thomas's actions particularly ominous was that the proprietor, Thomas Penn, at no point disassociated himself from his deputy-governor. The threat to Pennsylvania society was a joint proprietary/executive one.

The major consequences of this period of intense conflict between assembly and governor were fivefold. First, it so entrenched the Quaker Party in the legislature as to make it unshakable. Between 1739 and 1755, Quakers occupied from 71 to 90 percent of the seats in the provincial legislature (compared to 63–77 percent during the preceding decade), and under the leadership of John Kinsey and Isaac Norris, Jr., as speakers, they presented a united popular interest in the face of both proprietary innovations and gubernatorial initiatives. During this decade and a half, Quaker Party dominance ensured the regular return of party veterans in the colony's annual elections and tight party control of committee assignments within the legislature. Despite the overwhelming predominance of Friends in the legislature, however, party leaders never succumbed to the kind of religious exclusiveness that their circumstances seemed to encourage. Speakers Kinsey and Norris both ensured that non-Quakers took an active role in legislative affairs, thereby granting them a voice in party policy. The legislative discipline and breadth of the Quaker Party proved so formidable that even the military threat that reemerged during the last year of King George's War sparked no serious electoral challenge.

A second and closely related consequence of the political conflict of the early 1740s was the creation and immediate emasculation of the Proprietary Party. In 1740, a nucleus of old supporters of the proprietorship and others who approved of Governor Thomas's initiatives put together tickets to oppose the Quaker Party in the annual October election. Having been defeated on that occasion, and after largely sitting out the 1741 election, Proprietary Party leaders decided to challenge their opponents again in October 1742. They organized tickets for each county and tried to mobilize sympathetic voters. Unfortunately for themselves, their zeal outran their
judgment. Aided by some ships' captains, a small group of Philadelphia Proprietary Party notables recruited sailors to mingle with the county's intended voters and then, with their clubs, “discourage” Quaker Party supporters from casting their ballots. But whatever finesse was intended to cloak the aggression dissolved with the mist on election-day morning. As proceedings began, a mob of sailors descended on the square, swinging their clubs at the “plain Coats & broad Brims” and their allies the “Dutch Sons of Bitches.”146 Quaker Party supporters retreated, cut their own cudgels, drove off some of the sailors and yarded others to jail. When the flailing ceased and the ballots were counted, one thing was clear: the Proprietary Party had suffered a severe political and moral defeat. Appalled by the aggression, many of those who had intended to vote for some Proprietary leaders scratched their names off the ballot and substituted Quaker Party men. Almost a decade and a half passed before William Allen and his friends again felt strong enough to run for provincial office.147

A third major effect of the crisis of 1740–1742 was to reinforce the identification of Quakerism with popular rights and legislative privilege. As early as 1740, Governor Thomas and his Philadelphia supporters saw their rivals as a “Quaker” opposition, and condemned it as such. Supporters of the assembly made the same connection, seeing the cause they backed as the Quaker cause; it was the Quakers, Pennsylvania freeholders concluded, who were best equipped to protect their rights. Anyone of that religious affiliation who joined with the executive's Anglican and Presbyterian supporters was no longer a real Quaker but “an unsteady person.”148 This association of freeholder rights and assembly privileges with Quakerism was to remain strong throughout the remaining colonial years.

Fourth, the crisis of the early 1740s welded politically conscious Quakers together to an unprecedented degree. Prior to this time, Friends had frequently divided politically along proprietary/antiproprietary lines. But that quickly changed. As conflict between Governor Thomas and the Quaker Party deepened, a political upheaval took place, which for the first time in Pennsylvania brought almost all Quakers into a broad coalition. And the change brought conflict. For over two years influential Friends of both sexes involved themselves in politics as seldom before, trying to reconcile their views of the Society of Friends with the affairs of the political party that bore their name.149 By mid 1743, the fractiousness that accompanied this political realignment had largely died down. Although there were instances thereafter in which disagreements among active Quaker politicians suggested the possibility of a split, in fact, Friends maintained their newfound party consensus through 1755.150

Finally, despite the overwhelming preponderance of Friends among the candidates whom the Quaker Party put up for provincial and county offices,
the party came out of the early 1740s crisis with an enhanced level of public support among other religious and ethnic groups. Pennsylvania’s relatively recent German immigrants were the new Quaker allies most remarked upon. If William Allen is to be believed, their recruitment began in 1740, when Philadelphia Quakers enlisted “about 400 Germans who hardly ever came to elections formerly, perhaps never 40 of them having voted” before. Two years later, members of the Proprietary Party spoke to “ye Heads of ye Dutch” at Germantown, hoping that “ye Dutch cou’d be divided,” but it is unlikely that even if the riot had been avoided, the Proprietary Party men would have achieved their goal. While it is undoubtedly true that the various sectarians whose pacifist views were reflected in Christopher Saur’s *Pensylvanische Berichte* were the heart of Quaker support among Germans, Quaker popularity also soared among both church Germans and those without clear institutional affiliation. German Pennsylvanians associated the province’s “mild government” and liberty of conscience with Quaker dominance; county residents saw no point in paying taxes to defend Philadelphia from an unlikely Spanish attack; the prospect of a militia law appalled those acquainted with the oppressive use of military force in western Europe; and the Quakers offered both a liberal naturalization law and some security of property for the families of unnaturalized newcomers. In a colony in which the German population would soon become the largest component, the spread of such sentiments was crucial to the success of the Quaker Party.

Once past the 1742 election, the Quaker Party faced no sizable challenge until the mid 1750s, when for the first time a British war brought death and destruction to Pennsylvania inhabitants. The descent of Indian raiding parties on the frontiers of the province subsequent to General Edward Braddock’s defeat on the Monongahela in July 1755, sent the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of southwestern Pennsylvania fleeing eastwards for safety and forced the Germans of backcountry Berks and Northampton to huddle together wherever they could find a haven. Faced with the frantic cries of frontier families for military aid, Quakers were divided about what action their party should take. A small number of influential Friends, including some assemblymen, felt that they could not accept even a voluntary militia, nor could they be party to the appropriation and expenditure of money for specific wartime activities. On the other hand, a sizable number of Quaker assemblymen and a majority of Quakers in the province, led by Speaker of the House Isaac Norris, Jr., believed that defensive war measures were consistent with the Quaker mission. The problem for these Quakers was not whether money should be appropriated or not, but who would control whatever money the assembly chose to raise, and who might be taxed to support the war effort. Thomas Penn insisted through instructions to his
governors that the chief executive should have an equal say with the assembly in the expenditure of all money, and that proprietary lands should be exempt from all levies. The Quaker assemblymen believed that they should continue to control appropriations, as they had done for almost three decades, and that they should determine what the provincial tax base should be.\textsuperscript{160}

The political scene was further complicated by the growing retinue of influential non-Quakers who accepted the proprietary argument that the executive should be party to any wartime disposal of money, who felt that the Penns should have some say (if not an outright veto on taxation of proprietary lands), and who pressed strenuously for what they considered a regular and workable provincial militia law—one that would provide for executive-appointed, not elected, officers, the enforcement of strict military discipline among troops, and the fining of conscientious objectors.\textsuperscript{161} Their demands were animated by a genuine belief that such policies were the only effective way to fight an imperial war, and by a fanciful vision of themselves displacing the Quakers as leaders in the assembly.

Throughout the early stages of the war, representatives of these various points of view groped their way toward positions they were prepared to defend. Despite the doubts they harbored, conscientious Friends initially accepted the need for wartime grants to support the British military effort against France.\textsuperscript{162} But once it became clear that this war, unlike earlier ones, was going to require sustained legislative participation in spending wartime levies, continuous oversight of military discipline among provincial troops, and provincial declarations of war against various Indian tribes, pacifist-leaning Friends lobbied their acquaintances in government, encouraged dissent from assembly acceptance of such measures, and ultimately encouraged Quaker legislators to resign rather than compromise a reinvigorated peace testimony.\textsuperscript{163}

In the majority of cases, however, that counsel fell on deaf ears. From the fall of 1755 through the spring and summer of 1756, most Quaker assemblymen were willing to sanction war measures. What they were not prepared to do was to give in to proprietary demands on the question of joint appropriation of money, exemption of Penn lands from taxation, and the organization of what proprietary supporters felt would be a regular militia. For these Quakers, no matter what private doubts they harbored, pacifism was not the issue; safeguarding legislative power was.\textsuperscript{164} As Isaac Norris, Jr., put it, the assemblymen saw their case, not as "a Quaker cause," but as "a cause of Liberty."\textsuperscript{165} That, however, was not an easy distinction to make. From 1754 through mid 1756, they framed a number of bills that Governor Robert Hunter Morris would not sign because they controverted proprietary instructions.\textsuperscript{166} Because they drafted a succession of such bills, which they
suspected would meet executive rejection (and which did so because of Penn's instructions), the war Quakers laid themselves open to charges of covert pacifism. Their actions could easily be construed as hypocritical, an offering of lip service to frontier defense to hide their first allegiance to the perpetuation of Quaker power and unity.

The Quaker Party's opponents also groped toward renewed political activism. Thomas Penn pursued his interests most effectively by shoring up his support in Britain and by appointing the disputatious Robert Hunter Morris as governor to carry out his policies of regaining lost executive power and protecting the proprietary estate from taxation. As for the proprietor's allies in Pennsylvania, they initially challenged the Quaker Party in some counties in the 1754 election. But not gaining a single assembly seat in that contest, supporters of the proprietorship sat out the 1755 election, hoping that pressure from Whitehall would force the Quakers to resign, and that the Proprietary Party could then easily supplant its old rival. This seemed possible because a number of influential British politicians were prepared to conclude, on the strength of Provost William Smith's charges in his anti-Quaker pamphlet *A Brief State* that Pennsylvania was governed by "An Assembly, principled against military Service." And a Smith-penned, pro-defense petition dispatched to Whitehall in late 1755 was intended to furnish the British with the opportunity to disqualify the Quakers from government.

In the midst of the paralysis this stalemate engendered, Benjamin Franklin established what was to be, henceforth, one of the highest profiles in provincial politics. Well regarded in Philadelphia for his promotion of various civic improvements, increasingly famous overseas for his scientific experiments, and about to be recognized as an imperial constitutional theorist with his contribution to the Albany Plan of intercolonial union, Franklin had, up to this point, played a limited role in provincial politics since his election to the assembly in 1751. Although his closest friends were proprietary-leaning non-Quakers, the freethinking, nominally Anglican Franklin was a longtime fellow traveler of the Quakers, serving as their assembly clerk for almost fifteen years and relying on Quaker Party support to begin his legislative career. As Franklin himself admitted, as late as June 1755, he had "some Share in the Confidence of both" governor and assembly, but unable "to reconcile 'em," he sometimes fell in the middle, "both Sides expect[ing] more from . . . [him] than they ought."

To a man of Franklin's ambition, talent, and practical turn of mind, the crisis in Pennsylvania affairs was as much an opportunity as a problem. Because he was by far the most able writer among assembly spokespersons, and because even those Quakers committed to defensive war were reluctant to take the lead in dealing with military matters, Franklin seized
the political initiative in 1755–1756. With his undoctinaire, matter-of-fact Whig opinions about popular power in Pennsylvania, he argued Governor Morris to a standstill. More important, Franklin took action: he performed feats of legerdemain that allowed the assembly to meet some of the demands of war without much compromising its intransigence over Thomas Penn’s instructions; he enhanced Pennsylvania’s reputation with Whitehall and put cash into the hands of the province’s grateful inhabitants when he mobilized farmers to provide transport for General Braddock’s troops in the spring of 1755; he persuaded the assembly to approve a provincial militia much like his Voluntary Association of 1747–1748, and was elected colonel of the Philadelphia regiment; and as assembly leader and advocate of defense, he supervised the fortification of backcountry Berks and Northampton counties. In the course of these activities, Franklin became more convinced that the Quaker government was no impediment to the war effort. As he put it, “the Quakers now think it their Duty, when chosen, to consider themselves as Representatives of the Whole People, and not of their Sect only. . . . To me, it seems that if Quakerism (as to the matter of Defence) be excluded the House, there is no Necessity to exclude Quakers, who in other respects make good and useful Members.”

But destroying Quaker government was precisely what Franklin’s proprietary acquaintances seemed to have in mind. Provost William Smith’s Brief State and Brief View were attacks on Quakers in government, while Thomas Penn was determined to use his proprietary instructions to keep the pressure on the legislature and to generate anti-Quaker sentiment among war-endangered Pennsylvanians. Gradually a gap began to open between Franklin and Proprietary Party sympathizers. In February 1756, for example, Provost William Smith, whom Franklin had enthusiastically recruited to lead the College of Philadelphia, threw open the doors of the Academy to Proprietary Party supporters who chose to boycott the province’s voluntary militia law and to challenge Franklin’s leadership of the Philadelphia regiments by organizing their own voluntary defense force. When Franklin questioned Smith’s motives, the provost counterattacked with characteristic excess, belittling Franklin and the popular cause. His cruelest rejoinder, however, he saved until May, when Franklin was out of the province; during his absence, Smith and his allies seized the opportunity to push Franklin from the presidency of the College of Philadelphia’s board of trustees. Deeply hurt by that blow, Franklin became ever more frustrated with the proprietary position when, in August, Governor Denny arrived in Pennsylvania bearing the same kind of unyielding proprietary instructions that Franklin had so vigorously fought under Governor Morris.

By late summer 1756, it was clear to Franklin that the annual October elections would be among the most important ever held in Pennsylvania.
Pacifist Friends, who had hitherto been an important component of the Quaker Party leadership, had begun to withdraw from the assembly; this development clearly offered opportunity to those who would seize it.\textsuperscript{185} Franklin was sufficiently tempted to try his hand at candidate selection for Philadelphia County. Encouraged by his recent high profile ("The People happen to love me," Franklin modestly claimed),\textsuperscript{186} and by the fact that the Philadelphians elected in the June by-elections to replace resigning Quaker pacifists were Anglicans who shared many of Franklin’s views on provincial affairs, he explored the possibility of sponsoring a coalition ticket in Philadelphia that included both old Quaker Party men and moderate supporters of the proprietorship.\textsuperscript{187} What encouraged Franklin to take this gamble was his knowledge of a major Proprietary Party campaign in the outlying counties, intended to capitalize on what supporters of the proprietorship hoped would be a divided and demoralized Quaker opponent. There was the possibility, then, that the new assembly might be sufficiently divided to throw leadership into the hands of those who could work with both Quaker and Proprietary Party men. If Franklin had his own base in Philadelphia, he reasoned, he would be the one individual most capable of building a consensus in the new house.

If Franklin was ultimately wrong about the outcome of the election, he was certainly correct about the Proprietary Party’s intentions. Having failed to win seats in the 1754 general election, and again in the June 1756 by-elections to choose successors for six resigning pacifists, and disappointed by the British failure to disqualify Quakers from office, the Proprietary Party was ready by late August to throw its resources into an election campaign.\textsuperscript{188} Chief Justice William Allen made sure that the proprietary men were represented on the joint ticket he negotiated with Benjamin Franklin, accepted candidacy for himself in both Cumberland and Northampton counties, and counseled Attorney-General Benjamin Chew to run in York County.\textsuperscript{189} But the busiest member of the opposition was Provost William Smith, who was involved not only as a polemicist but as a strategist in Philadelphia and in Lancaster, Chester, and Northampton counties.\textsuperscript{190} Like the Livingston/Smith faction in New York, Provost William Smith and his Proprietary Party mounted a strong verbal attack on their opponents (in New York’s case, William Livingston’s campaign against an Anglican college; in Pennsylvania’s, Smith’s slanderous screeds against the Quakers), and tried to cobble together a political alliance from what they perceived to be the religious “outs” in the colony. Purposely resurrecting the old seventeenth-century shibboleth that Friends were not Christians, Smith claimed that his goal was to “unite all the [province’s] Protestants in one Interest.”\textsuperscript{191} With his large ego, vaulting ambition, and lack of seasoning in Pennsylvania society, Smith found it easy to conceive of himself as the Moses
of the Proprietary Party. Moreover, as provost of the College of Philadelphia, he held the most important nonpolitical position in Pennsylvania, an office that was the natural focal point for non-Quaker, interdenominational cooperation in the province.

The College of Philadelphia was as close to an experiment in non-denominational education as can be found in eighteenth-century America. Although Anglicans dominated the college's board of trustees throughout the colonial years, nondenominational commitment was given substance by the inclusion of Old Light Presbyterians and Baptists on the faculty and by the extension of considerable religious freedom to the students. Essentially, the college was a cooperative effort between Anglicans and Old Light Presbyterians, with Provost William Smith representing the former and Vice-Provost Francis Alison the latter. Their shared interest (by the standards of the times) in latitudinarian education and enquiry rather than dogma, however, gave the college some claim to greater interdenominational breadth. And it was this reputation that Smith wished to use for political purposes. In this regard he was particularly hopeful, for he and other proprietary supporters had already made good use of the college's precursor, the Philadelphia Academy, to focus the cause of interdenominational cooperation upon themselves. That action was their sponsorship and continuing promotion of charity schools to provide primary education for the children of Pennsylvania's poorer German immigrants. Although privately contemptuous of the Germans (as his anonymous polemics testified), Smith felt that the heads of those households whose children benefited from the charity schools, and whose views might be influenced by the anglicizing schoolmasters his Philadelphia Academy would provide, might well be predisposed to vote for the Proprietary Party.

The high hopes of both “franklinists” and the Proprietary Party fed on the apparent disarray of the Quaker Party, which under the residual influence of strict pacifists remained immobilized through the summer of 1756. Just before the election, however, Old Party supporters came to life. They put together a series of strong county tickets, and on October 1, they carried the day. Once he saw how the wind had shifted, Benjamin Franklin tacked accordingly and swept into office again on the Quaker ticket for Philadelphia burgesses. His one or two non-Quaker friends, whom he had tried to promote in his compromise county slate, were not so lucky. Quaker Party candidates swamped them. The Proprietary Party nominees, whom Smith and others had tried to promote, were no more fortunate. In Philadelphia County, where they had tried to cut a deal with Franklin, the sudden rejuvenation of the Quaker Party, along with Franklin's swift reaction to that development, left them dead in the water. Out in the surrounding counties, where they were better organized, they were simply beaten.
Why, given the unprecedented opportunity, did the Proprietary Party not fare better? One reason was that it did not offer a credible alternative. Although Smith and his friends tried to exploit the differences in attitudes to war that divided sectarian from church groups, the Proprietary Party was never able to persuade large numbers of Pennsylvanians (particularly in the longer settled areas) that Quaker pacifism was the villain propriety supporters claimed it to be. Despite the certitude with which Smith, Allen, and others pronounced that Pennsylvania’s “unfortunate” state resulted from “having an Assembly of all Quakers, whose Principles are against making defence,” they were never very convincing.\textsuperscript{199} As Isaac Norris, Jr., pointed out, “whatever influence . . . [such views] may have had in England . . . [they] need no answer here where the facts are known clear of the disguises they have been wrap’t in.”\textsuperscript{200} Most provincials believed that the defense issue was one that turned on popular rights, and they did not want to sacrifice the powers of their elected representatives merely for the possibility of better defense. “Neither the Quakers nor (if I judge right) any other set who can get elected into the Assembly,” averred Norris, “will tamely suffer” “the chains” the proprietor and governor intended “to rivet on the People.”\textsuperscript{201} The Proprietary Party was trying to make bricks without straw. It had none of the popular principles necessary to create a broad political alliance.

The other major reason for the Proprietary Party’s poor showing was its ineffectiveness at ethnoreligious coalition building. Most instructive in this context was the experience of Provost William Smith. To begin with, the alliance between himself and Alison, which symbolized Anglican/Old Light comity, was never very comfortable. Despite their efforts to work together, the two remained far apart: Smith admired the worldliness of the belles lettres, while Alison loved the rigor of classical scholarship; Smith preferred administration and public relations, while Alison’s métier was the classroom; Smith was as devious as Alison was unbending; and most important, while Smith thrived on political conflict, Alison hated it.\textsuperscript{202} In this case, the vice-provost refused to stoop to partisan scribbling and when his sermons did turn to public affairs, his comments consisted of criticisms of both Quaker and Proprietary Party intransigence.\textsuperscript{203} That did little to persuade the many Old Light supporters of the Quaker Party that they should become turncoats.\textsuperscript{204} Among his own Anglicans, Smith’s problems were even greater. In May 1756, the “over Busy and indiscreet” Smith became involved in a public dispute with a fellow Anglican, Daniel Roberdeau. In the course of that disagreement, Anglican vestrymen and even trustees of Smith’s college came to Roberdeau’s defense, in effect telling Smith to honor the tradition of political noninvolvement that his priestly predecessors had established in Philadelphia during the past quarter century.\textsuperscript{205} Later that year,
Richard Peters reported that “two thirds of the Church are gone off from Church Principles & Church Politics,” and had no inclination to follow Proprietary Party leaders.\(^{206}\) As for the New Light Presbyterians, they, too, kept their distance. Despite the fact that Gilbert Tennent had been the most outspoken anti-Quaker theologian in Philadelphia during the previous ten years, contrasting views about theology and religious enthusiasm, competition between the College of New Jersey and both the Academy and College of Philadelphia, and personal feuds among clerics prevented New Light Presbyterians from having much to do with either Old Light Presbyterians or Anglicans.\(^{207}\) Finally, there was the question of the political efficacy of the German charity schools. What stood out most clearly to those German communities targeted for a school was not the philanthropic dimensions of the enterprise but the overbearing political and cultural intentions of the sponsors. The Germantown printer Christopher Saur quickly pointed out that the schools were intended to produce a particular version of anglicized citizens—ones who would farm, fight, and pay taxes for the benefit of the proprietor and vote for the Proprietary Party. Convinced that Saur’s opinions were closer to the truth than was the gloss of proprietary public relations, few parents enrolled their children, and fewer still turned against the Quaker Party.\(^{208}\) All in all, the anti-Quaker, interdenominational, Proprietary Party coalition came to little.

The major reason for the outcome of the 1756 election, however, was not the weakness of the Proprietary Party but the strength and flexibility of its Quaker opponents. Rather than follow the advice of the handful of high-profile, strict pacifists to boycott the election, the bulk of the province’s Quakers continued their traditional political activism. Provincial Secretary Richard Peters complainingly diagnosed the problem: “the Quakers were never more assiduous, nor more of their young People avowedly busy, tho’ a few serious and grave men did not shew themselves but of those there were not many.”\(^{209}\) Circumstances were no different in the outlying counties, where long-time Quaker Party supporters flocked to the polls.\(^{210}\)

Yet in the midst of this success, there was one very important change. Despite the fact that the Quaker Party had won a resounding victory, the number of Friends in the legislature had dropped precipitously. Whereas twenty-seven Quakers had held seats prior to June 1756, their numbers were reduced to a dozen or fewer (depending on the authority) by the end of October of that year.\(^{211}\) In Philadelphia, Quaker Party managers and voters had exerted themselves “very much in favor of what they call moderate Churchmen.”\(^{212}\) In the outlying counties, again Friends’ replacements were predominantly Anglican, but they also included Presbyterians from Chester and Bucks Counties, Dutch Reformed and Baptist members from Bucks, a Swiss-German Mennonite from Lancaster, and a nominal Anglican inter-

married with German Lutherans from Berks. The party’s recruits had three things in common. First, they were “Quakerized,” as Richard Peters called it—that is, they all shared a common ideology of “civil Quakerism.” (Penn’s placeman and kinsman Lynford Lardner made the point more colorfully: they were all “Bastards begot by the Quakers upon the body politic.”) Second, they were all prepared to follow leaders who were “bitter on the side of Party.” In particular, what the Quaker Party leaders called “their moderate Churchmen [were] . . . noted for their ill will to the Proprietor.” Third, they all accepted the fact that the large numbers of Friends who remained active in politics were clearly committed to waging war in defense of the province.

So sweeping was the success of the Quaker Party (increasingly referred to as the Assembly Party) in restructuring itself and in solidifying community support that the Proprietary Party backed away from further large-scale contests for almost a decade. That did not mean, however, that the remade Quaker Party was without weaknesses. In Philadelphia, Proprietary Party members slashed away at the heels of their opponents until the assembly threw Provost William Smith in jail. (“Our old Inviterate Scribbler has at length wrote himself into a Jail,” gloated a self-satisfied Isaac Norris, Jr., to Benjamin Franklin.) More important than these Philadelphia skirmishes, however, was the problem of the west. The long months of terrifying frontier warfare beginning in 1755 and continuing through 1758 embittered some backcountry residents against the Assembly Party for putting its feuds with the proprietor before the welfare of the people. John Armstrong, justice of the peace from Cumberland County, felt he could “forgive everybody except the Assembly and the Enemy Indians.” Scotch-Irish critics were more vocal than their German neighbors, but it was a mob of predominantly German backcountry farmers who, in late 1755, dragged a “Waggon-Load of . . . scalped and mangled bodies” to the State House in Philadelphia to underscore their dissatisfaction with assembly priorities. It was all very well for legislative leaders to respond grandiloquently that “those who would give up essential Liberty, to purchase a little temporary Safety, deserve neither Liberty nor Safety.” Undoubtedly those who drafted such a statement were sincere. But during such a time of crisis, it was not evident that such a message was persuasive to residents of Pennsylvania’s western and northern frontier valleys, who perceived most assemblymen to be cozily insulated in their eastern cocoon.

In the longer run, it was not inadequate and unsuccessful defense in the early stages of the war but the Quaker-sponsored Friendly Association—a philanthropic organization founded in 1756 to promote peace between Pennsylvanians and hostile Indians—that weakened the loyalty of backcountry residents to the Assembly Party. The Friendly Association was the
idea of that small Philadelphia-centered group of “sober” (i.e., highly principled) Friends who had cooperated with like-minded public Friends (i.e., Quaker ministers) in orchestrating the partial Quaker withdrawal from provincial politics. The self-appointed conscience of the Society of Friends, this minority saw the Friendly Association as a means of demonstrating that they, not the Quaker assemblymen, were the true heirs of William Penn. They, not the legislators, were carrying on the tradition of identifying peaceful relations with native Americans as their first priority. Having temporarily abandoned politics, they were anxiously searching for means of giving public expression to a renewed Quakerism. Vocal, intolerant, and judgmental, the Friendly Association Quakers embarked on their private crusade, plying the Delaware Indians with gifts, seeking praise for Quaker land policies of generations past, and stirring up anger at recent proprietary diplomacy with the natives. Given the common interest of the Friendly Association and the renewed Quaker Party in blaming the proprietors for the Indian war against Pennsylvania, Quaker politicians openly cooperated with the association. At the Easton Treaties of 1757 and 1758, it was difficult to distinguish the behavior of assemblymen from that of the association’s representatives. By the end of the war, backcountry residents came to see Quakerism as a puzzling hybrid, intransigent on the subject of popular rights when the proprietor or governor threatened assembly power or provincials’ sense of equity, but inexplicably charitable and forgiving to Indians, who sometimes posed a more immediate and frightening threat to the frontiersmen’s lives and property.225

These weaknesses notwithstanding, the most important characteristic of the Quaker Party during and immediately subsequent to the 1756 crisis was its instinct for self-preservation. The resignation of the strict pacifists was enough of a purge to convince the great bulk of traditional Quaker Party supporters that their party was unequivocally committed to defending the province in time of war. Popular acceptance of the view “that it was not the Society of Quakers but the Proprietary Instructions yt obstruct[ed] the King’s Business” meant that the renewed party had every opportunity to consolidate itself in the late 1750s and early 1760s.226 If anything, it became more antiproprietary during these years, determined—even to the point of soliciting royal government—to try to protect and expand popular powers in the face of Thomas Penn’s continued efforts to reclaim and maintain executive and proprietary prerogatives. Along with the popular orientation of their policies, the renewed Quaker, or Assembly, Party continued its conscious cultivation of non-Quaker and non-English religious and cultural groups, and its recruitment of politicians who had close ties with those religiocultural enclaves. Although Quakers who were in good standing in their Society, along with nominal Friends, regained a slight majority in the
assembly during the late 1750s and early 1760s, they continued to keep close ties to the cultural brokers who represented strong non-English areas in the legislature.227

Once Benjamin Franklin fully realized the limitations Quaker Party hegemony imposed upon him, he became a stalwart of and mediator within the revitalized party. His well-known support among the leather-apron men of Philadelphia, his influence with many Anglican city politicians who shared his party loyalties, and his popularity (despite an Anglophile ambivalence about the cultural threat that large-scale German immigration represented) among backcountry Germans, who remembered his defense-related activities of 1755–1756, gave him powerful leverage within the Assembly Party. But the anchor of the coalition remained the speaker, Isaac Norris, Jr., with his conservative Quaker supporters and their non-Quaker allies from Chester and Bucks counties.228 Although tensions among Norris, Franklin, and leaders like Joseph Fox and Joseph Galloway certainly existed, the refurbished party was no more fragmented than it had been under Speaker John Kinsey, when such prominent individuals as Samuel Blunston, Isaac Norris, Jr., and Israel Pemberton, Jr., had each had his own ideas of how their party should function.229 What was most remarkable about the new coalition was the way it functioned “like a disciplined regiment”—war pressures, proprietary intransigence, regional tensions, and religious and cultural differences notwithstanding.230 Throughout its midcentury trials, the Quaker Party not only renewed itself but also retained the internal cohesion that had distinguished it so clearly in earlier times.

“*As the twig is bent . . .*”

The DeLancey/Jones coalition and the Quaker Party dominated politics in New York and Pennsylvania during the 1740s and 1750s. Amid the improbable circumstances of rapid population growth, continued geographic dispersion, increased socioeconomic complexity, and a strengthening of each province's peculiar tradition of multicultural immigration, these two organizations established considerable control over their respective colonies' political agendas and widespread support among each electorate. Their success in doing so owed a good deal to the particular wartime crises each colony faced in the 1740s. Both Governor Clinton's and Governor Thomas's determination to run their respective colonies' war efforts as they saw fit galvanized the chief politicians in each province into opposition. Their efforts to meet the threat of executive power led these leaders into cooperative political action. In following this course, they committed themselves to a popular political position that their subsequent success, their belief in the
validity of such a stance, and the overwhelming public support their appeals elicited encouraged them to sustain both as individuals and as members of collective political entities.

There were, however, important differences between the DeLancey/Jones faction and the Quaker Party even at their inception. First, the DeLancey/Jones coalition rose relatively swiftly and without prior indication out of a welter of separate interests that gained political expression in the late 1730s and early 1740s. As the coalition formed, its chief leaders began articulating a dialect of “popular Whiggism,” first made familiar to New Yorkers by the Philipse faction of the 1720s and early to mid 1730s (see chapter 6). Building on that tradition, and on their own unsurpassed ability to co-opt county notables and become the political beneficiaries of the strands of dependence that ran through these individuals’ hands to surrounding communities, the DeLancey/Jones faction overcame the always-potent centrifugal forces of New York politics. Comparatively, Pennsylvania’s Quaker Party had a stronger foundation. Although Governor Thomas’s actions triggered the appearance of the Quaker Party in the early 1740s, its coalescence was prefigured in the antiproprietary sentiment sweeping Pennsylvania in response to Thomas Penn’s innovations of the 1730s. And the fact that proprietary policies remained a continual factor in the 1740s and 1750s constantly reinforced Quaker Party cohesion and underscored its deep commitment to popular goals. Most important, Quaker Party spokespersons claimed to be the heirs to a generally consistent, anti-proprietary, anti-executive stream of popular political thought that had existed since the late 1690s. This idiom of “civil Quakerism” was a powerfully unifying—at times virtually consensual—ideology, which gave the Quaker Party unparalleled political strength (see chapter 7).

The religious profiles of their respective leaders and legislators were a second major difference between the DeLancey/Jones faction and the Quaker Party. In the case of the former, the coalition’s leaders were Anglicans who were able to develop and maintain close ties with many Dutch Reformed county leaders. In some cases, these Dutch Reformed notables became legislative lieutenants; in others, they simply filled out the faction’s rank and file. The strength of Anglican leadership in the DeLancey/Jones coalition, despite the paucity of Church of England adherents in New York, simply reflected the uncompromising demands of political entitlement in provincial affairs that churchmen had pressed on the Dutch since the late seventeenth century. That pattern of Anglican/Dutch Reformed cooperation was one that had characterized most New York factions since the end of anti-Leislerian politics at the turn of the century.

In Pennsylvania, of course, Friends had always played a central role in popular politics, but unlike the case of New York where the De-
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Lancey/Jones coalition represented a continuation rather than a change in the religious composition of popular political leadership, the formation of the Quaker Party began a period in which Quakers dominated provincial electoral office to an unprecedented degree. Given the growing strength of non-Quaker denominations, such a narrow religious base would appear to have made the Quaker Party a fragile entity. Paradoxically, it did not. Because of the very pervasiveness of the civil Quaker ideology, and the strategic vision and tactical expertise of Quaker politicians, its leaders developed the party into the most powerful political organization in early America.

Regardless of the popularity of the DeLancey/Jones faction and the Quaker Party, the fact that both New York Anglicans and Pennsylvania Quakers were religious minorities that wielded a disproportionate share of power through these political organizations meant that the organizations were susceptible to attack. And issues arose in the mid 1750s that triggered heated opposition in both colonies. In New York, the Livingston/Smith faction formed to fight against, first, the establishment of, and then the granting of public support for, an Anglican college. In Pennsylvania, the Proprietary Party reentered electoral politics on the grounds that the Quaker Party's wartime policies were inadequate for the province's needs. In each case, the opposition tried to exploit the issue of religious exclusiveness, arguing that civil policy was being subordinated to selfish denominational interests. In New York, critics portrayed King's College, not as a civic institution designed to serve the general good, but as an effort by the Anglicans to strengthen their stunted provincial establishment. In Pennsylvania, the most notable Anglican and Presbyterian opponents of the Quaker Party placed the blame for perceived deficiencies in provincial defense on Quaker pacifism rather than on proprietary instructions and their own partisan demands for greater executive authority. Both oppositions were simultaneously sincere, bitter, and opportunistic. Anti-college and anti-Quaker spokespersons were certainly committed to different principles of social organization than their opponents. But they were also driven by jealousy of Anglican and Quaker influence, anger at the slights they felt they had received at Anglican and Quaker hands, and a conscious willingness to exploit the license their communities accorded self-proclaimed champions of religious rights to inveigh against religious tyranny. Tired of feeling marginalized, they were committed to cutting down the power of the dominant political leaders by any means at their disposal.

The Livingston/Smith faction and the Proprietary Party hoped to strike at DeLancey/Jones and Quaker Party strength respectively by alienating some of the groups of non-Anglicans and non-Quakers that the latter two had been so successful in attracting, and by building their own coalitions with the help of these potential converts. The Livingston/Smith faction had
some success with the former tactic. Despite Anglican/Dutch Reformed
affinities, there was a strong, potentially offsetting, provincial tradition of
localism and Dutch church autonomy, which encouraged Dutch Reformed
leaders to look to their own interests. In addition, the Presbyterians Liv­
ingston and Smith were able to divert current, intradenominational Dutch
Reformed religious disputes over language and evangelicalism into chan­
nels beneficial to their cause. Livingston and Smith were also effective
because their faction expressed a secondary idiom of New York politics—
that of "provincial Whiggism"—which earned its own legitimacy in provin­
cial discourse in contradistinction to the popular Whiggism of the De­
Lancey/Jones coalition (see chapter 6). But despite these advantages, the
Livingston/Smith faction had little success (and arguably little sustained
interest) in building their own political coalition to the point where they
might gain a sizable share of electoral office. Presbyterians had an unsavory
reputation among many New Yorkers because of their association with New
England and Independency, and once the opportunity for a provincial elec­
tion disappeared, coincidentally with the college dispute, the Livingston/
Smith faction began to lose both shape and momentum.

In Pennsylvania, the Proprietary Party put much more emphasis on
forming its own coalition with which to oust the Quaker Party. In large
measure, that had to do with the opportunity that annual provincial elec­
tions provided, and to the fact that in 1756, large numbers of veteran Quaker
assemblymen were sure to resign. But the Proprietary Party leaders failed to
understand how closely the ideology of civil Quakerism bound non­
Quakers to the Friends, and how anathematical their vision of a Quaker­
less, proprietary/executive-led provincial government was to most Pennsylva­
nians. Whereas William Livingston's educational secularism, anticlerical­
ism, and derivative, freethinking rhetoric was far too radical for the conser­
vative, tradition-bound minds of most New York dissenters, the radicalism
of Provost William Smith's restructured Pennsylvania was far too reaction­
ary to gain much support in the Quaker colony.

Despite the limited, immediate political effects of the Livingston/Smith
and Proprietary Party activities, these nonetheless served to highlight one of
the most important morphological differences separating the politics of
New York and Pennsylvania. The Livingston/Smith faction encouraged
criticism of the DeLancey/Jones coalition, and after the French and Indian
War broke out that tendency continued. Just as Presbyterian attacks on
Anglicanism played a part in David Jones's defeat in the 1759 provincial
election, so other localized criticisms, frequently born of wartime exigen­
cies, wore away at the constituency roots of incumbents in the legislature.
Supporters of the Livingston/Smith, anti-college coalition suffered as well
as their opponents. But the biggest loser was the DeLancey/Jones faction.
Ultimately, it failed to preserve enough strength to be able to redefine itself around new postwar challenges.

It is possible to imagine circumstances in which a DeLancey/Jones-inspired coalition could have lived on beyond the demise of its original leaders. James DeLancey’s brother, Oliver, was still in the assembly in 1760; a member of the friendly Cruger clan, John, gained a New York City seat in 1759; a second DeLancey brother, Peter, continued to represent Westchester; William Nicoll, an Anglican Long Islander with good connections among both Presbyterians and Congregationalists succeeded David Jones as house speaker; and a handful of other coalition veterans returned to the legislature. The opportunity to revive the old antiprерогative popular base of the DeLancey/Jones group was present, too, because the querulous Cadwallader Colden, whose posturings and threats on behalf of Governor Clinton had helped draw the old coalition together, became acting chief executive upon James DeLancey’s death. But none of the survivors or new recruits was able to refit the old coalition with policies and structures suitable for new times. So tied to the personalities of its leaders was it that, no matter how coherent and powerful the old DeLancey/Jones coalition had been, it could not live beyond the men who made it. In that respect, the DeLancey/Jones faction was paradigmatic of every political organization to appear in colonial New York.

The direction that the Quaker Party took during and subsequent to the Proprietary Party’s challenge was a very different one. Unquestionably, the election of 1756 brought about change. Pacifist Quakers became critics of their old party and frequently nonvoters; Friends became a minority in the assembly; and the Quaker Party pledged to defend the province no matter the nature of the contest. At the same time, however, the party retained its hegemony, and voters of a wide variety of denominations reaffirmed their loyalty to it. Unlike the DeLancey/Jones faction, the Quaker Party adapted to new circumstances. It recruited new members to work alongside veteran leaders and simultaneously remained true to the ideology that had shaped its identity. Rather than die with change, the Quaker Party underwent a reinvigorating metamorphosis. Just as the party had moved from the leadership of John Kinsey to that of Isaac Norris, Jr., in 1750, so it was transmuted from a Quaker Party to a Quakerized one in 1756. Generational change and alterations in political environment notwithstanding, the party lived on.