

THE
Pennsylvania
Magazine
OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

*The Keith-Lloyd Alliance:
Factional and Coalition Politics in
Colonial Pennsylvania**

THE OLD VIEW of eighteenth-century colonial politics as a dichotomy between a "country" and a "governor's" party has today been largely superseded.¹ The old, overly neat, if not altogether useless, model has given way to an interpretation more in keeping with a consensus historiography. The word "party" is avoided partially because of a new sensitivity to anachronism, and partially because the word frequently connotes fundamental differences of opinion among groups of people. The concept of party refutes the consensus school's shadowy picture of meaningless and ephemeral factions passing in fluid combat upon a darkling plain.

* This article, in somewhat different form, was read at a session devoted to early Pennsylvania history during the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association at Stanford University on Aug. 29, 1967.

¹ John Adams is the authority for the older view. "In every colony," wrote Adams in 1812, "divisions always prevailed. In New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, and all the rest, a court and country party have always contended. . . ." Charles Francis Adams, *The Works of John Adams*, X, 23. The Adams construction still maintains its utility for the purpose of generalization. See, for example, Max Savelle and Robert Middlekauff, *A History of Colonial America* (New York, 1964), 413.

For example, in a recent and most penetrating study of the Anglo-American political milieu in the eighteenth century, Professor Bernard Bailyn characterizes colonial politics as a "milling factionalism that transcended institutional boundaries and at times reduced the politics of certain colonies to an almost unchartable chaos of competing groups." It was, writes Bailyn, a sort of "malaise."²

Professor Bailyn is mainly concerned with the cause of the malaise. He is not interested in analyzing it at any particular moment in the history of a particular colony. Yet there were, of course, innumerable instances of political strife within all the colonies when more seemed to be at issue than mere place-seeking. Professor Bailyn points out that there were a few factions that "formed to defend and advance programs that transcended personal or group interest."³ If we take a further step and admit that programs are rarely isolated from a leadership with whose destiny they are entwined, we may perhaps penetrate the malaise at specific moments in a colony's history when a crisis created significant divisions. Such an example occurred in Pennsylvania in the 1720's when Governor Sir William Keith and Assembly Speaker David Lloyd united their followings into a coalition that had some of the attributes of modern party organization. It utilized a rhetoric of egalitarianism and it fought its battles within the arena of constituted representative government.

Pennsylvania was especially fitted for such early manifestations of political sophistication. In the first place, the Quakers, because of past persecution, were particularly sensitive to presumed encroachments upon their rights as citizens of the new commonwealth. Their religion, perhaps more than that of the Puritanism which preceded it, was a true "dissidence of dissent." They brought with them to the colony, as Professor Tolles has expressed it, a dualistic Whig heritage that tended to polarize them into two interests, "the one cherishing liberty above all things, and the other, property." A temperamentally "anti-authoritarian" people, Pennsylvania's Quakers proved to

² Bernard Bailyn, "The Origins of American Politics," *Perspectives in American History*, I (1967), 50-51. Bailyn diagnoses the malaise as rising in the "conflict between a presumptuous prerogative and an overgreat democracy"; or, as he puts it in another place, "Swollen claims and shrunken powers, especially when they occur together, are always sources of trouble, and the malaise that resulted from this combination can be traced through the history of eighteenth-century politics" (72, 80).

³ *Ibid.*, 50.

be a contentious, or, as William Penn sadly wrote, a "government-ish" lot.⁴

In the second place, the institutions of government, as set forth by Penn, invited political disputation on the very nature of representative government. The First Frame of Government, although prefaced with liberal sentiments and containing guarantees of religious freedom, provided for a representative assembly that was disabled from introducing legislation.⁵ Almost all of the great powers of government rested in the upper house where the Proprietor, in part because of the triple vote with which he was provided, exercised great influence. Political practice was in accord with constitutional structure. Penn bestowed the great offices of government upon the relatively few men of wealth who purchased nearly half the land. Substantial purchasers were frequently granted important offices for life, and plural officeholding was the rule rather than the exception. Although the colony was settled primarily by yeomen and artisans, thus it was that its constitution and government originally favored men of property and wealth who were ensconced in the upper house of the legislature with the exclusive right to initiate bills, or in the highly important land office, the judiciary, and other offices of responsibility and power. From the outset, political division in Pennsylvania was to be reflected in tension between the Assembly and the Council.

In 1701, however, with the grant by Penn of the Charter of Liberties, the Assembly won a predominant place in government. The new Charter, which was to be Pennsylvania's constitution until 1776, excluded the Council from the legislative process.⁶ Yet in some re-

⁴ Edmund Burke, *Speech on Conciliation with America* in Richard Morris, ed., *The American Revolution* (New York, 1955), 131; Frederick B. Tolles, *Meeting House and Counting House, the Quaker Merchants of Colonial Pennsylvania, 1682-1763* (New York, 1963), 16; Gary B. Nash, "The Dynamics of Instability; the First Four Decades in Pennsylvania" (paper read before the 1967 meeting of the Organization of American Historians), 7; Samuel Janney, *The Life of William Penn . . .* (Philadelphia, 1852), 278.

⁵ Gary B. Nash, in "The Framing of Government in Pennsylvania: Ideas in Contact with Reality," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XXIII (1966), 183-209, explains that pressure upon William Penn from prospective purchasers of large blocks of land in Pennsylvania forced him to frame conservative institutions of government not in keeping with his libertarian philosophy.

⁶ The First Frame and successive organic laws through the Charter of Liberties may be consulted in Francis N. Thorpe, *The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and other Organic Laws . . .* (Washington, 1909), V, 3052-3080.

spects the Charter was a Pyrrhic victory for the Assembly. The Council, not recognized in the Charter, refused to die. Freshly commissioned by Penn as an advisory body to the Governor, the Council retained tremendous prestige.⁷ Its members continued to monopolize the great offices of government and to wield immense influence both within the Assembly and over the Governor. "Made up of the wealthier, more substantial inhabitants who possessed extensive estates in various parts of the province and who were in many cases engaged in commercial ventures on a large scale," writes Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, the Council represented interests divergent from those represented by the Assembly, itself "composed, generally speaking, of those who were modestly situated."⁸ The Council sought to maintain its stature in the face of an Assembly that not only insisted upon the upper house's exclusion from legislation, but also, by 1715, controlled the governor through the power of the purse.

If conflicting institutions of government operating within a radical Whig milieu help explain Pennsylvania's early proclivity for party politics, by the 1720's there was the additional factor of the increasing diversity of Pennsylvania society. As early as 1709, James Logan, principal proprietary representative in the colony, reported that non-Quakers made up at least one-half the population of the colony. Religious diversity was indicated in part by the establishment in 1717 of the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia.⁹ As for the Anglicans, Governor Gordon remarked at his accession in 1726 that Christ Church numbered eight hundred communicants and that outside Philadelphia there were thirteen other churches and chapels in the colony.¹⁰ In 1709, the same year as Logan's report, it has been estimated that two thousand indentured servants entered Philadelphia.¹¹ By the mid-twenties, the ethnic diversity that was to be a hallmark of the colony was plainly in evidence. German immigrants already

⁷ Penn's commission to the Council may be found in Samuel Hazard, *Colonial Records of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1852-1856), II, 61. Hereinafter cited as *Colonial Records*.

⁸ Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, "The Organization and Procedure of the Pennsylvania Assembly," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (PMHB), LXII (1948), 411.

⁹ Wayland Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Chapel Hill, 1944), 33.

¹⁰ Patrick Gordon to the Bishop of London, July 19, 1726, in William S. Perry, *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church; Pennsylvania* (Hartford, 1871), II, 149.

¹¹ Leonard Bernstein, "The Working People of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the General Strike of 1835," *PMHB*, LXXIV (1950), 322.

made up a sizeable percentage of the population, and the years 1717-1718 were to see the first great wave of Scotch-Irish immigration.¹²

By 1720, then, Pennsylvania society had matured to the point where new economic, religious, and ethnic interests would seek political expression. The economic crisis of that decade would encourage the emergence of relatively definable political groupings. There was, in the first place, a proprietary-mercantile group. This interest included individuals and those dependent upon them who combined an attachment to the Proprietors with heavy personal investment in and commitment to the provincial economy. Their business, be it the fur trade or ocean commerce, depended upon far-flung correspondents throughout the British Empire, not the least of whom were the proprietary friends in London, Bristol, and other English ports.

The proprietary-mercantile group included such men as the three Land Commissioners, James Logan, Isaac Norris, and Richard Hill. Successful traders and merchants, these men were joined by such like-minded individuals as Jonathan Dickinson, William Trent, and the Bucks County grandee Jeremiah Langhorne.¹³ Individuals such as Peter Evans, who owed his appointment as Registrar of Wills to the Founder, followed Logan's lead.¹⁴ So too at this time did John Moore, Collector of the Port of Philadelphia. Frequently at odds with the Proprietors in the past, Moore was now to join them against the factions led by Keith and Lloyd.¹⁵

The leader of the proprietary-mercantile interest was James Logan. Proprietary Secretary, sometime Chief Justice, Mayor of Philadelphia, Clerk of the Council, Secretary of the Land Office, Receiver-General of Pennsylvania, trustee of the province, Logan

¹² Dunaway, 33; Theodore Thayer, *Pennsylvania Politics and the Growth of Democracy, 1740-1776* (Harrisburg, 1953), 1.

¹³ The Logan, Dickinson, and Norris papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company of Philadelphia give the best indication of the positions and attitudes of these men. See also *Colonial Records*, II and III; John Hill Martin, *Martin's Bench and Bar of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1883); *Dictionary of American Biography*, IX, 44, and XIII, 553-554; William J. Buck, "Jeremiah Langhorne," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, VII (1883), 67-87; and Isaac Sharpless, *Political Leaders of Provincial Pennsylvania* (New York, 1919).

¹⁴ Sophie Drinker, *Hannah Penn and the Proprietorship of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1958), 131.

¹⁵ For the Collector's case against Keith, see *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1726-27*, (London, 1934), 427-430.

was, in the words of his biographer, a "fixed pole," to whom the conservative Quaker merchants or those grateful to Penn tended to gravitate in times of trouble.¹⁶ They agreed with the Secretary that "Riches [are] the natural Effects of Sobriety, Industry and Frugality." "He that loveth pleasure, shall be a poor Man: and he that loveth Wine and Oyl' (that is, high living)," Logan explained, "shall not be rich."¹⁷ A man of great intellectual power, scientist and humanist, James Logan was an exemplary servant to William Penn and his successors.

The political opposition to the proprietary elite had long combined disaffected city elements with the farming interest of Philadelphia and, later, of Bucks and Chester Counties. Retail merchants, artisans, and others resented the oligarchic control of the city bestowed by its charter of incorporation upon a self-perpetuating group of men.¹⁸ The farmers in the counties resented proprietary quitrents and were frequently distrustful of the great city merchants upon whom they depended to purchase their surplus for the overseas trade. They, along with their city allies, followed the lead of David Lloyd, the foremost legal mind in Pennsylvania, great landholder, and, by this time, one of the wealthiest men in the colony.¹⁹

Lloyd had come to Pennsylvania in 1686 as Penn's Attorney General, but he shortly broke with the Proprietor over an affair of property. Regularly returned to the Assembly from his base in Chester County, he was almost as regularly elected Speaker of the House, from which vantage point he carried on the struggle for Assembly autonomy as a brake to the exercise of proprietary prerogatives. It had not been many years before that he had led in the movement to impeach James Logan.²⁰ Now he had been appointed Chief

¹⁶ A definitive work is Joseph E. Johnson, "A Statesman of Colonial Pennsylvania. A Study of the Private Life and Public Career of James Logan to the Year 1726" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1942). Frederick B. Tolles', *James Logan and the Culture of Provincial America* (Boston, 1957) is of limited usefulness because of the modest objectives of the Library of American Biography series of which it is a part. The quotation is from Johnson, "James Logan," 276.

¹⁷ James Logan, *The Charge Delivered from the Bench to the Grand Jury . . .* (Philadelphia, 1723), 9.

¹⁸ Judith M. Diamondstone, "Philadelphia's Municipal Corporation, 1701-1776," *PMHB*, XC (1966), 183-201.

¹⁹ The most recent biography is Roy Lokken, *David Lloyd, Colonial Lawmaker* (Seattle, 1959).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 180.

Justice of the Supreme Court by Governor Keith. In his dual role as Justice and Speaker, Lloyd was a formidable adversary of the proprietary faction.

A newer emergent political force in the colony included the heterogeneous mass of the population that made up the City and, to a lesser extent, the County of Philadelphia. The city, at Governor Keith's accession in 1717, had a population of about 10,000.²¹ The majority of Pennsylvania's approximately 46,000 population lived principally in the three original counties. Of these, Philadelphia County, as the first area of settlement, was the most heavily populated. Its eight representatives in the Assembly, the same number granted each of the other two counties, frequently made common cause with the city's two representatives. The fifty-acre property qualification for the vote was not particularly restrictive, although the fifty-pound property qualification in the city perhaps worked a greater hardship there.²² Nevertheless, even those mechanics and laborers who were legally disenfranchised exercised influence through intimidation of the voters and through fraudulent or illegal voting practices.²³

Governor Sir William Keith emerged as the political leader of the City and County of Philadelphia. This impecunious Scottish baronet, shortly after assuming the governorship in 1717, came to resent the influence of James Logan and the Council.²⁴ Harboring ambitions fired by the contemporary embarrassment of the proprietary interest as a result of William Penn's death in 1718, Keith evidently planned to overthrow the Proprietors and to be named royal governor not

²¹ Sir William Keith to the Board of Trade, Dec. 16, 1722, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1722-23*, 189.

²² E. B. Greene and Virginia Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932), 4; Albert McKinney, *The Suffrage Franchise in the Thirteen Colonies in America* (Philadelphia, 1905), 285.

²³ Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, "Elections in Colonial Pennsylvania," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XX (1954), 393-394.

²⁴ In 1724 Keith wrote to Hannah Penn, "That Mr. Logan exercised an absolute and despotick Authority over my Predecessor . . . is a very poor Argument to support [your demands], which must extinguish all Authority in the Person of the Governor. . . ." *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, II, 1628. Keith's career is analyzed in Thomas Wendel, "The Life and Writings of Sir William Keith, Lieutenant-Governor of Pennsylvania and the Three Lower Counties, 1717-1726" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1964). The fullest short summary is Charles P. Keith, "Sir William Keith," *PMHB*, XII (1888), 1-33.

only of Pennsylvania and the Lower Counties, but of West Jersey as well.²⁵ His vaulting ambition was to be an important catalyst in a new coalition of antiproprietary factions.

If Keith supplied the leadership in the formation of a new political configuration in Pennsylvania, it was economic depression, related in part to the bursting of the South Sea Bubble in 1720, that provided the setting.²⁶ Rapid deflation caused a drain upon the gold and silver coins that were the colony's only legal medium of exchange. Immediately there arose a demand for paper money.²⁷ Keith seized upon this issue to ingratiate himself with the populace. The Councilmen, desirous of keeping a paper issue severely limited and fearful of its effects upon the credit structure of the province, resented the manner as much as the substance of the Governor's address to the newly elected Assembly of 1722/23.

Keith introduced his program with a demagogic harangue. "We all know," said he,

it is neither the Great, the Rich, nor the Learned, that compose the Body of the People; and that Civil Government ought carefully to protect the poor laborious and industrious Part of Mankind. . . . What ever Preference therefrom any one Man's Circumstances whether in Knowledge [*an obvious allusion to the learned Logan*] or Fortune, may seem to have over another, yet such Considerations will have no more Impression on such worthy Members of any Legislative Body who prefer the Good of the whole Community to the Interest of Particulars, than they could be expected to have upon an honest *English* jury in another Case.²⁸

²⁵ The uniting of these colonies under royal government was suggested by Keith to the Board of Trade shortly after his accession to the governorship. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1717-18*, 136. An unfriendly contemporary suggested that the Pennsylvania Governor resented being under the authority of a woman, Hannah Penn, executrix of William Penn's estate. "Mr. Gooch's Answer to the Foregoing Observations," in William Byrd, *History of the Dividing Line and other Tracts* (Richmond, 1866), II, 230.

²⁶ Lokken, 208.

²⁷ Francis Rawle, *Some Remedies Proposed for the Restoring the sunk Credit of the Province . . . Humbly offer'd to the Consideration of the Worthy Representatives of the General Assembly . . .* (Philadelphia, 1721). Rawle had long been a political supporter of David Lloyd. Lokken, 152, 165, 209; *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, II, 1463.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 1459-1460. See Logan's remark to Henry Gouldney, Feb. 9, 1722/23, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, VII, 70-71, that "the last two elections for Assembly were very mobbish and carried by a levelling spirit."

The elements of Keith's partisan program included the issuance of paper money, a reduction of the legal interest rate, a law to curb the activities of lawyers, and an amendment to the Law of Attachments in favor of the debtor. To the Councilmen's cautionary address regarding the inflationary dangers of paper, Keith replied that their prolix economic theories were meant only to mislead and confuse "the plainest, and generally speaking, much the honestest Part of Mankind."²⁹

With the Council on the defensive over the question of paper money, Keith saw his opportunity to attack its members and at the same time to create for himself a popular following. He instigated a policy of wholesale removal of high officeholders, among them such Penn-appointees as Peter Evans and several Councilmen, and replaced them with his own followers, notably Anglicans.³⁰ Besides naming churchmen to high office, he courted their support in other ways. He made a unilateral grant to the City of New Castle of a charter of incorporation which effectively banned Quakers from holding public office.³¹ He also sponsored a bill in the Assembly for the grant to a churchman, William Chancellor, of the exclusive right to build a powder house and to reap the profits thereof.³²

Another group courted by Keith included recent immigrants. He had early invited a number of Palatine Germans to settle in the

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Eighth Series, II, 1474.

³⁰ Three of the new Anglican Councillors were Patrick Baird and Robert and William Assheton. Logan to Joshua Gee, Oct. 8, 1724, Penn Papers, Official Correspondence (PPOC), I, 169, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). *Colonial Records*, III, 216, 242-245. Keith also replaced the naval officer with his own son-in-law, Dr. Thomas Graeme. James Logan to Simon Clement, October, 1731, Logan Letter Book, III, 351, HSP. The appointment of the Asshetons was peculiarly politic in that they were cousins of Penn's first wife, Gulielma. At this time there was pending an amicable suit between the heir at law and Hannah Penn, Penn's second wife. As executrix of her husband's estate, however, Hannah exercised proprietary control. The appointment of the Asshetons could therefore conceivably weaken Hannah's exercise of proprietary authority. William B. Rawle, "The General Title of the Penn Family to Pennsylvania," *PMHB*, XXIII (1899), 60-68, 224-240, 464-482; Johnson, "James Logan," 612-613.

³¹ Patrick Gordon to John Penn, Oct. 22, 1726, PPOC, I, 247. Keith's antiproprietary activities in the Lower Counties paralleled his activities in Pennsylvania itself. By the middle of the decade he was treating the Lower Counties as a private preserve. Richard S. Rodney, "Delaware Under Governor Keith: 1717-1726," *Delaware History*, III (1948), 1-25. The Charter is reprinted in *ibid.*, 26-36. Officers of the new corporation had to take "their Corporal Oath," which of course the Quakers could not do.

³² James Logan to Andrew Hamilton, Feb. 24, 1724/25, Logan Letter Book, II, 270.

Tulpehocken Valley on land not yet cleared of Indian claims.³³ Now he sought enactment of a law, contrary to proprietary prerogative, that would confirm lands purchased by newly arrived settlers from Sweden.³⁴ He also championed a liberal bill for naturalizing three hundred and eighty "of those loose Palatines," as Logan put it.³⁵ Councilman Isaac Norris believed Keith was creating a "sinister army." Both men agreed that Keith's immigration and naturalization policies were aimed at building a personal constituency.³⁶

That Keith intended to gather all of the Proprietors' powers in his hands while building an imposing personal following within the colony is clear from his obtaining possession of the Lesser Seal of the Province necessary for granting land warrants.³⁷ This Seal had heretofore always been in Logan's possession. Keith now combined under his own authority both the government and the soil of the province. Such a combination was diametrically opposed to the fixed policy of William Penn and his heirs, who had always insisted upon an absolute separation of these two functions. The use to which Keith would put his new powers was ominously indicated by his laying claim to land across the Susquehanna River said to contain a rich vein of copper. Not only were mineral lands a proprietary right, but the trans-Susquehanna region, like the Tulpehocken Valley, had not yet been cleared of Indian claims.³⁸

Through the efforts of Logan, the Proprietors, now thoroughly alarmed, sent Keith instructions by which he was to reconstitute the Council to its original membership and to do nothing without its concurrence. But the instructions, instead of hobbling Keith, played into his hands. He promptly revealed them to the Assembly, which viewed them as an unconstitutional device to include the Council in the legislative process.³⁹ David Lloyd now returned to the Speaker's

³³ *Colonial Records*, III, 322; William Johnson, "Some Aspects of the Relations of the Government and German Settlers of Colonial Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History*, XI (1944), 85.

³⁴ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, II, 1402, 1411.

³⁵ James Logan to Andrew Hamilton, Feb. 24, 1724/25, Logan Letter Book, II, 270.

³⁶ Isaac Norris as quoted in Burton Alva Konkle, "David Lloyd and the First Half Century of Pennsylvania" (typescript at Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore, Pa.), 267.

³⁷ Logan to Joshua Gee, Feb. 23, 1725/26, Logan Letter Book, II, 371; Johnson, "James Logan," 624, 719.

³⁸ *Colonial Records*, III, 155; George Prowell, *History of York County* (Chicago, 1907), 20.

³⁹ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Third Series, II, 1608, 1610.

chair to make common cause with Keith against the Council's alleged encroachment upon the Assembly's rights.

The alliance of the Governor and the Speaker brought together the city populace with those antiproprietary interests that normally adhered to Lloyd's leadership. This combination posed a dramatic threat to proprietary rule. In the City and County of Philadelphia, Keith had largely superseded the Quaker Lloyd's leadership. Particularly in the city the small merchants, artisans, and disenfranchised mechanics and laborers found in the baronet a new champion. He appealed also to the Anglican and Presbyterian population which had long resented Quaker control. Because the ruling Quaker oligarchy was already suspicious of the newly arrived immigrants, these too—both in the city and the county—rallied to Keith's banner. Debtors of whatever class or station also followed the Governor's leadership. If the Keithian party was predominantly of the city, Lloyd's alliance with Keith meant that the new coalition extended to the Quaker back country. Assembly hegemony was the farmers' shield against proprietary domination. With the publication of the Proprietors' instructions they rushed not so much to the defense of Keith, but to the defense of the constitution as they understood it.

The "union of Counsells" between Keith and Lloyd all but isolated the Proprietors' representatives in the colony and left the Quaker oligarchy facing its most serious challenge.⁴⁰ Logan commented bitterly:

D. Lloyd formerly began the game of spiriting away the peoples understanding and filling their heads with notions of oppression from the Proprietor. Yet our governors won even against him and he was fairly beat out of his play, but now Pilate and Herod are friends for the same goodly purpose—the Governor has all the proprietors rights—the chief justice expounds the law of which the other now says he is an oracle. . . .⁴¹

With the grand coalition now in effect, Keith organized two political clubs—the Tiff Club, whose members were known as "Leather Aprons," and the Gentlemen's Club made up of the elite of the Keithian party. To Isaac Norris the first of these clubs was composed of the "new, vile people . . . they may be truly called a mob." The

⁴⁰ Isaac Norris to ?, Apr. 30, 1725, Norris Letter Book, 421, HSP.

⁴¹ Logan to Simon Clement, Feb. 15, 1724, Logan Copy Book, III, American Philosophical Society.

latter, he believed, was made up of genteel and not-so-genteel debtors.⁴² These two clubs represented for the time and place quite remarkable achievements in political organization. "All state affairs," explained Isaac Norris, "were agreed, directed, canvassed [and the] choosing representatives for Assembly was decided at one or other of [them]."⁴³ The membership of Keith's political clubs represented a cross section of the people to whom the Governor's program appealed.

The organization of political clubs and the hammering out a party program were not Keith's only activities. Sir William was among the first modern political leaders to recognize the power of the press. It could well be that his befriending the talented young Benjamin Franklin bespoke his desire to find a writer and printer who could disseminate his party's political views. As it was, the existing pressmen had to burn the midnight oil in keeping up with the unprecedented flood of political pamphleteering that marked this troubled decade.⁴⁴

Typical of the egalitarianism implicit in the Keithian appeal was Sir William's satiric parable, *The Observer's Trip to America*. The "Observer" meets the unassuming "Roger Plowman," who descants upon the political situation in Pennsylvania. Of Logan and his followers, Plowman says,

As for your lærned Schollards, tho' perhaps they will not allow Us poor Country Folks to put our Thinking Faculty in the Ballance with theirs, on many Subjects, which, in truth, we do not pretend to, yet surely they must

⁴² Norris to Joseph Pike, Aug. 28, 1728, Norris Letter Book, 515.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ For example, see Hannah Penn, *Letter of Instructions to Sir William Keith . . .* (Philadelphia, 1724); Sir William Keith, *A Letter from Sir William Keith . . . to Mr. James Logan . . .* (Philadelphia, 1725); David Lloyd, *A Vindication of the Legislative Power . . .* (Philadelphia, 1725); James Logan, *The Antidote [to Lloyd's Vindication] . . .* (Philadelphia, 1725); Logan, *A Memorial* (Philadelphia, 1725); Anon., *The Triumvirate of Pennsylvania . . .* (Philadelphia, 1725?); Anon., *The Case of the Heir at Law and Executrix . . .* (Philadelphia, 1726); Anon., *The Honest Man's Interest as He Claims Lands in the Counties of Newcastle, Kent or Sussex . . .* (Philadelphia, 1726); Sir William Keith, *A Just and Plain Vindication . . .* (Philadelphia, 1726); James Logan, *A More Just Vindication . . .* (Philadelphia, 1726); [Logan], *Advice and Information to the Freeholders . . .* (Philadelphia, 1727); Anon., *The Conspiracy of Cataline; Recommended to the Serious Consideration of the Authors of Advice and Information . . .* (Philadelphia, 1727); [Keith], *Remarks upon the Advice to the Freeholders . . .* (Philadelphia, 1727).

own, We are made of the same Flesh and Bones, and after the same Manner with Themselves, so that our Sense and Feeling of Happiness and Misery, Justice and Injustice, good Fortune and ill Fortune, are much the same with Us all. And I appeal to you, Master, if a quiet Enjoyment of, and equal Support under these opposite States in Life, respectively, be not the chief End, if not the whole Business of Civil Government?⁴⁵

Appeals such as this, and the attractiveness of their program resulted in the Keithians' successive electoral victories from 1722 through the rest of the decade. Each election seemed more "mobbish" to Logan and his friends than the last. Three successive paper-money laws were legislated in the sessions of 1722/23, 1723/24, and 1728/29.⁴⁶ Both Philadelphia County and City regularly returned a Keithian slate to the Assembly, and until 1726 Lloyd's following in Chester and Bucks Counties remained in loyal alliance.

In that year the Penns removed Keith from the governorship and replaced him with the eighty-one-year-old Major Patrick Gordon.⁴⁷ Nothing daunted, the audacious baronet not only ran for the Assembly but also made a colorful attempt to take the speakership from Lloyd. Shortly after the elections of 1726, Logan reported to John Penn that "in this factious town where the lower rank of People, Sir William's Partisans are the most numerous, he was elected . . . all ten members for the County and City but one are Keithians, as they are now called. . . ."⁴⁸

Election day had been factious indeed. A Philadelphia mob, climaxing the Keithian triumph, put to the torch those symbols of authority and morality, the pillory and the stocks, and for good measure also burned several butcher stalls.⁴⁹ But this was as nothing compared to the remarkable scene two weeks later on the day the new Assembly was to meet and to select its Speaker. To the boom of ships' guns, Keith rode triumphantly into the city at the head of eighty mounted gentlemen. Behind the riders, marching two by two, came a parade of butchers, tailors, blacksmiths, journeymen, apprentices,

⁴⁵ Published in Philadelphia in 1726. Logan attributed the piece to Keith. Johnson, "James Logan," 729.

⁴⁶ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Third Series, II, 1514-1515, 1565; III, 1963.

⁴⁷ *Colonial Records*, III, 251; *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1726-27*, 56-57.

⁴⁸ James Logan to John Penn, Oct. 17, 1726, PPOC, I, 237.

⁴⁹ Patrick Gordon to John Penn, Oct. 17, 1726, *ibid.*, 247.

porters, and carters. Here were the gentlemen on horseback with the Tiff Club close behind.⁵⁰ Keith hoped to awe the legislators into placing the mantle of the speakership upon his shoulders. But in this attempt he split his followers from those of Lloyd, who won the office by a wide margin.⁵¹

Keith's break with Lloyd in October, 1726, meant the collapse of the coalition through which, as Governor, Keith had hoped to rule the colony. That coalition had emerged in the paper-money controversy and had been sealed in the Keith-Lloyd alliance brought about by the publication of the proprietary instructions in 1724. As with most political coalitions, this one had been a marriage of convenience. An antipathy between the polyglot city and the relatively homogeneous Quaker counties became apparent once Keith challenged Lloyd for predominance. Royal government—rumors were rife that that was Keith's ultimate purpose—with Sir William either as Governor or as Speaker of the House posed more of a threat to the Lloyddeans than did proprietary government checked by an ever-vigilant Assembly.⁵² Logan, always the political realist, saw his opportunity. "Rather than to leave any chance to S^r W.," he decided "of two evils, one would choose the least." Lloyd was preferable, although concerning him, it was not likely that "ye Ethiopian change his skin."⁵³

Although Keith lost the support of Lloyd, and with it the support of the Assembly, he nevertheless retained his grip on the city.⁵⁴ Thus it was that in preparation for the election of 1727, Logan bent every effort to get out the country vote, a vote expected to follow Lloyd's disenchantment with the former Governor. But, unfortunately, the Gods themselves frowned upon Logan's electioneering. Sadly he re-

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ "And now the great Sir William," wrote Logan, "is dwindled down to the low Degree of an Assembly man in common with the other members." Logan to John Penn, Oct. 17, 1726, *ibid.*, 237. Not even all the Keithians voted for Keith. It was the practice of standing in the vote for Speaker that deterred them. As Logan put it, the "lesser number" simply did not choose to oppose what they were powerless to stop. Sister Leonard, "Elections," 227, says it was not "prudent" for the minority to stand and expose its support of Keith.

⁵² Samson Davis and Thomas Parry's, *Depositions laid before the House, 9 August, 1728* (Philadelphia, 1728), tells of Keith's alleged plans at this time to have the Crown assume the government of the colony.

⁵³ James Logan to H. Taylor, Sept. 9, 1726, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series, VII, 91.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, Eighth Series, II, 1760, for the Assembly's extremely cool address to the outgoing Governor.

ported that it rained on election day. In spite of the provisions made for them, the countrymen did not come in to vote and "Keith and his crew" were re-elected. Yet there was some recompense. Once more Sir William was defeated by Lloyd for the speakership.⁵⁵

Having failed to obtain the power and the perquisites that the speakership would have conferred upon him, and with his creditors closing in, Keith now decided to return to England in order to mend his political fortunes.⁵⁶ Although his abrupt retreat left his faction leaderless, it did not dissolve its solidarity. Sir William had decreed that his nephew, James Graeme—"a hair brained, hot-headed, ignorant young fellow," according to Patrick Gordon—be named to replace him in the Assembly.⁵⁷ When Speaker Lloyd refused to call a special election, eight of the nine remaining Philadelphia City and County representatives walked out leaving the Assembly without the necessary quorum to do business. Nevertheless, under Lloyd's leadership, the Assembly continued in session.⁵⁸

In the election of 1728, the Keithians were again returned to the Assembly. "We should be very quiet," wrote David Barclay to Thomas Penn, "if y^e spirit raised among y^e people for paper money by Sr. Wm. did not constantly perplex us. His doctrine of reducing all to a level suits mighty well with the inclination of the poorer sort," Barclay continued, "who in all countries by far are the most numerous and I am pls'd, however some of us be hated in Philadel-

⁵⁵ Patrick Gordon to John Penn, Oct. 25, 1727, PPOC, I, 297. The eight Philadelphia members who remained loyal to Keith were John Swift, Dr. John Kearsley, Job Goodson, Thomas Tresse, Edward Horne, William Monnington, Leonard Sprogel, and Thomas Rutterson.

⁵⁶ James Logan to Henry Brooke, Mar. 30, 1728, Logan Copy Book, 203. Although Keith for two decades sought reappointment to the colonies, he never returned to America. He published several works including a *History of Virginia* (London, 1738), in which he discussed the relationship between England and her colonies and in which he showed considerable sympathy with the latter. On the other hand, Keith was the first official to elaborate a plan for extending the stamp tax to America. Richard Preston, "Sir William Keith's Justification of a Stamp Duty in the Colonies, 1739-42," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXIX (1948), 168-182. Incarcerated for debt at least once, in 1734, Keith died a bitter and defeated man in 1749. Charles Keith, "Sir William Keith," 29; *Gentleman's Magazine*, November, 1749; *London Magazine*, November, 1749.

⁵⁷ Patrick Gordon to John Penn, May 1, 1728, PPOC, II, 7.

⁵⁸ Morris Morris, *Morris Morris' Reasons for his Conduct in the Present Assembly in the Year 1728*; Timothy Telltruth [pseud.], *To Morris Morris*; [John Kearsley?], *A Letter from a Gentleman in Philadelphia to his Friend in Bucks*; Anon., *Remarks on the Late Proceedings of Some Members of Assembly at Philadelphia*, all published in Philadelphia in 1728. Morris was the one member for Philadelphia who did not walk out of the Assembly.

phia, we have still y^e country on our side. . . ."⁵⁹ "Hated in Philadelphia," the anti-Keithians surely were. The Lloyd-dominated Assemblymen were treated to physical violence so that the next Assembly was forced to meet at Chester.⁶⁰ The well-known lawyer Andrew Hamilton, who had replaced Lloyd as Speaker, was forced to invoke the riot act, which forestalled further difficulties.⁶¹

In fact, the sound and fury of these years proved but to be the death rattle of the Keithian party. The turn of the thirties saw the dawn of an "Era of Good Feelings" in Pennsylvania politics. Slowly the bitterness of the preceding years dissipated under the artless guidance of Patrick Gordon, the soldierly octogenarian in the governor's chair. Times grew better. A liberal naturalization law was passed.⁶² Even James Logan admitted the efficacy of paper money; by 1739 the amount of paper currency in circulation had been more than doubled to some 80,000 pounds.⁶³ Keith's political clubs became but a nostalgic and faintly humorous memory. As early as February, 1728/29, Benjamin Franklin in *The Busy Body*, No. 4 poked sly fun at one of them. "I give Notice," wrote Franklin,

that I am now actually compiling, and design to publish in a short Time, the true History of the Rise, Growth, and Progress of the renowned Tiff-Club. All Persons who are acquainted with any Facts, Circumstances, Characters, Transactions, &c. which will be requisite to the Perfecting and Embellishment of the said Work, are desired to communicate the same to the Author and direct their Letters to be left with the Printer hereof.⁶⁴

Franklin's sally implies that the Keithian period in Pennsylvania history was an exception to the normally ill-defined factionalism typical of colonial politics. To Isaac Norris, Pennsylvania had been undergoing nothing less than a "revolution."⁶⁵ In truth, the economic crisis of the twenties had brought forth a fortuitous concatenation of historical setting and ambitious leaders which momentarily revealed the underlying meaning of what otherwise appeared to be a

⁵⁹ [1728?], PPOC, II, 43.

⁶⁰ *Colonial Records*, III, 340-342.

⁶¹ Lokken, 235.

⁶² *Pennsylvania Archives*, Eighth Series, III, 2264; Richard A. Lester, "Currency Issues to Overcome Depression in Pennsylvania, 1723 and 1729," *Journal of Political Economy*, XLVI (1938), 378.

⁶³ *Pennsylvania Archives*, Third Series, III, 1963, 2521-2522.

⁶⁴ Leonard Labaree, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, 1959), I, 126.

⁶⁵ Isaac Norris to Jonathan Scarch, Aug. 21, 1726, Norris Letter Book, 475.

directionless competition for place and power. The decade suggests that in Pennsylvania a "democratic ideology" (to use Robert Palmer's term) was emerging in opposition to claims of proprietary hegemony.⁶⁶ This ideology found expression in the rhetoric of egalitarianism.⁶⁷ Its operating medium was party organization within a framework of representative government.⁶⁸

It is difficult to read contemporary descriptions of colonial Pennsylvania without sharing the writer's impression that something novel was afoot. A generation following the Keithian period, that acute observer, Gottlieb Mittelberger, caught the spirit of the times. "They have a saying there," Mittelberger wrote, that "Pennsylvania is heaven for farmers, paradise for artisans, and hell for officials and preachers." The system of liberty under which Pennsylvanians lived, Mittelberger observed, "makes them all equal."⁶⁹ Something of this spirit is apparent in the decade of the 1720's. Mittelberger's comment provides an essential clue with which to penetrate the "malaise" of early Pennsylvania politics.

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⁶⁶ Robert Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800, The Challenge* (Princeton, 1959), I, 5. The ideology, writes Palmer, included opposition to "the possession of government . . . by an established, privileged, closed, or self-recruiting group of men" (pp. 5-6). The Pennsylvania Council was a perfect example of such a group. Both Keith and Lloyd appealed to the popular resentment against it. To be sure, the Keithian movement against the proprietary group occurs previous to the period studied by Palmer. But Palmer makes it clear that the "democratic revolution" obviously cannot be exactly dated and that "in a comparative view . . . it seems certain that the Anglo-American colonial assemblies, before the American Revolution, were the most nearly democratic bodies to be found in the world of European Civilization" (p. 50).

⁶⁷ Keith, at one time, compared Logan to Jack in *Tale of a Tub*. Just as Jack could not shed the trappings of Roman Catholicism, so Logan could not shed the trappings of aristocracy. *Remarks upon Advice to Freeholders & etc.* . . . (Philadelphia, 1727), 4. *The Triumvirate of Pennsylvania* . . . (Philadelphia, 1725?), and Brutus [pseud.], *The Conspiracy of Cataline* (Philadelphia, 1727) are typical anti-Logan tracts accusing the proprietary friends of monopolizing government in order "to oppress the Freemen of [this] Province." The Quaker oligarchy reminded the Keithians, somewhat incongruously, of the Venetian aristocracy. Logan was compared to the "Doge of Venice."

⁶⁸ The Keithian period illustrates the transitional developments toward party government as described by V. O. Key: "As democratic ideas spread, those dissatisfied with the old order rallied the masses . . . against the established holders of authority. In effect the outs played demagogue, lined up the unwashed in their support, and at the elections, by superiority of numbers and organization they bested those dominant in government. . . ." *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups* (New York, 1958), 220-221.

⁶⁹ Oscar Handlin and John Clive, *Journey to Pennsylvania* (Cambridge, 1960), 48, 86.