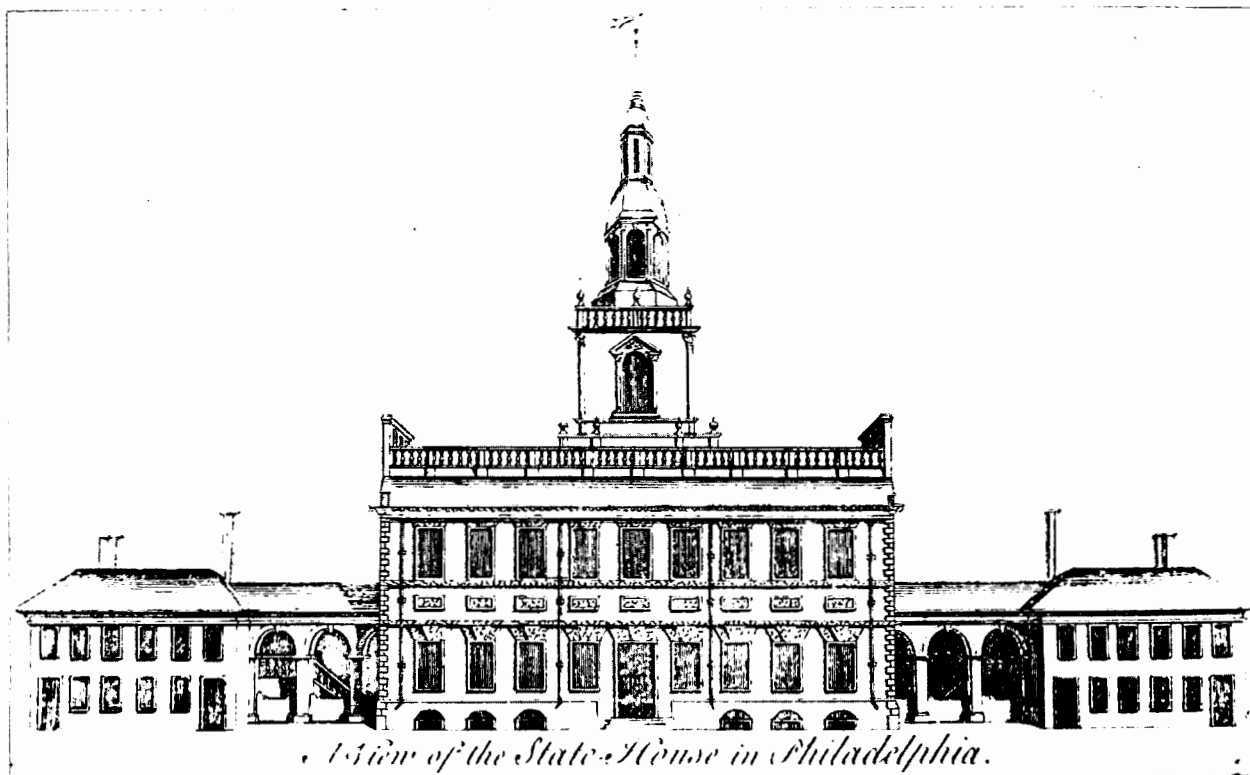


**INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
PENNSYLVANIA**

INDEPENDENCE HALL

Furnishing Study of the Second Floor

**by
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During the actual writing of the report my colleagues in the Office of History and Historic Architecture endured my constant ruminations on furniture, provincial councillors, committee rooms, and banquet halls. The report was read in draft and final form by Frank Sarles of the Division of History who corrected the errors of style and grammar that had escaped me. Finally Miss Liliane Lykes typed the report and transformed the rough hewed draft into the polished product you hold in your hands. Despite this wealth of support, the errors that remain are mine alone.

INTRODUCTION

Begun in 1732 and completed fifteen years later, the Pennsylvania State House was one of the largest public buildings in England's North American Colonies. Its most famous moments occurred in the first eleven years of the history of the United States of America. The Second Continental Congress met there in 1775 and in July of the next year adopted, after long debate, the Declaration of Independence. By this act the thirteen English colonies declared their right "to be Free and Independent States." Eleven years later, in 1787, after five years of war with England and six abortive years of attempting to exist as a loose confederation, representatives of the thirteen colonies met in the State House to form a stronger central government. The result was the Constitution of the United States. These two events made the Pennsylvania State House a national shrine and gave it the better known name of Independence Hall.

Built as the capitol for the Province and later Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it served as such for more than sixty years. In an attempt to present the full story of the State House, the National Park Service plans to refurnish the second floor to reflect its use during Pennsylvania's last years as a proprietary colony. In March 1966 a Resource Study Proposal in history was prepared requesting a report on the furnishings of the second floor of Independence Hall. Four years passed before it was possible to fulfill this need. The report that follows has been prepared to satisfy the requirements of RSP H-63B for Independence Hall

with certain modifications in the original recommendations regarding the era to be represented in the refurnished rooms.

It is the current plan to refurnish the southwest room as it appeared when used by the Governor's Council prior to 1775. The Long Gallery on the north side of the building will be refurnished to show its use as a gathering place for social events and banquets during the colonial years. The third room, in the southeast quarter of second floor, will be furnished as a committee room for the Pennsylvania Assembly, one of its many functions in the years prior to 1775. The report will be divided into two chapters. The history of the rooms will be traced from completion until 1775-77, with a short discussion of their use until 1800. Chapter 2 will present evidence of original furnishings in the three rooms.

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Chapter 1

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SECOND FLOOR OF INDEPENDENCE HALL IN THE 18TH CENTURY

In 1729 the Province of Pennsylvania under the benevolent proprietorship of the Penn family was approaching the 50th anniversary of its establishment. Though a vigorous and prosperous colony, it lacked an official meeting place for its assembly. This small legislative body had met in private houses hired out for the session or in the old City Hall at Second and High [Market] streets in Philadelphia. With the addition of four delegates from Lancaster County in 1729, these accommodations had become too small. A series of incidents that had exposed members to "indecencies . . . by rude and disorderly Persons"¹ had resulted in the suggestion that the provincial government be removed from Philadelphia. The governor, upon advice of his councillors, most of who were from Philadelphia, declined to act on this suggestion. The assembly acquiesced, agreeing to continue to meet in Philadelphia. A short time later "diverse Inhabitants" of the town submitted a petition to the assembly requesting that a state house be built in the town. In 1729 the assembly appropriated £2,000 to build a "House for the Assembly."²

A committee of three was appointed, consisting of Speaker of the Assembly Andrew Hamilton, Assemblyman Dr. John Kearsley, and Thomas

1. Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania, 1682-1776, Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series (8 volumes, Harrisburg, 1931-35), 3, 1908. Cited hereafter as Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series.

2. Ibid., p. 1929.

Lawrence, member of the Provincial Council. Progress on the planning of the building was slow as Hamilton and Kearsley battled over both the location and the plan of the building.³ Lawrence remained aloof from the debate, but ultimately threw his support to Hamilton and construction of the State House on Chestnut Street between Fifth and Sixth began in the summer of 1732. That same summer the disagreement between Hamilton and Kearsley was revealed to the assembly, and after extended debate Hamilton was sustained in his opinion. The assembly voted to continue the same three men "to superintend and govern the Building of the State-house."⁴ The doctor, however, chose not to exercise his authority. Provincial Councillor Lawrence did the same, leaving Andrew Hamilton in the position to give the building the form he had wanted all along.

Three more years passed before the Assembly was able to move into the new building. Even then their meeting place on the east side of the first floor was not complete and the thirty members of the provincial body suffered considerable discomfort until all the window panes had been installed. Between 1735, when the building was first occupied, and 1741, when the Assembly requested the building to be finished without delay, work progressed slowly. In 1743 the Supreme Court Chamber across the entry

3. One point of disagreement between the two was whether the building was to serve as more than a seat of governmental and judicial bodies. Kearsley desired a combination market and state house, while Hamilton favored a state house only. Hamilton wanted to house the Council and courts in the building while Kearsley viewed it as the home of the assembly only.

4. Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, 3, 2154-55.

hall from the Assembly room was ready for occupancy. On June 6, 1747, the Provincial Council decided that the empty Council Chamber would be the "most Commodious Place for them to meet in." The governor's secretary inquired of the Speaker if the room were then in order or could be put in order for the use of the council.⁵ On August 18, 1747, the council is believed to have met in the room in the southwest corner of the second floor for the first time. Presumably the Long Gallery and committee room on the second floor were also completed about this time.

The State House as conceived by Hamilton and executed by Edmund Woolley, master carpenter and "architect" of the building, possessed an impressive exterior and a simple interior arrangement of rooms. The main building was 107 by 45 feet. The first floor was divided into two rooms by a twenty-foot-wide hallway. To the east was the Assembly room and to the west the Supreme Court Chamber. Each measured 40 by 40 feet. An ornate stairway led to the second floor and a twenty-foot-square hallway. From here one moved into the Long Gallery which stretched the full length of the building and was twenty feet wide. Two doors opened from this room to the Council Chamber and the Assembly Committee Room. These rooms each measured 20 by 40 feet. The former was located to the west of the hallway and the latter to the east. The Long Gallery on the north side of the building was lighted by nine large windows overlooking Chestnut Street. Both the

5. Colonial Records, Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania from the Organization to the Termination of the Proprietary Government (16 vols., Harrisburg, 1852), 5, 69. Cited hereafter as Colonial Records: Provincial Council.

Council Chamber and the Committee Room possessed three windows looking south over the State House yard.

The presence of a long room in the State House reflected the taste of that and previous times. It was the Province's room of state. Here various displays reflecting the growing wealth of the colony were exhibited. And more importantly, the large room lent itself to formal banquets or celebrations. Traditionally the first use of the Long Gallery was in 1736 when Mayor William Allen entertained the gentlemen of the Corporation with a sumptuous repast. Such a banquet was customarily given by the Chief Magistrate of Philadelphia upon leaving office.⁶ Celebrations on similar occasions of state followed, and after the completion of the second floor during the late 1740s, such grand entertainments increased in number.

On November 10, 1752, Governor James Hamilton, son of Andrew Hamilton, gave an entertainment at noon at his home, Bush Hill. In the evening he hosted "a grand Ball at the State-house at which were present upward of one hundred Ladies, and a much greater number of Gentlemen who

6. There is some question whether the Long Gallery was utilized for this in 1736, since the Assembly Room had not been completely finished at this time and none of the other rooms were as yet being utilized. Accounts of the event refer to the banquet at the State House. Charles P. Keith, The Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 125, indicates that the Assembly Room was used for the September 1736 banquet. Two years later a banquet celebrating the 56th birthday of George II was given at the State House and concluded with a ball, according to the Pennsylvania Gazette of November 2, 1738. Again this may have taken place on the first floor rather than the second.

formed the most brilliant Assembly that had ever before been seen in this Province. The whole Company were elegantly entertained by his Honour there at Supper in the Long Gallery, and every thing conducted with the greatest Decorum, and to general Satisfaction."⁷ Two years later, Gov. Robert Hunter Morris hosted the celebration of George II's 72nd birthday with a "grand Ball at the State-house." Again about a hundred ladies and a much larger number of gentlemen "were elegantly entertained by his Honour there at Supper in the Long Gallery, after which the Royal Health was drank; likewise those of the Proprietance of Pennsylvania, and Prosperity to the Province [illegible]."⁸

In September of the next year, gentlemen of the Army present in Philadelphia gave a grand entertainment and ball at the State House to celebrate the victory of General William Johnson over the French near Lake George.⁹ Johnson's victory saved New York from the French and he later received the thanks of Parliament, was created a baronet of Great Britain, and was voted £5,000. The entertainment was, as usual, "conducted with the greatest Decorum and Elegance." Exactly eleven months later on August 23, 1756, the Assembly entertained the newly arrived Lieutenant Governor, William Denny, with a "handsome dinner" in the Long Room attended by former Lt. Gov. Robert Hunter Morris, leaving after two stormy years of clashes with the Assembly over funds for frontier defense,

7. Pennsylvania Gazette, November 16, 1752.

8. Pennsylvania Gazette, November 14, 1754.

9. Ibid., September 25, 1755.

the Council, Mayor and Corporation, Officers Civil and Military, Clergy, and "Strangers, now residing in this City."¹⁰

The entertainment of Governor Denny provides a hint as to how such "handsome dinners" were organized. Less than a week before the Monday evening banquet the Assembly had "ORDERED, That the Clerk do speak to some suitable Person to provide a handsome Dinner on the next Second-day [Monday] at the State-house."¹¹

On September 30 the Pennsylvania Assembly adjourned after the approving payment of a long list of incidental expenses. Among the charges paid was one to "Mary Jones, her account for the entertainment-- & 127.0.0."¹² A Mrs. Jones operated the Three Crowns Tavern in 1756. The Three Crowns was located on Second and Water streets "above Walnut," about three or four blocks east of the State House. Mary Jones had a "celebrated public house" which was the scene of occasional provincial entertainments.¹³ There is no way of determining definitely if the "entertainment" Mary Jones was paid for was Governor Denny's dinner or not.

10. Pennsylvania Gazette, August 26, 1756.

11. Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, 5, 4289.

12. Ibid., 5, 4353. Provincial elections occurred on October 1 so the Assembly often sat until the last week of September. All bills had to be paid before adjournment.

13. The above information on Mrs [Mary] Jones was found in the following sources: Walter C. Brenner, A List of Philadelphia Inns and Taverns, 1680-1850 (1928), Typescript in Manuscript Collections, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Leonard W. Labaree, The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (12 vols., New Haven, 1959-), 6, 385; and John F. Watson, Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1844), 1, 464. Watson locates Mrs. Jones' tavern in "the old two-story house now adjoining the south end of the City Tavern; besides its present front on Second Street it had a front towards Walnut Street, with a fine green court yard all along that street down to Dock Creek."

That she was paid £127 would indicate that it was not a small gathering and the use of the singular (entertainment) would rule out this as a cumulative bill for the entire session. If Mrs. Jones did cater the dinner, the question of where the table utensils for a hundred people--or perhaps two or three times that number--came from is unanswered.¹⁴

Because it was one of the largest rooms available in the City of Philadelphia, the long room on the second floor of the State House was used by the Corporation of Philadelphia and private citizens for banquets. On March 18, 1757, officials of the Corporation "genteely entertained" Lord Loudoun, Commander in Chief of the English forces in the colonies.¹⁵ In June 1762, upwards of 100 "of the principal Gentlemen" of the City bade their final farewell to Abraham Taylor, who had served on the Governor's Council from 1741. He was leaving Philadelphia for permanent residence in England.¹⁶ News of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached Philadelphia in mid-May 1766 and prompted celebrations by the populace and the "principal inhabitants of the city." They gathered at noon on May 21 and "gave an elegant Entertainment at the State-House, at which his HONOUR the GOVERNOR, and the Officers of Government; the Military Gentlemen; Captain HAWKER, of His Majesty's Ship Sardine, the other Gentlemen of the Navy, and the Strangers in the City were present."

14. One possibility is that the tableware of several taverns was pooled for such major banquets. Some idea of the value represented by £127 is to compare it with the cost of the famous Syng silver inkstand that is associated with the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In 1752 Philip Syng, Silversmith was paid £25. 16. 0. (twenty-five pounds, sixteen shillings and no pence) by the Assembly. Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, 4, 3534.

15. Pennsylvania Gazette, March 24, 1757.

16. Ibid., July 1, 1762; Keith, Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania, p. 220.

Honors of the table were performed by the Mayor, assisted by the Aldermen. Not less than three hundred plates were laid and "the whole was conducted with the greatest Elegance and Decorum; so that Detraction itself must be silent on the Occasion." Twenty-one toasts were drunk "out of glasses poured full," beginning with the King and ending with Liberty of the Press in America. Twenty-one guns were fired from cannon in the State House yard for the toast to the King and seven guns for each of the toasts that followed.¹⁷

The number in attendance celebrating the repeal of the Stamp Act may have been the largest gathering in the Long Gallery of the State House up to that time, but on November 18, 1771, 350 gathered for "a very genteel entertainment" sponsored by the merchants of Philadelphia to show their pleasure at the appointment of Richard Penn as governor of the Province.¹⁸ Penn, unlike other governors who antagonized and lost the friendship of the Province, retained his popularity and when he departed in September 1773 was given a farewell banquet. How many attended is not known, but the assemblage was entertained during the meal with music by the band belonging to the troops quartered in Philadelphia. Toasts were drunk and the usual salutes were fired.¹⁹

17. Pennsylvania Gazette, May 22, 1766; Der Wochentliche Philadelphiaische Staatschate, May 26, 1766. While the principal inhabitants entertained in the Long Gallery, the populace enjoyed themselves with bonfires and many barrels of beer on the evening of May 20.

18. Pennsylvania Packet, November 18, 1771.

19. Ibid., September 20, 1773.

Though the merchants of Philadelphia could hail Richard Penn for the "moderation, wisdom, and affability of his governmental management," events in Massachusetts and other colonies during the last months of 1773 were placing great strain on the fabric that held the thirteen colonies to the mother country. In December the Boston Tea Party focused the attention of England and the colonies on that town. When England closed the Port of Boston, fear of further repression in the other colonies led to the calling of an intercolonial congress. Philadelphia, centrally located, and the largest city in the colonies, was chosen as the meeting place of the First Continental Congress. Delegates gathered at City Tavern on September 5, 1774, formally convening at Carpenters' Hall later the same day.

On Friday, September 16, the delegates were hosted by the gentlemen of the City. Assembling at City Tavern at 3 o'clock, they were conducted to the State House by the managers of the entertainment. Here they were received by a very large company including citizens from "every province of the Continent." "About five hundred gentlemen sat down at once, and . . . there was plenty of everything eatable and drinkable, and no scarcity of good humor and diversion."²⁰ After dinner many toasts were drunk, including ones to the King, Queen, and Perpetual Union of the

20. Silas Deane, delegate from Connecticut, to Mrs. Deane describing the banquet; E. C. Burnett, Letters of Members of the Continental Congress (8 Vols., Washington, 1921-36), 1, 32. Deane's estimate of attendance was supported by the account in the Pennsylvania Packet on September 19-- " . . . making in the whole near 500."

Colonies. These were accompanied by music and discharge of cannon.²¹ The cost of this grand banquet, "the greatest intertainment (sic) that ever was made in this City," was estimated by one observer to be a thousand pounds at least.²²

This marked the last known use of the Long Gallery for formal entertainments for six years. During the eighteen months that followed, the colonies and England moved further and further apart. The skirmish at Concord and Lexington on April 19, 1775, and the siege of Boston during the next eleven months clearly marked the colonies as rebels. On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence. The American army after winning some battles in the early months of the 1776 campaign was forced into retreat across New Jersey and by December the "times that try men's souls" were upon the country. In September of 1777, Washington was defeated in the Battle of Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania and the British moved on to occupy Philadelphia. When they left the next June, the State House--the first floor used as barracks and the second as a prison--was in a "most filthy and sordid situation."

Congress returned to the State House and the first floor Assembly Room. The Pennsylvania Legislature met upstairs in the Committee Room--their home since 1775 and the convening of the Second Continental

21. Pennsylvania Packet, September 19, 1774.

22. Caesar to Thomas Rodney, September 14, 1774, Caesar Rodney Papers, Library of Congress.

Congress--but they expanded the chamber to include the eastern forty feet of the Long Gallery and created a room forty feet square. The Supreme Executive Council, which had replaced the Provincial Council, utilized the room to the southwest. In 1780 and 1781, "collations" were held on July 4 at the State House to celebrate Independence Day and these probably utilized the 60x20 foot gallery upstairs. With the end of the war, further changes overtook the second floor of Independence Hall and partitions were put up and taken down during the next century to suit various occupants of the building.²⁵ Between 1895 and 1900 the second floor was returned to its original arrangement. And so it remains today.

Completed in 1747, the Council Chamber, west of the entry hallway, served as the meeting place for the Proprietary Council. Here the Governor or Lieutenant Governor met with his council.²⁴ The Councillors, appointed by the Proprietor, usually numbered twelve, though it was seldom that all were in attendance.

William Penn issued two significant documents in 1701 establishing the operation and organization of the provincial government. The first

23. Because our interest is directed to the use of the rooms during Colonial era prior to 1775, this discussion of the history of the second floor is limited to this era. An excellent history of the entire building is available in the Historic Structures Report on Independence Hall done by the Staff between 1959 and 1962.

24. Technically, only a member of the Penn family was governor of the province. When one of the Penns was not present in the colony, he appointed a deputy who acted as his agent and was designated Lieutenant Governor. In actual fact these agents were often referred to as Governor. Following historic precedent, the terms will be used interchangeably except when referring to John or Richard Penn, grandsons of the founder William Penn.

designated the Pennsylvania Assembly as legislative body of the Province. Prior to 1701 the upper house or Council had been a popularly elected body. The "Commission to the Council" changed it to a body appointed by the governor from "trusty and Well-Beloved friends," a Council of State whose function was to "Consult and assist" the Penns or their Lieutenant Governors "in all Public affairs and matters relating to the . . . Govrmt, . . . Peace, safty (sic), and well being of the People." When neither Governor nor Lieutenant Governor was present, the Council, as a body, exercised all the power, jurisdiction, and authority granted to the Provincial Executive.²⁵

Among the major functions of the Council were the following. First, the reception of delegations of Indians and negotiation of agreements with them. Upon organizing each year, the Assembly would wait upon the governor and present its selection as Speaker of the house and request the usual legislative privileges.²⁶ The Governor and Council, at times unwillingly, always granted both. Third, The Mayor of Philadelphia came to the Council Chamber each year to take his oath of office and be received by the Governor and his advisors.²⁷ Finally, and most importantly, the Speaker and the full Assembly came to the Council Chamber to learn the

25. Colonial Records; Provincial Council, 2, 57-58. The President of the Council became the acting chief executive.

26. Ibid., 6, 165-66.

27. Minutes of the Common Council of the City of Philadelphia, 1704-1776 (Philadelphia, 1847), p. 503.

fate of bills passed by them. If approved by the Governor and Council they would be enacted into law -- the title of each was read, distinctly approved by the governor, signed by him and countersigned by the Secretary to the Council, the Great Seal of the Province was affixed to it, and it was then carried to the Records Office to be enrolled.²⁸ When the Governor and Council did not accept an act of the Assembly there would follow a period of negotiation often highlighted by a battle between the two over rights and prerogatives.

The conflict between Council and Assembly, when it occurred, was often economically motivated. The members of the Council were nearly all of the landed and commercial gentry and attached to the Proprietary interests. The Assembly, with some exceptions, were merchant or middle class. Thus issuance of paper money by the Province, with its resultant depreciation in rent and mortgage payments, or proposals to tax Proprietary estates were opposed in Council, but supported by the Assembly. Other conflicts stemmed from the efforts of the Assembly to constantly expand its areas of authority and the resistance of the Governor and Council to these efforts.

The most colorful functions of the Provincial Council were the frequent Indian conferences. Beginning with the establishment of the Province of Pennsylvania, the Quakers and William Penn had attempted to maintain friendly and benevolent relations with the Indians. As a result, small and large

28. Colonial Records; Provincial Council, 5, 375; 6, 742-43; 7, 58.

delegations of the tribes often came to see "Brother Onas" and "the place where the Council Fire has always burned."²⁹ These meetings might involve anywhere from less than ten to several dozen Indians plus interpreters. The province was represented by eight council members, the governor, his secretary, and, on some occasions, all or part of the 36 to 40 members of the Assembly. Though the scene of these meetings was usually the Council Chamber, occasionally they were held away from the City of Philadelphia, such as the several conferences at Easton, Pennsylvania, in the last years of the 1750s. Less than three months after the Council Chamber was finished, the Governor and Council were treated to a war dance by ten Ohio Indians. They had come to ask for better weapons to fight the French and to urge a more active war against them. After the usual exchange of strings of wampum accompanied by formal speeches from both sides, the Indians were given specific goods by the governor including 4 barrels of gunpowder, 500 pounds of bar lead, 8 guns, 1 1/2 dozen tomahawks, 10 dozen knives, 1/4 cask of gunpowder, a dozen looking glasses and 11 pair of "Sizzars." This so pleased the warriors from Ohio, they "gave the Indian Marks of Approbation and did a War Dance."³⁰

During the next 28 years, many more meetings were held in the big, sunny, southwest room on the second floor of the State House between the governor, his council, and the tribesmen to the west. These meetings

29. Ibid., 8, 492.

30. Ibid., 5, 151. This council took place on November 13, 14 and 16, 1747.

played a major role in maintaining the peace between the tribes and between settlers and Indians.

Those "trusty and well beloved friends" of the governor who served on the Provincial Council after 1747 represented the elite of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania society. James Hamilton, son of Andrew Hamilton, designer of the State House, was twice lieutenant governor and served on the Council from 1749-75. His nephew Andrew Allen, son of William Allen, mayor of Philadelphia in 1735-36, served on the Council during the final four years of its existence. Many appointees held their seats for long periods of time. Other besides Hamilton who served for twenty years or more included Dr. Thomas Cadwalader, Joseph Turner, Thomas Hopkinson, Benjamin Chew, and the Rev. Richard Peters. Joseph Turner, a long-time partner of Benjamin Chew and William Allen in a variety of enterprises, was a councilman from 1747 to 1771. Benjamin Chew, a member of the Council from 1755 to 1775, was also attorney general and chief justice during that period. Named secretary to the Provincial Council in 1743, the Rev. Richard Peters became a councillor in 1749. He served the cause of the proprietors until 1775. From 1762 to 1775 he was rector of Christ and St. Peter's Churches in Philadelphia. In 1763 his namesake and nephew was appointed to the council. Twelve years later Richard Peters left the council and joined the Whig or revolutionary cause. He later became secretary to the Board of War. Two members of the prominent Shippen family also served on the Council: Edward, Jr., from 1770-75 and Joseph, Jr., who though not a member was clerk of the council and Secretary to the

Proprietor from 1762. The most loyal of these friends of the proprietor was the Logan family. James Logan faithfully represented the Penn family interests from 1701 to 1747, serving as a councillor for 46 years. In 1763 his son, William Logan, was appointed to the Council and served until it was disbanded in 1775.

Sons of three members of the Provincial Council during its last thirty years of operation were prominent in the War for Independence. Thomas Hopkinson was on the Council from 1747 to about 1766. His son, Francis, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and employed his satirical and political writing skill against the British during the war. Francis Hopkinson was a Federal District Judge for Pennsylvania at the end of his career. Thomas Mifflin, son of John Mifflin, a member of the Provincial Council from 1755-75, was active in the American army during the first two years of the war. Elected to Congress in 1782, he became president of the Congress the next year and accepted Washington's resignation as commander-in-chief. A delegate to the Constitutional Convention in 1787, Thomas Mifflin was governor of Pennsylvania from 1790-99. James Tilghman served on the Governor's Council from 1767-75. His son, Tench Tilghman, a native of Maryland, was a merchant in Philadelphia at the outbreak of the Revolution. He served as an aide-de-camp to Washington during the entire war and carried news of the surrender of Cornwallis to Congress in October 1781.³¹

31. The above brief sketches of some of the men who served on the Provincial Council from 1747 to 1775 were taken in large part from the Dictionary of American Biography (21 vols., New York, 1943). For a more

The men who presided over the colony as governors during the last thirty years of its history included two grandsons of the founder. When the Council moved into its new quarters the province was being administered by Anthony Palmer, president of the Council. James Hamilton was appointed governor in 1748 and held the office for six years. This period was marked by difficulties with the Assembly. From 1754-56, Robert Hunter Morris was governor. His term was marked with clashes with the Assembly over funds to protect the frontier. William Denny followed him, served three years, and battled the Assembly for funds to fight the French and Indian War and defend the frontiers. Hamilton returned as governor in 1759, holding the post until 1763. That year John Penn took over the reins and administered the colony until 1771. During his administration, there were boundary problems with Virginia, Connecticut and Maryland. As president of the Council, Hamilton was acting governor from May to October 1771 and from July to August 1773. Richard Penn then became governor for less than two years (1771-73). The colonials' high regard for him has already been mentioned. John Penn returned to the province in 1773 and remained as governor until 1775.³²

extensive treatment of all the men who served on the Provincial Council during its existence, see Charles P. Keith, The Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia, 1883).

32. Technically the provincial government lasted until 1776 when it was replaced by the Pennsylvania colonial government constituted that fall, but the last official meeting of the Provincial Council was on October 5, 1775, and the last act of the Provincial Governor was December 9, 1775. Colonial Records: Provincial Council, 10, 274 and 276.

In 1776 the Pennsylvania constitution created a weak executive body, the Supreme Executive Council, totally dominated by the powerful Colonial Assembly. In September 1777 the State and national governments fled the State House at the approach of the British. During the British occupation the entire second floor was used as a prison for American soldiers. After the cleaning and repair of the Council Room, it was again occupied by the Supreme Executive Council. In 1790 a new State constitution was drafted. The governor and the Secretary of the Commonwealth moved into the Council Chamber. The State Capital remained at Philadelphia for nine more years and then moved to Harrisburg. For the first time in more than half a century, the southwest room was empty of legislative or executive bodies. Interestingly, of the three rooms on the second floor, only the Council Chamber had survived in its original form as the 18th century drew to a close.

The third room, in the southeast corner of the building served a variety of purposes during the last half of the 18th century. Designated the Assembly Committee Room in early plans of the State House, there are very few references to it during the colonial era. Between 1752 and 1753 a committee room and library was completed to the southeast of the Assembly Room.³³ This room, approximately 29 by 23 feet, was by the standards of the time luxurious and in 1774 was described as a "very elegant apartment."

33. "Ordered, That the Superintendents of the State-house do build a suitable Room, adjoining to the South-east Corner of the said Building, for the Accommodation of the Committees of the House." Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, 4, 3491.

However, the second floor chamber continued to be used after the mid-1750s as a committee room. Two rooms for the use of committees of a 36- to 40-member Assembly would seem to be excessive, but committees of the Assembly played significant part in the legislative process of Pennsylvania during the 18th century.

Pennsylvania, like other colonies, patterned its system of committees on those in operation in the English House of Commons. The first Assembly meeting in Chester in 1682, appointed three permanent committees: Elections and Privileges, Justice and Grievances, and a Committee of Foresight to draft legislative bills. Other committees were created to meet specific needs as they occurred. By 1740 the number of permanent committees had grown to four--Accounts, Grievances, Correspondence, and Minutes. Other committees, such as one to inspect provincial laws and "report which of them had expired, or near expiring and ought to be reenacted; with . . . Opinion . . . what Amendments to them or others may be necessary" were created periodically.⁵⁴ The Committee on Correspondence had a provincial agent in London in the years after 1740. Ben Franklin often held this position. All committee members were nominated by the Speaker of the House, although any member could put forth additional nominations or dispute those made by the Speaker.

34. Sister Joan de Lourdes Leonard, "The Pennsylvania Assembly, 1682-1776," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 72 (1948), 237-38. Sister Leonard's article in two consecutive issues of the PMHB has also been published as a single pamphlet. It is the best brief treatment of the subject.

In addition to the four standing committees, the Assembly appointed select committees to expedite its business. Select committees, a creation of the House absolutely subject to its authority, were appointed for a specific purpose and could exercise only powers granted to them by the Assembly. Select committees were appointed for a variety of reasons--to amend bills following debate on the floor of the Assembly, investigate petitions and private bills, draw up bills, conduct investigations, carry messages to the governor, prepare addresses to the governor and King, and study the financial condition of the province. In addition to all the above they also could draw up articles of impeachment, conduct a census, distribute ammunition to frontier areas, prepare instructions for the delegates to the Continental congresses, visit and inspect the Philadelphia jail, and take care of Indian guests.³⁵ Select committees varied in size and length of life. Some, such as those that informed the governor and Council that the Assembly was organized, had a brief existence. Others, investigative committees and those charged with caring for Indian guests, might continue during the entire session. Usually there would be five or six members on such committees, but some had only two members while others numbered 14 or more. Generally they were kept small to aid in the efficient dispatch of business. The small size of select committees often made it feasible to meet in locations other

35. Ibid., pp. 386-87.

than the committee rooms in the State House. This was especially true before 1753 when select committees utilized the courthouse, private homes, the market place, or coffee houses or taverns. The last two were most often used when receiving public petitions or grievances.

Committees and committeework did much of the groundwork of the legislature and took up a considerable amount of time of the members. Members were excused from attendance at sessions if they were involved in committee work. When extremely important matters arose, they would be summoned by the sergeant-at-arms, but if all members were involved with committees the House would adjourn until some or all were finished.³⁶ Committees, then, were an important and integral part of the legislative system in Pennsylvania before 1776. The volume of work done would indicate that both the second floor Assembly Committee Room and the new and luxurious committee room and library, finished in 1753, were important parts of the colonial legislative process.

About six years before the end of the proprietary government, however, the second floor room ceased to be used as a committee room. In 1771 the southeast room was described as "unoccupied."³⁷ Three years later it had been turned into an armory for the militia companies of the City of Philadelphia--"In the room towards the East, the small arms of the

36. Ibid.

37. Rev. Jacob Duche, Caspipina's Letters Containing Observations on a Variety of Subjects Literary, Moral and Religious (2 vols., Dublin 1792), 1, 8-9.

city are deposited, which consist of between one and two thousand pieces all placed in a regular manner."³⁸ By May 1775 these arms had apparently been removed, for the Pennsylvania Assembly moved upstairs to the committee room when the delegates to the Second Continental Congress, upon invitation of the Assembly, convened in the east room on the first floor.³⁹

The Provincial Assembly, now totaling about 40, met in the committee room until shortly after the Declaration of Independence was adopted. The State constitutional convention met there and between July 14 and the end of September drew up a new frame of government. Under this new constitution, the State had a unicameral legislature. This body also held its meetings in the committee room. It returned to the same room after the British had evacuated Philadelphia in 1778. The next year the Assembly voted to remove the partition between the committee room and the long room and create a room equal in size to the Assembly Room directly below. When all 69 members were present, the 20 by 40 foot room would have been crowded. In this newly enlarged room the Pennsylvania legislature met. The Supreme Executive Council also used the room when conferring

38. In 1774 a schoolboy wrote the best description of the State House presently known. It was prepared for The Universal Magazine and Literary Museum of Robert Proud's Latin School. John W. Jordon (ed.), "A Description of the State House, Philadelphia, 1774," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 23 (January 1900), 418-19. Cited hereafter as PMHB.

39. The State House had been offered to the First Continental Congress in September 1774, but the members chose to use Carpenter's Hall instead. Since the Pennsylvania Assembly was always in session during part of September, the end of the legislative year, this could be taken as evidence that the arms had been removed from the east room second floor, by September 1774.

with the House, electing president and vice-president of the Commonwealth, or for conferences with the House and the States representatives in the Continental Congress meeting downstairs.

In June 1783 the Continental Congress left Philadelphia for Princeton because of the uneasiness of members over the mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line. For the next eighteen months the Assembly sought in vain to lure Congress back to the State House and, in hopes of their acceptance of offers made, remained in the second floor Assembly Room. In January 1785, the Congress moved to New York--from Princeton they had traveled to Annapolis and Trenton. By November 1, 1785, the Pennsylvania Assembly was back in the first floor chamber. The former Assembly Committee Room became the office of the surveyor-general of Pennsylvania.⁴⁰ Less than two years later, on September 4, 1787, the legislature moved back upstairs--this time to allow the Constitutional Convention to use the first floor room. This displacement lasted only two weeks. The Constitutional Convention completed its work on September 17. The Assembly then returned to their first floor chamber.

Two months later the upstairs room was the scene of the State convention meeting to debate and ratify the Federal Constitution. In February 1790 the movable Assembly shifted upstairs while the first floor was being used by a convention drafting a new State constitution for Pennsylvania. The

40. Colonial Records: Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council, 14, 583. This is the continuation of the Colonial Records cited earlier. The Colonial Records, in 14 volumes, cover the years from 1664 to 1790.

newly created State Senate used the east room on the second floor from 1790 to 1799. It also served for joint meetings of the House and Senate on such occasions as the swearing in of the governor, reports of Governor Thomas Mifflin on the state of the Commonwealth, and election of senators to the Federal Congress. During the last decade of the century, it was also used for private meetings on occasion and other events.⁴¹ From 1799 until 1802 the rooms were vacant. When Charles Willson Peale received permission to use all of the second and part of the first floor as a museum in 1802, he restored the three rooms to their alignment prior to 1775. The Assembly Committee Room was designated the Mammoth Room and later the Marine Room.

Of the three rooms on the second floor, the committee room has served the widest variety of purposes. Between the completion of the second floor in the last years of the 1740s until the Declaration of Independence in 1776, two of the rooms had had only one function--the Long Gallery for banquets and public entertainments and the Council Chamber as home for the Provincial Council. Within the same period the southeast room had already served as a committee room, armory, and home of the Provincial Assembly. For two of the rooms there is no question what they shall be when refurnished for the years before 1776. The historic rationale for refurnishing the third room as a committee room is not as

41. The above discussion of the history of the Assembly Committee Room after 1778 is based largely on a draft history of the second floor rooms prepared by a member of the staff at Independence National Historical Park (MQB) and loaned to me by Martin Yoelson, historian at Independence.

strong, but it does have a validity in the larger story of Independence Hall. Little is known about the **outside** appearance of the first floor Library Committee Room and there is apparently no present plan to reconstruct it. Thus the second floor Assembly Committee Room will illustrate the importance of committees in the legislative process of the Assembly of Pennsylvania. It could also provide a display area for the large number of books purchased between 1753 and 1776 and stamped Assembly of Pennsylvania in gilt letters on the outside cover. These books, now at Harrisburg, show the commitment that the men of the province had to learning. Finally it will reflect the major use of this room during the years before 1776.

Chapter 2

FURNISHING AND APPEARANCE OF THE SECOND FLOOR OF INDEPENDENCE HALL BEFORE 1776

During the summer of 1747 the Governor's Council Chamber was completed. In the next year or two the Long Gallery and committee room were also finished. All three rooms possessed cove ceilings, and possibly a plaster wall finish, surbase, and cornice. There was a single fireplace in both the Council Chamber and the Committee Room. The Long Gallery had a fireplace at each end of the room. Little more than this is known about the physical appearance of the three rooms. The schoolboy's description of 1774 notes the presence of a stucco "cornish" along the ceiling of the Long Gallery.¹

Utilized for public dinners and entertainments, the Long Gallery with its 2,000-square-foot area was admirably suited for that purpose. On many occasions more than two hundred people gathered to honor the King on his birthday, pay tribute to a departing member of the Provincial Council, receive a new lieutenant governor, or celebrate the repeal of an unpopular law. The largest and last banquet held in the Long Gallery was to honor the members of the First Continental Congress. About 500 gentlemen sat down to a late afternoon meal on September 16, 1774. The Long Gallery was also used for lectures and served as an access and waiting room for the Council Chamber and the second floor committee room.

Because large banquets were not a continuous occurrence the Long Gallery was not permanently set with tables, chairs, and benches; rather,

1. "A Description of the State House, 1774," PMHB, 23, 419.

it was a large open room with benches or chairs along the wall to accommodate visitors, including Indian delegations waiting to see the Provincial Council, and a few tables.

The tables and benches used for banquets were constructed for the occasion and taken down afterwards and stored. Building tables and benches for special needs was a common practice in Philadelphia during the years before and after the American Revolution. On July 28, 1735, Edmund Woolley, then involved in completion of the new State House, submitted an account in the amount of ten shillings and six pence (0.10.6.) for "work done to the tables and benches in the Court House, at the time of the entertainment of the proprietor."² Woolley was also responsible for "making tables in the long gallery of the State House for the entertainment of Governor Denne [sic] and for taking them down again. Also taking down the plasterers scaffold in the entry hall and clearing the state house above and below of the scaffold and table stuff [emphasis added] and stowing the same away in the State House cellar."³ General elections were held the first of October each year and the citizens of all or part of Philadelphia voted at the State House. On October 11, 1766, the city commissioners ordered payment to James Pearson, Carpenter, "for his Accot [of] boards, scantling, Nails, and Labor making benches,

2. Minutes of the Common Council, City of Philadelphia, 1704-76, p. 343.

3. Woolley's bill, dated August [September ?] 13, 1756, is in the Loan Office Accounts, Norris Papers, in the Manuscript Division of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Woolley and five other men worked 1 1/2 days on this project.

Tables, etc at the State House for the convenience of the inspectors at the late Election."⁴ Among other furnishings purchased for the State House after the British left it in disorder were benches for the Assembly. Michael Kuntz was paid £13.0.0 for making benches for the use of the Assembly on September 11, 1778.⁵ Marquis de Chastellux, Marquis de Lafayette, Vicomte de Noailles and several other Frenchmen visited a session of the Assembly of the State of Pennsylvania on December 5, 1780. They seated themselves on a bench to observe the proceedings.⁶

The exact form the benches and tables took is not precisely known. The benches, made of finished lumber, may or may not have been painted. They were doubtless without backs and well-constructed. The tables may have been boards nailed together and laid over the equivalent of sawhorses--these could be taken down and stored in the State House cellar as Woolley's 1756 voucher indicates. It seems more likely that the legs and tops were fastened together in some way so that the table was sturdy, but also easily disassembled for storage. One thing is certain--neither benches nor tables could be considered fancy. There may have been some fancier benches, such as those built for the Assembly in 1778, in the Long Gallery, but these would be there permanently rather than being built just for the

4. Misc. Papers, City Lots, etc., Philadelphia County, Vol. 3 (1762-1802), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

5. Comptroller General's Journal A-1 (1775-85) General Account of Revenues and Expenditures, Comptroller General's Papers, States Archives, Harrisburg.

6. Marquis de Chastellux, Travels in North America in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782, ed. Howard Rice, Jr. (2 vols., Chapel Hill, 1963), 1, 144.

occasion. The same might apply to a few of the tables permanently located in the Long Gallery. These tables would be used to display items of public interest when the hall was serving its more usual and prosaic function of ante-chamber or waiting room. They also could be utilized as serving tables during banquets. Benches would serve to seat most of those attending a banquet at the State House. The honored guest or guests and the ranking members of the assemblage would no doubt have used chairs. These probably would have been similar to the ones found in the first floor assembly room and possibly the chairs from the Assembly were pressed into service for such gatherings.

As with the tables and benches, we must use some imagination regarding the table coverings. Perhaps some of the same green baize that covered the tables in the Assembly room was utilized to cover the rough tables, or it may have been a simpler plainer cloth. The benches may also have been covered with cloth to hide their rough edges and present a slightly finer appearance. Eating utensils would have paralleled those used in the taverns and hotels of mid-century Philadelphia. There is evidence indicating that banquets were catered by local taverns, but no evidence that the province had the necessary supply of plates, cups, glasses, and cutlery. Whether they supplied table coverings in addition to, or instead of, the cloth presumably provided by the State is also unknown.⁷

7. Though the above description does not compare with more elaborate concepts of a state banquet, it would present an impressive appearance--cloth covered tables set with pewter, crockery and glass stretching nearly the full length of the hundred-foot hall. Solid wooden benches along the sides of the tables with chairs at the head table.

Though the celebration of the repeal of the Stamp Act took place at noon, most of the banquets were late afternoon or evening affairs with candles for illumination. For this purpose, candles could be placed along the table at intervals.⁸ But the Long Gallery was also used for balls and then candles would be placed above the festive crowd. Chandeliers were the answer. Charles W. Peale illuminated the second floor of the State House during the years it was a museum with five oil lighted chandeliers. Presumably an equal number of multi-candle overhead lights would have accomplished the same purpose.

Nine windows along the north side of the Long Gallery broke up the expanse of wall. The south wall, however, was solid except for the twenty-foot opening into the hallway at the head of the stairs and the doors leading into the committee room and Council Chamber. The wall was decorated with maps of the British holdings in North America and the continents of Europe, Africa and Asia. On May 22, 1746, Benjamin Franklin, clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly, wrote to his agent in London, William Straham, and ordered two of "Popples Map of the British

8. Philip Vickers Fithian, a Princeton graduate, was serving as tutor to the children of Robert Carter at Nomini Hall in Westmoreland County, Virginia, in 1773. Describing an evening meal in December of 1773 for approximately 22 people, he comments that the room "looked luminous and splendid; four very large candles burning on the table where we supped; three other in different parts of the room; a gay sociable assembly." John R. Williams, ed., Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal and Letters, 1767-1774 (First published in 1900, reprinted by Freeport, Books for Libraries Press, 1969), p. 65.

Empire in America with the French and Spanish Settlements adjacent thereto." One of these was to be bound and the other in sheets. The maps were for the Assembly. Franklin added a postscript requesting "some other large Maps of the whole World, or of Asia, or Africa, or Europe of equal size with Popple's to match it; they being to be hung, one on each side [of] the door in the Assembly Room; if none can be had of equal Size, send some Prospects of principal Cities, or the like, to be pasted on the Sides, to make up the Bigness."⁹

When the maps had not arrived after a year and a half, Franklin wrote to Strahan again, requesting "Popple's large One of North America pasted on Rollers; Ditto bound in a Book; and 8 or 10 other Maps of equal Size if to be had; they are for the Long Gallery and the Assembly Room in the Statehouse." Again Franklin stressed that, if the other maps were not as large as Popple's Map, they should be made larger by pasting "Prospects of Cities, Buildings, etc" around them.¹⁰ Eleven months later, on October 19, 1748, Franklin wrote to Strahan acknowledging the receipt of the maps.¹¹

Franklin's letters of May 1746 and November 1747 indicate quite clearly that at least two of the maps, Popple's map of North America and another one, were hung in the Assembly Room. Some, if not all, of the

9. Leonard W. Labaree, The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (12 vols., New Haven, 1959-), 3, 77.

10. Ibid., pp. 213-14.

11. Ibid., pp. 321.

eight or ten other maps were destined for the Long Gallery. These would have been framed and varnished or hung on rollers along the south wall of the Long Gallery or flanking the fireplaces at either end of the room.¹² All the maps were eight feet square, the size of Popple's map of North America.¹³

There may also have been some mirrors in the room. In 1780 a French officer, possibly Baron Cromot de Bourg, aide to Comte de Rochambeau, commander of the French army in America, described a "lady's hall or school where young ladies met to dance twice weekly." The officer notes that the hall is quite pretty, even though the British had stolen or carried away some twenty mirrors which ornamented the hall.¹⁴ It would seem reasonable that in a room used for balls as well as banquets there might have been a few mirrors along the walls.

The Long Gallery with benches along the walls, a few chairs, and some tables was basically an empty room. Because of the largeness of

12. During the last twenty years the staff at Independence National Historical Park have searched a vast number of repositories. As a result an impressive number of notecards are on file at the park. A search of these cards shows several references to payment by the State for the framing and varnishing of maps or the placement of maps on rollers. Though these postdate 1777, the method of preparing maps for display should not have changed radically between 1773 and 1781.

13. In a letter from John to Abigail Adams on August 13, 1776, he discusses the need for a knowledge of geography and lists the maps acquired by the War Department. At the end of the letter he makes passing reference to Popple's map. "Popples Map is not mentioned here, which was dedicated to Queen Anne, and is recommended by Dr. Hawley. It is the largest I ever saw and the most distinct. Not very accurate. It is Eight foot square. There is one in the Pensilvania [sic] State House." Lyman Butterfield (ed.), Adams Family Correspondence (2 vols., Cambridge, 1963), 2, 90.

14. "Diary of a French Officer," Magazine of American History, 6 (1880), 214.

the room and only two fireplaces, it was no doubt a cold room also. This chilliness may have communicated itself to the other two rooms on the second floor--the Council Chamber and the Assembly Committee Room.

Any chill in the Council Chamber would have been removed by a large fire in the fireplace. The lieutenant governor and councillors may have sat close to the hearth when their number permitted and there was no formal occasion requiring that they gather about the council table. Heating the 20 by 40 foot room would have presented some problems. In December of 1775 a tin-plated stove was purchased for the Council Chamber by the Committee of Safety.¹⁵ It is not known whether this was to replace one previously there or if the red blood of the patriots ran thinner than the blue blood of the provincial councillors and the former felt the need of additional heating. The fireplace in the Council Chamber, like those in the other two rooms of the second floor, would have had the andirons, shovel, and tongs required to maintain a warm fire.¹⁶

Though there were as many as 12 councilmen appointed by the Penn family, attendance usually totaled about eight plus the governor

15. In addition to the stove, a front door, two side doors, two front feet, a collar for the stove, a scrapper and a 43 1/4-pound iron plate were also purchased from Jacob Winey by the Committee of Safety. Comptroller General's Papers, State Archives, Harrisburg.

16. Much of what follows is based on logic or supposition, since no hard evidence of the exact furnishings of the Provincial Council Chamber has yet appeared. An attempt has been made to determine how the council chambers or upper houses in other colonies were furnished. This information has been used to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of the furnishings of the Council Chamber of the Pennsylvania State House.

and secretary to the Council. . . Because their work required a certain amount of reading and writing, the Council would have met around a large table. . . The governor of Virginia and his 12 councillors met around an oval table fourteen feet long and six feet wide.¹⁷ When the Maryland Provincial Council decided to furnish their chambers in November 1728 they ordered "a handsome table" for the room.¹⁸ The Maryland Provincial Council also contained as many as twelve members, but attendance averaged nine or ten plus the governor.¹⁹ Benjamin Chew, a member of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania for twenty years, makes passing reference to a "long table . . . as is usual in Publick Treaties" while describing the activities at the Easton Peace Conference with the Indians in October 1758.²⁰ There would also be a covering on the table. In Maryland the Council ordered the purchase of "a handsome Carpet for the said table" at the same time they determined to purchase the table. Virginia in 1703 ordered "a large turkey work Carpet for the table."²¹ In Pennsylvania, no doubt something of similar quality was purchased

17. Citations taken from the Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia and cited in The Capitol in Which the General Assembly of the Colony and Commonwealth of Virginia met from 1704 to 1779 (Williamsburg, 1934), p. 34. Cited hereafter as The Capitol . . . of Virginia From 1704-79.

18. Proceedings Council of Maryland, 1698-1731, Archives of Maryland, 25 (Baltimore, 1905), 504.

19. Newton D. Mereness, Maryland as a Proprietary Province (New York, 1901), p. 174.

20. "A Copy of Mr. Chew's Private Diary During the Treaty at Easton in October 1758," entry for October 11. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, as cited by Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 1696-1790: Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia, 1945), p. 537.

21. The Capitol . . . of Virginia from 1704-1779, p. 35.

by the Proprietor for use in the Council Chamber. Presumably the table covering was fancier than the green baize used elsewhere in the State House.

The Provincial Council of Pennsylvania on many occasions met with large groups of people such as delegations of Indians, the Provincial Assembly, or interested citizens. Such meetings necessitated additional seating in the Council Chamber. The members of the council had large fashionable chairs for their own use similar to those utilized by the Virginia and Maryland **councils**.²² William Penn and his descendants conferred with Indian delegations at Pennsbury, one of the Penn estates, seated in arm chair of British oak set on a low dais in a large room.²³ After the British occupation of Philadelphia the southwest room on the second floor was furnished with a dozen and a half Windsor chairs for the use of the Supreme Executive Council.²⁴

When conferring with large groups, additional seating may or may not have been provided, depending on the circumstances and the group. The Pennsylvania Assembly was often called to the Council Chamber to witness the signing of bills into law or hear an address by the governor. On such

22. There were two dozen cane arm chairs, one larger than the others, with 25 green pillows stuffed with hair in the Virginia Council Chamber. Maryland ordered one large elbow chair and twelve "fashionable, strong Russia Leather Chairs with high backs" in 1728. Proceedings Council of Maryland, Archives of Maryland, 25, 504.

23. Manuscript copy of a letter attached to the William Penn Chair in the Pennsylvania Hospital Library from Henry L. Drinker to Managers, Pennsylvania Hospital, May 7, 1810.

24. Colonial Records: Supreme Executive Council, 11, 535. The chairs were ordered on July 21, 1778, and on August 20, 1778, Francis Trumble was paid £64.2.6 for 19 Windsor Chairs. Ibid., p. 558.

occasions, the 30 or 40 men probably stood along the walls. The same would be true of the administering of the oath of office to the mayor of Philadelphia. Several times during the 1750s the Assembly was invited into the Council Chamber to be present at conferences with the Indians held in the upper room. Because such meetings were lengthy in nature, some provision must have been made to seat the members of the Assembly. It is very possible that benches were brought in from the Long Gallery on such occasions.

There is no direct mention in the minutes of the Provincial Council regarding how their aboriginal guests were seated or what provision was made for the interpreters and friends of the tribes such as Andrew Montour or Conrad Weiser. The Indians may have sat on the floor or on blankets or carpets provided by the Council. They, or at least their interpreters, could have occupied chairs or benches provided for the occasion. In August of 1760, Governor James Hamilton and the council conferred with the Nantycoke and Conoy Indians. On the 14th the Indian spokesman referred to clearing "the Floor, Seats, and everything in the Council Chamber that you may sit as clean and easy as before." The following day Governor Hamilton replied to the Indians, indicating his pleasure at seeing them and his desire to clear up any misunderstandings ("thick dark Clouds which have taken away the sight of the Sun and of one another"). Later in his reply Hamilton "cleans" the Indians' eyes, throats, and hearts that they may speak, see, and understand clearly--"and Likewise

wipe the Council Seats clean that you may sit easy with your Brethren, and confer with Them freely."²⁵ Benjamin Chew in his diary of the peace conference at Easton in 1758 describes a gathering of Quakers and Indians at the Lutheran Church: "I observed a large Assembly of Quakers and Inds sitting some round a long Table and others on benches behind with great Solemnity & as much form as is usual in Publick Treaties."²⁶

In addition to the large table and 12 to 18 chairs in the Council Chamber, there would have been a desk for the Secretary or Clerk to the Council as well as a case for the keeping of papers and other means of storing documents relating to the work of the Council. The clerk may also have used a small table to hold needed books and papers. During 1776 Isaac Powell was paid six pounds for making a nest of drawers for the Council Chamber²⁷ and four years later a writing desk, paper case, and several other items were made for the Supreme Executive Council by William McDowell at a cost of £577.2.6²⁸ The proprietors were noted for the meticulous record keeping and this doubtless was also practiced by the Council appointed by them.²⁹ The office of the Clerk

25. Ibid., 8, 492-94. Whether this was rhetoric or factual reference is hard to determine.

26. Chew as a long time member of the Council would be well acquainted with public treaties. "A Copy of Mr Chews Private Diary During the Treaty at Easton in October 1758," entry for October 11, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Cited in Wallace, Conrad Weiser, p. 557.

27. Comptroller General's Journal A-1 (1775-85), General Account of Revenues and Expenditures, Account No. 236, pp. 305 and 335. State Archives, Harrisburg.

28. Colonial Records: Supreme Executive Council, 12, 245.

29. There may have also been a desk for the governor, though no mention is made of it for the period before or after 1777.

of the Council and the Secretary of the Colony in Virginia during the first decade of the 1700s were furnished with "boxes or presses for preserving and keeping Records and papers" as well as desks.³⁰

Selected by the Proprietor from his trusty and well beloved friends, the Council was responsible for most of the executive work of administering the colony. All acts of the Council as well as actions taken by the Proprietor were entered in the Council Book.³¹ The minutes of the Council were also carefully recorded in the same large volumes. The governor and Council carried on considerable correspondence with the Proprietor in London, administrators in other colonies, and the various officials appointed by them to administer affairs in the province. The Council was responsible for ordering the printing of laws, certificates, warrants, proclamations, other documents relating to the business of the province. All these items in draft and finished form would have passed through the hands of the Clerk of the Council.³² When the provincial

30. The Capitol . . . of Virginia from 1704-1779, pp. 36-37.

31. Governor William Denny to Thomas Penn, Philadelphia, November 4, 1756. "I acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 12th July last, Original and Duplicate. The Repeals of the two Acts were as usual entered in the Council Book and sent to the house to be put on their Minutes, and then they were published, as you desire in the Gazette." Rev. H.L.L. Denny, "Memoir of his Excellency Colonel William Denny, Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania," PMHB, 44 (1920), 106.

32. Apparently the Clerk of the Council paid the costs of postage, stationery, and legal forms out of his own pocket and was reimbursed by the Council. Joseph Shippen paid £15.18.10½ for warrants, certificates, proclamations and stationery in 1772. Three years later the cost of these had increased to £18.3.0. Postage for letters mailed by the Governor and Council in 1775 totaled £12.14.4½. Shippen's salary as clerk was £30 per year. Colonial Records, Provincial Council, 10, 53-54 and 266.

authorities were supplanted by the newly established State government, they took all the records with them. In the spring of 1780, the State authorities called upon Joseph Shippen, Jr., to deliver "all Records, books, and papers belonging to the said office of the Secretary of the late Government of Pennsylvania, or show Cause . . . for his non-compliance." At the same time Edmond Physick, late receiver general under the Proprietors, was requested to produce the books, certificates, orders, and other documents, instruments, writings, and seals of office. On April 20, Shippen informed the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania that he had given all the records "belonging to the Office of the Secretary of the late Government" to John Penn. The Secretary of the Supreme Executive Council was ordered to secure the records from Penn.³³ Ultimately both John Penn, the last provincial governor, and Physick delivered the requested records and seals of office to the State government.

The Great Seal of the Province was affixed to every bill after the governor signed it. The newly passed law was then sent to the Rolls Office to be recorded. Edmund Physick received a yearly stipend as keeper of the Great Seal. On December 22, 1779, he surrendered it to the Supreme Executive Council, but requested that it be returned to him after the impression was defaced.³⁴ During the provincial period there is some possibility that the Great Seal of the Province was kept in the Council Chamber at certain times.

33. Ibid., 12, 280, 293, and 327.

34. Ibid., p. 205.

Nothing is definitely known regarding carpeting on the floor or drapes on the south-facing windows. It would seem logical that there would have been some sort of curtains or shades on the windows to break up the afternoon sun, especially in the winter months. Note has already been taken of the possibility that carpets were provided for Indian guests who chose to sit on the floor. Unfortunately the records of the Council and Assembly of Pennsylvania are silent on references to either carpet or curtains for the Council Chamber.

Evidence from other colonies indicates that the walls of the Council Chamber contained paintings of William Penn, the founder of the colony, other members of the Penn family, plus the King and Queen of England. In Maryland, like Pennsylvania a proprietary colony, the Council Chamber featured a full-length portrait of Queen Anne opposite the door and above the governor's chair. The opposite wall contained a full-length portrait of Lord Baltimore, Proprietor of Maryland.³⁵ In August 1782, Baron Von Closen stopped in Annapolis and described the new statehouse, completed about 1779, in his journal. The building contained "three immense rooms," one for the senate, another for the house and a third for archives and records. "There are some very beautiful paintings, among

35. "A Notice of Some of the First Buildings with Notes of Some of the Early Residents," Maryland Historical Magazine, 14, 264-65, as cited by Morris L. Radoff, Buildings of the State of Maryland at Annapolis, Publication No. 9, The Hall of Records Commission of State of Maryland (Annapolis, 1954), p. 50.

others those of the former Lords Baltimore, the first proprietors of this State."³⁶ In 1703 Queen Anne of England was requested to send her picture and arms to the governments of Virginia and New York. The following year, Virginia received both the portrait and arms and decided they should be kept in the Council Chamber.³⁷ In 1763, William Franklin, governor of New Jersey, was concerned about the lack of a portrait of George III or Queen Charlotte in the colonies. Apparently he had ordered the portrait before he left England in December 1762 to assume his new office. After letters in April and October to William Strahan, his agent in London, had not produced the painting, he wrote again on December 18, 1763: "I wish the King and Queen's pictures were finished as there is no picture of either of them (except the prints) yet sent to North America."³⁸ On February 18, 1765, Governor Franklin inquired about the portraits one last time.

The Provincial Council of Pennsylvania was the "upper house" of the legislature as well as being the executive branch. In the former capacity they had the same need of a library as the Assembly. The Council probably had a free-standing bookcase somewhere in the room containing basic

36. Evelyn Acomb, ed., The Revolutionary Journal of Baron Ludwig von Closen, 1780-1783 (Chapel Hill, 1958), p. 219

37. The Capitol . . . of Virginia From 1704-1779, p. 34.

38. Charles H. Hart, ed., "Letters From William Franklin to William Strahan," PMHB, 35 (1911), 434. In a footnote, Hart explains that the portrait Franklin was interested in was a full-length work by Alexander Ramsey. Originally painted by order of the King for the Province of Pennsylvania, it was never sent because of the increasing troubles brewing between colonies and George III. In the middle of the 19th century it was purchased by Joseph Harrison, Jr., and brought to America. In 1911 it was hanging in Independence Hall.

references, chiefly legal, such as the Laws of Pennsylvania, commentaries on English common law, Votes of the Assembly, and compilations of laws that affected the colonies. The Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in 1777 purchased Burne's Justice and Blackstone's Commentaries for their use.³⁹ This may have been to replace books removed by the Proprietor or Council when they ceased to operate in 1775. On April 9, 1775, Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts visited Williamsburg, Virginia, and commented on the "commodious" State House. The Council Chamber "is furnished with a large well chosen, valuable collection of books, chiefly of law."⁴⁰ William Franklin, newly appointed governor of New Jersey in 1763, was informed that he should have or provide folio common prayer books for all 12 members of the Council.⁴¹ A Bible or Bibles would also have been in the Council chamber.

Often the Council met into the evening hours or at night and candles were used. Presumably there was a single candlestick at the place of each councillor and a candelabrum in the center to provide additional light.⁴² Candles would also stand on the desk of the clerk and on any other small side tables in the room.

39. Colonial Records: Supreme Executive Council, 11, 177.

40. Josiah Quincy, Jr., Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior, of Massachusetts, 1744-75 (Boston, 1874), p. 97.

41. Hart, ed., "Letters of W. Franklin to Strahan," PMHB, 35, 426.

42. The Maryland Council Chamber was lighted by "a handsome wooden lacquered Branch for 12 candles and 12 Single Brass Sconces for the said Room." Proceedings Council of Maryland, Archives of Maryland, 25, 504.

In addition to the major items mentioned above, there would be such minor furnishings as ink wells, quill pens, sealing wax, scrap paper, black sand, and ink in the room.⁴³ A pair of globes would stand somewhere reflecting the interest held by men of the 18th century in exploration and astronomy.⁴⁴ The Provincial Councillors, as educated and wealthy individuals, would possess a considerable interest in such subjects.

Dividing the Council Chamber from the Assembly Committee Room to the east was the twenty-foot-square entry hall at the head of the grand staircase. Like its counterpart downstairs, there was no furniture in this area and it served merely as a passage way into the Long Gallery and the other two rooms.

Committee work was an important part of the legislative process in colonial Pennsylvania. The First use of the Assembly Committee Room is not known, but it is generally assumed that the room was completed about the same time as the Council Chamber. Several years later a Library Committee Room was added to the southeast of the Assembly Chamber on the first floor. During the next twenty years, these two rooms served the

43. The items mentioned were some of those purchased for the Council Chamber between October 12, 1776, and March 13, 1777. State Treasurer Accounts, 1777, State Archives, Harrisburg.

44. Sometime between 1775 and 1783, Nicholas Weaver was paid for making covers for a pair of globes belonging to the Council Chamber. Comptroller General's Waste Book, 1775-83, Comptroller General Papers, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg. See also the description of the Assembly Committee Room.

standing and select or special committees of the Pennsylvania Assembly. The first floor chamber was far more elegant than its second floor counterpart. Designed for both comfort and convenience, it probably was the most luxurious room in the State House. The room upstairs was much more utilitarian in decor and furnishings.⁴⁵

Committees of the Pennsylvania Assembly ranged in size from two to 14 members. It is obvious that two or more committees could utilize the 20-by-40-foot upstairs chamber at the same time without disturbing each other. In contrast to Pennsylvania, the Virginia Capitol contained three committee rooms--the smaller one was furnished with a single large table, while the two larger ones each had three oval tables nine feet long and six feet broad.⁴⁶ In view of this it is suggested that the Committee Room of the State House be furnished with two or possibly three tables of the same approximate size. Master Carpenter Edmund Woolley was charged with the construction of the Committee Room Library as well as the tower and belfry of the State House. When he submitted his bill for his work, he included the building of "ye Committee room together with the Bookcases, table, the Entry, and all other Woodwork as it now stands."⁴⁷ This indicates the presence of at least one table

45. Very little is definitely known about the furnishings of the Assembly Committee Room. The discussion below is based completely on the furnishing of the committee rooms at Williamsburg, common sense, and the few facts we have regarding the Library Committee Room and second floor Committee Room.

46. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1703, as cited in The Capitol: In Which the General Assembly of the Colony and Commonwealth Met From 1704-1779 (Williamsburg, 1934), p. 33.

47. Miscellaneous Accounts and Small Account Book, Norris Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

in the first floor committee room. Unfortunately we do not know either its size or shape.

Between a half-dozen and ten chairs could be placed about each of the tables in the second floor room. These probably would be a combination of the rush-bottom chairs used by the Assembly before 1760 and the Windsor chairs which became popular after that date. Since the Committee Room was used only intermittently, it is very possible that the older chairs would have predominated.⁴⁸

In addition to the chairs and tables the most noticeable furnishings in the room would be the bookcases and books. The glass-front cases would occupy most of the north wall of the Assembly Committee Room. In 1774, the Library Committee Room was described as follows:

From this [Assembly] room you go through a back door into the Assembly's library, which is a very elegant apartment. It is ornamented with a stucco ceiling, and chimney pieces. Round the room are glass cases, in which the books are deposited. These books consist of all the laws of England made in these later years, and besides these history and poetry. The Assembly only have recourse to this Library. There is likewise deposited a most beautiful bust in way of Thomas Penn Esqr, one of the Proprietors of the Province.⁴⁹

Because the Continental Congress held its meetings in private, it was necessary for members of the Pennsylvania Assembly, after 1775, to seek permission to enter the first floor Assembly Room each time they needed

48. The presence of rush-bottom chairs in the State House as late as 1776 is borne out by William M. Horner. In his classic Blue Book of Philadelphia Furniture, William Penn to George Washington (Philadelphia, 1935), p. 304, Horner cites a bill from John Fiss on March 30, 1776, "for making 6 chair bottoms," presented to the Province for payment.

49. J. W. Jordon, ed., "A Description of the State House," PMHB, 23. 418.

a book from the Library Committee Room. By 1778, the Pennsylvania Assembly grew tired of this inconvenient arrangement and voted to relocate at least part of the library upstairs in their newly expanded quarters. John McCulloh in December 1778 and January 1779 installed bookcases, using pine boards for the shelves and cedar for the outside frame.⁵⁰ Like the bookcases downstairs, these were no doubt locked or latched in some manner to protect the books.⁵¹

The library accumulated by the Assembly was the most impressive legislative library in the colonies. Most of the books were acquired at the same time as the Library Committee Room was finished. On January 16, 1753, the assembly ordered Speaker Isaac Norris and Benjamin Franklin to "procure such Books and Maps as they may think suitable and necessary for the Use of this House."⁵² In September of the same year, Norris was paid £850 for purchase of books and Franklin was reimbursed £292.3.6 for money he had expended on books and maps for the Assembly.⁵³ The expenditure of nearly £1,150 provided a good foundation for the legislative library. Other books were added in the years that followed. On January 15, 1767, the clerk of the Assembly was ordered to make a catalogue of all the

50. A study of McCulloh's bill shows that he used 279 feet of pine board and 46 feet of cedar, thus indicating that the book cases were built chiefly of pine. McCulloh worked 39 days on the library. John M'Culloh's bill, State House Papers, Public Records Office, Harrisburg. The total bill of £121.2.4 was paid on February 13, 1779. Report of the Committee of Public Accounts, Records of the Comptroller General, Public Records Office, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

51. Evidence indicates that this was true of the Library Committee Room.

52. Pennsylvania Archives, Eighth Series, 4, 3543.

53. Ibid., 3607-08.

books in the library and each book was then to be stamped with the words, Assembly of Pennsylvania in gilt letters on the outside cover.⁵⁴ In addition to the volumes of law, history, and poetry found in the library there were bound volumes of the minutes of the Assembly, labeled "Votes of the Assembly" on the spine⁵⁵ and the codified laws of Pennsylvania. By the 1770s the books accumulated by the Pennsylvania Assembly had reached impressive proportions. Most, if not all, of them were saved from the British during the war and ultimately went to Harrisburg when the capital was transferred there in 1799. They remain there today.⁵⁶ The maps purchased for the library were no doubt bound in folio volumes or stored as single sheets in a cabinet in the library, since they were intended for use by the Assembly. A few may have been hung on the walls as decoration.

In addition to the books, maps, and map cases, the chamber probably contained a pair of globes. In March 1773, Josiah Quincy, Jr., of Massachusetts was visiting the southern colonies for his health. While in Charleston he visited the public library there and commented on the

54. Ibid., 7, 5960.

55. The Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania covered the years from 1682 to 1776 in six volumes. The first three, from 1682 to 1750, were printed by B. Franklin and D. Hall between 1752 and 1754. The last three were printed in 1775-76 by Henry Miller.

56. It is hoped that these volumes may be put on permanent loan to the National Park Service for use in the refurnished Committee Room.

"large collection of very valuable books, prints, globes, etc."⁵⁷

When Franklin established the Philadelphia Library Company in the 1740s, Proprietor Thomas Penn donated the land and also gave "some telescopes, two globes, and a machine for display of electricity."⁵⁸

Beyond the major items mentioned above, there would have been a number of minor furnishings necessary to the work of committees of a legislature. The tables were covered with some type of cloth, possibly the same green baize utilized elsewhere in the State House. Quill pens, ink, and paper would be readily available, for it was in committee that bills and laws were drafted. Some sort of curtains or shades covered the window to block out the sun shining in from the south. Candlesticks and candles stood on the table to provide light for late afternoon or evening sessions.

Candles used by the committeemen of the Assembly as well as those used to light the gala balls held in the Long Gallery and to illuminate the sessions of the governor and Council were of four types. The most expensive, and most preferred, were spermaceti candles. Made of the

57. Josiah Quincy, Junior, Memoir of the Life of Josiah Quincy, Junior, of Massachusetts, 1744-1775 (Boston, 1874), p. 78. Quincy was a lawyer in Boston who, along with John Adams, defended the British soldiers accused of the Boston Massacre. He died in 1775.

58. Peter Kalm was a Swedish scientist who traveled in the British colonies from September 1748 to February 1751. Though he went as far south as Virginia and north into Canada, much of his time was spent in the middle colonies. He left some excellent descriptions of life in Pennsylvania during this period. Adolph Benson, ed., Peter Kalm's Travels in North America (2 vols., New York, 1966), 2, 638.

fat formed in the brain and head of the whale, the candles were very white and nearly translucent. These candles burned as brightly as tallow candles, if not more so, and at about the same rate. Their advantages included the fact that they never needed to be snuffed, did not drip, and would not soften in warm weather or when held in the hand. In 1749 spermaceti candles sold for two shillings, nine pence per pound, four times as expensive as tallow candles, the second most preferred type.⁵⁹ Tallow candles made of the rendered fat of cattle and sheep were used by most. Wax candles were the third most popular type. Bayberry candles, by 1749 being made in small quantity, ranked last.⁶⁰

The candle-lit capitol of Pennsylvania was host and witness to many events during the 60-plus years that it served as first a provincial and then a State capitol. It also hosted meetings of men from all the colonies which drew up a philosophical statement of our grievances with England, governed the new nation, and formulated the federal constitution that exists today. In all these functions, the rooms on the second floor

59. Tallow candles sold for eight pence a pound. Benson, Peter Kalm's Travels in North America, 2, 664. According to Dr. John D. R. Platt, research historian in the Office of History and Historic Architecture stationed at Independence National Historical Park, there were 20 shillings in a pound and 12 pence to a shilling in Colonial Pennsylvania.

60. Ibid., pp. 664-65.

played a part as ballroom and banquet hall, meeting place of the executive council, committee chamber and temporary home of the State Assembly. These rooms were both observer and participant in the historic events of the years before 1800.

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Much of the manuscript material cited in this report was taken from the large collection of research cards at Independence National Historical Park. During the past twenty years the historians assigned there have performed a vast amount of archival research and transferred their findings to these cards. The citations within the report are to the records themselves, but needless to say in the two months allowed for research and writing of this report it would have been impossible to check all the archival resources cited. The presence of this large file of research cards made it possible to complete the work in such a short period.

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