

A Loyalist Homestead in a World Turned Upside Down

Donald Sherblom

The sun was setting and eighteen-year old Mary Grandin Vought was about to give birth. She had reason to be apprehensive. Her sister-in-law Christiana had died in childbed six months earlier. Mary and her husband John had taken Christiana's infant son into their household. As darkness enveloped their farmstead, Mary's contractions grew stronger and more frequent until nine o'clock, when the cries of a newborn pierced the night. John and Mary named her Christiana. When she reached age eighteen, Christiana kept a journal of the Vought family's return from exile to the new United States of America. As Mary lay with her newborn daughter on this mid-September 1773 night, a decade of controversy over Parliamentary authority was coming to a head. In Philadelphia, men were organizing to stop the import of East India Company tea. When the *Polly* sailed up the Delaware in October with a tea shipment, activists persuaded the captain to return his cargo to England. Inspired by their resistance, in December a crowd in Boston boarded ships and dumped cases of East India Company tea into the harbor. The dispute roiling Atlantic seaports would soon spread and develop into rebellion, disrupting the peaceful lives of farmers here in Lebanon Township, New Jersey.

Parliament responded to the destruction of tea in Boston with the Coercive Acts, which closed that port to shipping, revoked the province's charter, and prohibited town meetings, thereby punishing an entire colony for the actions of a crowd. Revoking the charter set a dangerous precedent; if Parliament could cancel one colony's fundamental law, no province was safe, no rights protected from the over-reach of distant legislators. Rural New Jersey was drawn into this mounting crisis as local committees sent aid to the people of Boston. The

American crisis divided communities, especially in the middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. Here the controversy and the push for independence entailed a civil war among neighbors. The Vought's friend and neighbor Thomas Jones represented Hunterdon County in the Provincial Congress, which endorsed the Continental Congress in Philadelphia. Christiana was but three when her father John and grandfather Christopher Vought rode off with seventy-five Hunterdon loyalists to join the loyalist New Jersey Volunteers as the British Army swept through New Jersey in December 1776. Washington's retreating continental troops barely escaped across the Delaware in boats collected by Daniel Bray and Thomas Jones of the Hunterdon militia. Christopher and John became local leaders of those who remained loyal while Thomas Jones joined the rebel cause; once close neighbors on opposing sides at war.

Tradition holds that when the British surrendered at Yorktown in 1781, their band played "A World Turned Upside Down." In New Jersey, loyal British Americans experienced that reversal of fortunes much earlier, when Washington re-crossed the Delaware in the winter of 1776. His unexpected victories at Trenton and Princeton revived the failing rebellion and prompted British troops to withdraw from most of New Jersey. Patriots resumed control of a province with widespread loyalist sympathies and overwhelming British forces at its borders. With so many farmers serving in the patriot militia or royal provincial troops, the role of managing their farms fell to their wives. Christopher Vought's wife Cornelia and John's wife Mary managed the 488-acre Vought farm as the wives of loyal British Americans under the increasing dominion of a patriot government, in a world turned upside down.

During the American Revolution's early and most vulnerable years, from the decision to declare independence to the victory at Saratoga that prompted the 1778 French alliance, New Jersey was the primary theatre of war. In this contested territory, with a restive loyalist minority and internecine warfare, the scene of major continental battles and frequent enemy incursions, "under the shadow of the British Army's mighty garrison in New York City" the new state struggled to assert its authority, raise taxes and organize the militia.¹ The experience of the Vought family, Christopher and John who became locally prominent loyalists, and Cornelia and Mary Grandin Vought who dealt with the new regime, reveals how a newly independent state emerged and established its authority in these first crucial years of upheaval. It also provides an unusual example of the widespread experience of colonial wives managing their husbands' farms during the war, an experience that combined with revolutionary ideals gave impetus to greater social and political equality in the new republic.

~ ~ ~

Christiana was born that September 1773 night in the stone house her grandfather, Christopher Vought built in 1759. It was an impressive two-and-a-half-story colonial facing south toward the Brunswick pike, set well back from the road. A brick chimney rose from each end of its cedar shake roof. Next door to the east, Thomas Jones kept a tavern, the site of township meetings, where travelers along the great road from New Brunswick to Easton stopped for refreshment, sharing news from distant towns. Behind the house was a good barn, outbuildings and a newly purchased 203-acre wooded parcel. The now 488-acre Vought

¹ Calhoun, Robert McCluer "The Suppression of the Loyalists in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey" in *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America 1760-1781*. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 402.

farmstead “was under good cultivation, 165 acres were in tillage, 25 acres of meadow, and the rest timber.”²

From the fields around the house, where dozens of sheep, hogs, and cows grazed, the Vought farm stretched west, across the Raritan River, above the union of the Raritan and Spruce Run where David McKinney built a stone milldam. The boundary ran north along the river to Allen’s Union Iron Works, where river water powered the bellows at the furnaces and worked the slitting mill. By 1773, John Allen owned the iron works. He was the son of William Allen, an ally of the Penn proprietors and one of the wealthiest men in Philadelphia, who had started the iron plantation with his partner Joseph Turner in 1742. At the height of its production, the Union Iron Works shipped tons of pig iron, wrought iron, and refined anchonies from two furnaces and a forge, and finished products such as rods and nails from the slitting mill, by wagon to the Delaware and downriver to Philadelphia. This rural enclave of woodcutters, charcoal colliers, ore miners, furnace workers, and teamsters, a mix of wage earners, indentured immigrants and enslaved workers, provided a ready market for local farm produce. The Vought farm sold wheat and butter at the company store. Transportation links to Philadelphia, and to New York via sloops from New Brunswick, allowed farmers to send wheat and other farm produce to those port cities and to international markets.

Given John Allen’s ties to the Philadelphia merchant firm of Allen and Turner, farmers in rural Lebanon Township had access at the store to a variety of imported goods from across the empire, including fine textiles that competed with homespun fabrics. Christopher and John

² William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family, being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 9.

bought silks, molasses, rum, tea, and sugar. They also purchased flints, gunpowder, shot, clay pipes, snuff, and cards for making woolens. John bought a pair of silver buckles.³ As T. H. Breen notes, colonists were drawn into the Atlantic trade and participated in a consumer revolution decades before the War for Independence. “As individuals they celebrated the comforts of a new and expanded material culture.”⁴ Their importance as consumers also gave colonists leverage to force repeal of Parliamentary laws through boycotts as early as the 1765 Stamp Act and to resist their colonial status over the next decade. Boycotts also created a political environment in which “private decisions about mundane purchases became matters of public judgment.” Consumer sacrifice united strangers across the colonies in a common cause, and divided them from the perceived enemies of American liberty.⁵

Both the Vought family’s cultural heritage and the influence of the British Atlantic world are evident in the house Christopher built, with its blend of Germanic and British architecture. The gable-end chimneys and center hall floor plan are typically British while the “wattle and daub” decorative plaster ceilings, built on a lattice of woven twigs not lathe, and geometric patterns scribed into the ceilings of four rooms reflect the Vought’s Palatine German heritage. Other Palatine homes had ceilings with symmetrical patterns but this home’s center hall called forth a uniquely linear design: A plaster serpent slithers down the hall ceiling to the foyer and partway back, its head turned to face the front door. Ornamental plaster ceilings, chair rails

³ *Lebanon Store Daybook, December 1770-May 1772*, Hunterdon County Historical Society, Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library.

⁴ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199.

⁵ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 200.

and moldings set off the Vought family's fine furniture, which included a dining table and chairs, a chest of drawers, a valuable great clock, and of course, a tea table.

The Vought family's assimilation into British Atlantic culture crossed religious lines. Christopher Vought was a Palatine Lutheran, his wife Cornelia was Dutch. Their daughter Christiana married a Lutheran minister while her brother John wed Mary Grandin, whose parents were Quakers, at a local Anglican church. About the time John and Mary were married in November 1772, Christopher Vought was feeling his age; he retired and made over his property to John, who became the head of their household. As the new patriarch, John Vought held the property and made decisions for the family.

John and Christopher were both prominent farmers and leaders in Lebanon Township. Christopher had been a road commissioner. John Vought was elected town clerk at the annual township meeting held at Jones' Tavern in March 1774, a year of controversy in British America over the Coercive Acts, which led to a Continental Congress in Philadelphia that fall. New Jersey's Assembly chose delegates to this extra-legal Continental Congress, which approved a boycott of British imports until Parliament repealed the Coercive Acts. This non-importation agreement would rely on associations, county and township committees that would enforce the boycott by pressuring reluctant inhabitants to join the Association. John Vought did not support this boycott of British goods but "signed an Association and attended the training of the Militia" because he "durst not declare his sentiments."⁶ He remained active

⁶ William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family; being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 9.

in township politics and was re-elected “town clerk” in March 1775, a month before the outbreak of war at Lexington and Concord.⁷

Local committees also elected men to attend New Jersey’s extra-legal Provincial Congress. In January 1775, the Vought’s neighbor, Thomas Jones was among those chosen to attend New Jersey’s Congress. These committees included previously uninvolved men and every member of the legal Assembly, except the speaker, Cortland Skinner and Richard Lawrence, a Quaker from Monmouth County, which gave the Provincial Congress an aura of legitimacy.⁸ However, the formation of local committees also “altered the political chemistry in the cities, towns, and counties of America. It was on this level that ordinary men and women declared their independence.”⁹ As prospects for reconciling differences with the mother country receded over the next year, the Provincial Congress chosen by local committees displaced New Jersey’s legal Assembly. The boycott of British goods, obligatory militia drills and taxation by New Jersey’s Provincial Congress brought the imperial crisis home to New Jersey’s farmers. The sale or consumption of British imports in violation of the boycott invited action by local committees and men like Thomas Jones. Turning out for militia drills also became a political act, especially when the outbreak of war heightened tensions within communities.

The war had begun at Lexington and Concord just before the second Continental Congress convened in Philadelphia in May 1775. In June, the battle of Bunker Hill proved a

⁷ New Jersey Archives, Hunterdon County elections, Box 7 items 21, 23.

⁸ Larry R. Gerlach, *Prologue to Independence, New Jersey in the Coming of the American Revolution*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 212.

⁹ T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 326.

costly victory for the British. The Continental Congress authorized the invasion of Canada to bring that province into the resistance. Montreal was taken but the patriot army failed at Quebec. Cannons from Fort Ticonderoga, which fell to patriot forces, were sledged to heights above Boston. This forced the British to evacuate that city for Halifax, Nova Scotia. By the end of this first year of warfare, New Jersey's William Franklin was the only one of seven royal governors not to have gained the protection of a British warship.

A rural colony with no major ports, New Jersey had been peripheral to the agitation churning port cities and the battles fought in New England. All that was about to change as John and Mary Vought hosted the wedding of Mary's sister Jane Grandin to Jonathan Furman at their impressive stone farmhouse in April 1776. Once reinforced, Howe's troops were poised to descend on the inhabitants of New York and New Jersey. Lebanon Township was drawn inexorably into the continental crisis being debated in Philadelphia when the Continental Congress resolved that royal authority in each colony be "totally suppressed and all the powers of government exerted under the authority of the people."¹⁰ May elections to New Jersey's Provincial Congress effectively became a referendum on independence. Although "a decided majority of New Jerseyans favored the curtailment of Parliamentary authority over the North American colonies, most also strongly opposed the establishment of an independent nation."¹¹ Hunterdon moderates and loyalists succeeded in electing Union Iron Works owner John Allen to the Provincial Congress. John's sister Anne was married to Governor Penn. His brother Andrew Allen was Pennsylvania's attorney general and served in

¹⁰ http://www.founding.com/founders_library/pageID.2349/default.asp, accessed May 15, 2014

¹¹ Larry R. Gerlach, *Prologue to Independence, New Jersey in the Coming of the American Revolution*. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1976), 320.

the Continental Congress as a strong advocate for reconciliation with Great Britain, a role John Allen would play during his brief tenure as a Deputy for Hunterdon in New Jersey's Provincial Congress.

When the Provincial Congress met in June, it considered a petition from Hunterdon County inhabitants protesting John Allen's election, asking that Congress overturn the ballot.¹² Patriots held a large majority in the new Congress, which considered the petition but upheld the legitimacy of Allen's election. To prepare the defense of New York City and coastal New Jersey, the Provincial Congress summoned men to attend militia drills. In Lebanon Township, Joseph Lee, a manager at the Union Iron Works, and John Vought were among those who refused to serve in the patriot militia. According to Lee, they were "repeatedly summoned to attend the trainings and other publick meetings of the Militia which they from principles of Loyalty as often refused, and in consequence thereof were subject to fines and ameracements to a great amount." Determined "not to take up arms against their Lawful sovereign they openly opposed the officers of the Militia and for sometime avoided their usurpation."¹³ The Congress learned of the disturbances in Hunterdon County and ordered John Vought and three others to appear before them.¹⁴ Years later, John testified he had "attended the training of the militia," but when his company was drafted to serve in the militia, "to a man they refused

¹² *Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: Naar, Day, & Naar, 1879), 452.

¹³ W. Bruce Antliff (ed.), *Loyalist Settlements 1783–1789, New Evidence on Canadian Loyalist Claims* (Archives of Ontario, 1985), 44-45.

¹⁴ *Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: Naar, Day, & Naar, 1879), 465.

to turn out. After this he was ill-used as they blamed him and Captain Lee for the company not serving. He resisted and raised men, and returned the ill usage.”¹⁵

A visitor to Lebanon Township reported in June the militia companies were “Not above half full although Some of the Companies have Augmented the Bounty to Eight pounds.” Practical concerns like the seasonal needs of farm work motivated some of the resistance. Since their families could not survive without them during planting season, “there are Numbers of Tennants that Say if they are take[n] away at this Season of Year they may as Well knock their famalys in the head for that they will be Ruined.”¹⁶ Some resistance was due to the perceived illegitimacy of the extra-legal Provincial Congress and took a form of protest familiar to the previous generation, which had witnessed New Jersey’s land riots.

Starting in 1742, the West Jersey Society leased then sold land to Allen & Turner for the Union Iron Works. Some of that land had been cleared by families who claimed title to the farms they had cultivated. Eviction suits led to riots, especially, in the “3,100 acres leased to Allen and Turner in the vicinity of Spruce Run. The wood lots which were being cut over to provide fuel for the iron furnace built by Allen and Turner were claimed by squatters who had previously settled on the tract.”¹⁷ The manager of the iron works, Colonel John Hackett and his men arrested several squatters. While they were jailed in Trenton, a club-wielding mob

¹⁵ William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family, being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 9.

¹⁶ Edward Thomas, “From Edward Thomas Lebanon Township about 40 miles W . . . June 30: 1776 Hunterdon County,” in Carl E. Prince (ed.), *The Papers of William Livingston, Volume 1, June 1774-June 1777*, (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1979), 59.

¹⁷ Peter O. Wacker, *Land and People: A Cultural Geography*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1975), 361.

gathered, attempted to break them out, but failed. The club men then attacked and pulled down a structure at the Union Iron Works.¹⁸

New Jersey's land disputes began in East Jersey, occasionally drawing crowds of over 200 people, and "acts of collective violence quickly spread from the New York border south to Trenton. Hundreds of yeomen engaged in violence against the colony's gentry, their clients and tenants, and royal officials."¹⁹ The term club men came to illustrate "how self-imposed limits on collective action operated. Land claimants refused to carry guns or swords, even when they knew their opponents were armed."²⁰ Club men acted as loyal subjects protecting their community from the illegitimate actions of local authorities. These "instances of popular disorder became prima facie indictments not of the people, but of authority. In 1747, for example, New Jersey land rioters argued that 'from their numbers, Violences and unlawful Actions' it was 'to be inferred that . . . they are wronged & oppressed, or else they would never rebell agt. the Laws'."²¹

During the turmoil of the land riots, Christopher Vought had paid rent to and later purchased land from a proprietor of the West Jersey Society, which had prevailed in the disputes. A generation later, John Vought led local farmers and ironworkers who protested the Provincial Congress' usurpation of royal authority as 'club men' with similar self-limited violence. On Friday June 21, New Jersey's Congress addressed the question of what to do

¹⁸ Charles S. Boyer, *Early Forges and Furnaces in New Jersey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), 236.

¹⁹ Brendon McConville, *These Daring Disturbers of the Public Peace, The Struggle for Property and Power in Early New Jersey*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 454.

²⁰ Thomas L. Purvis, *Origins and Patterns of Agrarian Unrest in New Jersey, 1735-1776*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1986), 215.

²¹ Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution, Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1991), 22.

with the former royal governor, since Mr. Franklin had “refused to answer the questions put to him, denying the authority of this body, which he alleged had usurped the king's government in this Province.” It resolved “William Franklin be confined in such place and manner as the Honourable Continental Congress shall direct.” The Provincial Congress then resolved to form a new government “pursuant to the recommendation of the Continental Congress.”²² As the push for independence gained momentum, those who held to the goal of reconciliation with Britain had little recourse. The vote for a new government was the final straw for John Allen. He was one of only three who voted against this motion. He stopped attending the Provincial Congress after Friday’s vote and returned home to the Union.

He returned to a Lebanon Township already in turmoil where instead of bringing their muskets to a militia muster held “to Recruit men, one half of Two Companies Came with Clubs, Colonel Johnson was knocked down by them & was Afterwards Obligated to Retreat, the Same day one of the Capts. Was much beat by them.”²³ Monday, June 24 1776, was the highpoint of local resistance to independence. About midnight John Vought and Joseph Lee led two dozen club-wielding men to the tavern of former Congressman and militia Captain Thomas Jones where they came upon and beat John Shurts. Captain Jones heard Shurts’ cries for help, grabbed his gun, and ran up from the basement. Outnumbered, Jones trained his gun on the club men and ordered them to leave or he would “blow their Brains out. They answered Gd Dam him he presents his Gun at us, & twisted it out of his hands & beat him on

²² *Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: Naar, Day, & Naar, 1879), 470, 471.

²³ Edward Thomas, “From Edward Thomas Lebanon Township about 40 miles W . . . June 30: 1776 Hunterdon County,” in Carl E. Prince (ed.), *The Papers of William Livingston, Volume 1, June 1774-June 1777*, (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1979), 59.

the head & sundry parts of his body w' their Clubs." He broke away and ran into the house but John Vought and the other club men "broke open the outside door and several inside doors . . . and threatened to kick his wife if she did not tell them where he was." After they left, Jones staggered down the stairs with his wife's help to find they had also stolen twenty pounds from the bar.²⁴ The Provincial Congress ordered the arrest of Christopher and John Vought, Joseph Lee and the others. They were held in jail until the end of July then faced a trial before the newly renamed legislature that had ordered their arrest. The Convention heard charges against these "disaffected and dangerous persons . . . considered the several matters alleged and proved relative to the said charges" and levied fines of one hundred pounds each on Christopher Vought, John Vought, and Joseph Lee and smaller fines on the other men.²⁵

A similar club man uprising took place at a militia muster in Upper Freehold, Monmouth County, where Anthony Woodward "exhorted the crowd, claiming that the rebel merchants 'oppressed them by Raising [prices] upon their Goods more than England would do,' and that those who refused to sign the Continental Association were disenfranchised." These farmers' genuine "complaints about harassment, disenfranchisement, fines, and compulsory oath taking were intermingled with more questionable ones such as a plot by Whig merchants to inflate prices and outrageous rumors regarding rebel leaders."²⁶ The provincial Congress ordered these Monmouth County club men to appear before them and bond themselves to

²⁴ Hunterdon County, New Jersey, miscellaneous court record number 5716.

²⁵ *Minutes of the Provincial Congress and the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton: Naar, Day, & Naar, 1879), 527.

²⁶ David J. Fowler, "Loyalty is Now Bleeding in New Jersey, Motivations and Mentalities of the Disaffected" in *The Other Loyalists, Ordinary People, Royalism, and the Revolution in the Middle Colonies, 1763-1787*, Joseph S. Tiedemann, Eugene R. Fingerhut, and Robert W. Venables (ed.), (Albany, NY: State University Press of New York, 2009), 52-53.

ensure good behavior. Not surprisingly, that bond proved insufficient to curb their behavior, just as it ultimately failed to reform the loyalist affinity of Christopher and John Vought.

In August 1776, William Livingston was inaugurated governor under the July constitution. British and Hessian troops arrived in New York harbor and debarked on Staten Island. By November, they had captured Long Island and New York City and crossed the Hudson, scaling the Palisades to capture Fort Lee. The retreat of Washington's disintegrating army across New Jersey, the nadir of the Revolution so eloquently lamented in Paine's "The American Crisis," interrupted patriot rule. New Jersey's legislature quickly relocated from Princeton to Burlington, then Pittstown, and finally Haddonfield where it dissolved. Thomas Jones, Daniel Bray and Jacob Gearhart, all captains in the Hunterdon Militia, rounded up every boat along the Delaware to speed Washington's escape and slow the British.²⁷ Christopher and John Vought, and Joseph Lee led seventy-five loyalists to join the British. After a brief skirmish with a band of militia turned out to intercept them, the loyalists made their way to New Brunswick and joined Cortland Skinner's "New Jersey Volunteers which ultimately enlisted at least 2,450 men," making it one of the largest provincial corps in the colonies. Based on enlistment figures, roughly 35% of New Jersey's population became active loyalists.²⁸ Another 3,000 New Jersey people sought protection from General Howe by signing an oath of allegiance.

This loyalist resurgence ended with Washington's surprise re-crossing of the Delaware on Christmas. After the American victories at Trenton and Princeton, Howe relinquished all of

²⁷ David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 134.

²⁸ Robert McCluer Calhoun, *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America 1760-1781* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973) 362.

New Jersey except Perth Amboy and New Brunswick, leaving the families of loyalists to their fate as patriot authorities reasserted control. Although the legislature had dissolved in early December, “courts, law enforcement, local markets, and public records—including the land titles so vital to an agricultural economy—all remained in patriot hands.”²⁹ New Jersey’s July 1776 Constitution had continued English common law and “Statute-Law, as heretofore practiced in this colony,” but extended the right to vote to “all Inhabitants of this Colony of full Age, who are worth Fifty Pounds.”³⁰ New Jersey legislators thereby “enfranchised property-owning single women, or, at the very least, made no efforts to disenfranchise them, settling on gender-neutral language” in a break with the past.³¹ State government was also designed to be very responsive to the electors; the annually-elected legislature would choose the governor after each election. As the fledgling state struggled to reestablish its control in 1777, its most pressing problems were its own institutional ineffectiveness and disorder among local militia units, which led to instances of looting.

In the chaotic early months of 1777, General Washington wrote Governor Livingston urging that the legislature regulate the militia, both to get more men to turn out for duty and to stop officers from leading men into “plundering the inhabitants, under pretence of their being Tories.”³² Patriots plundered the home of sixty-six year old Cornelia and twenty-two year old

²⁹ Mark Edward Lender, “The ‘Cockpit’ Reconsidered: Revolutionary New Jersey as a Military Theatre” in Barbara J. Mitnick (ed.), *New Jersey in the American Revolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rivergate Press, 2005), 50.

³⁰ Larry R. Gerlach (ed.), *New Jersey in the American Revolution 1762-1783 A Documentary History* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1775), 219.

³¹ Jan Ellen Lewis, “Rethinking Women’s Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807.” *Rutgers Law Review* 63:3 (Spring 2011), 1019.

³² Washington’s letter quoted by Livingston in Carl E. Prince (ed.), *The Papers of William Livingston, Volume 1, June 1774-June 1777*, (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1979), 209.

Mary Grandin Vought, whose husbands were in fact “tories” serving with the British army. When Mary went to John on Staten Island later that year, she “told him that the rebels had carried off everything they had.”³³ In fact, many of their possessions and household furnishings were not taken and later appeared in the accounts of commissioners for the confiscation of loyalist property. Although exaggerated, Mary’s statement reflected looting by local militia, neighboring farmers and ironworkers who had turned out for the militia and now sought revenge on families of the disaffected. Under patriot rule, Cornelia and Mary Grandin Vought would deal with hostile neighbors and the patriot Council of Safety and property confiscation laws passed by the new state but their immediate concern was managing this large productive farm.

Mary & Cornelia effectively became “deputy husbands” managing their husbands’ 488-acre farm while also maintaining domestic production for themselves, three young children, and two slaves. The Vought farmstead had a typical Palatine separation of areas that revolved around the house and domestic activities and the barns and fields that produced largely for the market, roughly reflecting the division of responsibilities on rural colonial farms.³⁴ Christopher, then John managed the farm, organizing the cultivation and harvesting of acres of wheat and corn, tending two dozen cows, two dozen pigs, fifty sheep and other livestock, and dealing with markets and mills. Both men had accounts at the Lebanon store, exchanged farm produce at local and distant markets, and left homespun woolens for

³³ William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family, being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 10.

³⁴ Ian Burrow, Damon Tvaryanas, George Cress, Nadine Sergejeff, and Douglas Scott, *Phase I and II Cultural Resource Investigation, Christoffel Vought Farm Site (28HU550), Proposed Clinton Township Middle School, Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Hunter Research Inc., 2005), 4-65.

processing at the fulling mill. Cornelia and Mary Grandin's days were largely filled with domestic production and raising children. Since the family also relied on the labor of two slaves, the female slave may have helped Cornelia and Mary grow food in the kitchen gardens near the house, cook in the fireplace in the kitchen cellar and preserve food for the winter. She may have helped with other domestic work, carding, spinning and weaving cloth from the sheep's wool, and may have worked in the fields in the spring and autumn.

Farm wives in this part of rural Hunterdon County, which included a mix of Dutch, German, English, and a few Africans among the free inhabitants, generally did not engage in the sale of farm products and few went to market, as seen in account books kept at the Lebanon Store from 1770-1772. With a handful of exceptions like the Widow Little, women did not have store accounts and wives drew on their husband's account in fewer than 5 percent of the entries. Cornelia Vought and Thomas Jones' wife were among the few farmers' wives who retrieved consumer items, indigo, textiles, tea, ribbon, rice at the store on their husbands' accounts. Christopher and John spent more time at the store, and Christopher would occasionally send his male slave to pick up items. The Lebanon Store bought local farm produce including buckwheat, rye, and corn, crediting farmers' accounts or making payment. As far as we know, few if any wives sold produce at the store, although the Vought's neighbor, the miller David McKinney's wife was paid for fish sold to the store on his account.³⁵ The Union Iron Works Account book for 1773 and 1774 registers payments, often in iron bars due to the shortage of currency, for a range of work performed at the works. It also records the

³⁵ *Daybook, Lebanon Store, December 1770-May 1772*, Flemington, NJ: Hunterdon County Historical Society, Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library. For the role of markets in women gaining greater independence, see Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds, Mid-Atlantic Farm Women* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

sale of imported fabrics, rum, household goods, and rarely lists a female name.³⁶ The daybook kept at Grandin fulling mill lists hundreds of men who brought fabric for processing over the course of nine years, from 1774-1785. Few women left cloth to be processed, some specifically identified as widows.³⁷ In what was overwhelmingly a man's domain, Cornelia and Mary now managed the farmstead and dealt directly with local markets and mills.

In managing farm production, Cornelia and Mary could hire men for seasonal work as their husbands had done, although even hired workers were required to turn out for militia duty or be subject to fines.³⁸ Heavy enlistment in loyal provincial troops or the patriot militia and continental army meant there were fewer laborers available for farm work. In 1773, William Allen & Joseph Turner had begun to wind down the once-bustling Union Iron Works plantation, dividing the 3,100 acres into salable parcels over the next six years, transferring some to their heirs.³⁹ John Allen's furnace plantation had an account with Allen & Turner as early as August 1772 and the furnace on Spruce Run evidently continued making pig iron. The slitting mill on the Raritan also continued to operate. Iron works manager Robert Taylor later bought the mill, when Allen & Turner's properties were confiscated.⁴⁰ In October 1777, Allen and Turner hired out several of their enslaved ironworkers to John Patton, initially for a

³⁶ *Union Iron Works daybook*, Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company, Records, 1742-1950. Wilmington, DE: Hagley Museum and Library.

³⁷ Walter J. Young, "Grandin Fulling Mill Book, 1774-1785," *The Genealogical Magazine of New Jersey*, Vol. 52, Number 1, January 1977. *Grandin Fulling Mill Day Book*, Flemington, NJ: Hunterdon County Historical Society, Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library. Manuscript 003.

³⁸ Charles W. Parker, "Shipley: The Country Seat of a Jersey Loyalist" *Proceedings of New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. XVI No. 2 April 1932, 132.

³⁹ Hagley Museum and Library, Taylor-Wharton Iron & Steel Company, Records, 1742-1950, (Box 7 blueprint maps 1-10). Pennsylvania Historic Society, Chew family papers, Series 21 New Jersey Land Papers, Miscellaneous: Surveys—draft of division made between William Allen and Joseph Turner, 1779 (Box 764 ff.10).

⁴⁰ Pennsylvania Historic Society, Chew family papers, New Jersey Land Papers, Hunterdon County: Accounts—William Allen and Joseph Turner, 1765-1779 (Box 765 ff. 2).

period of a year. When former Pennsylvania Governor John Penn and his Chief Justice, Benjamin Chew, an heir to Joseph Turner, resided at the Union in the winter of 1777-1778, Turner encouraged Chew to have Robert Taylor reconcile the Allen & Turner accounts.⁴¹ Had the iron works remained viable and the forge, furnaces, smith shop, and mill fully active, meeting the wartime need for iron wares and ammunition would have increased demand for produce from the Vought farmstead.

New Jersey's Council of Safety presented new political uncertainties for the Vought family and the disaffected throughout New Jersey. The state's governing institutions had proven inadequate to the threat posed by British forces at its borders and loyalist partisans within and in March 1777, Governor Livingston convinced the Assembly to grant him and twelve legislators extraordinary powers to act against the enemy as a Council of Safety during the legislature's recess. This body combined legislative, executive and judicial functions. The Council of Safety could imprison anyone they suspected of disloyalty, visiting places where local justices were unreliable in punishing the disaffected and "order arrests, hear witnesses, jail suspects, and even transport them to safer prisons elsewhere in the state. In a single day of such emergency procedures in Morristown, in July 1777, the Council ordered the arrest of forty-eight persons."⁴² In October, the Council of Safety turned its attention to Hunterdon County.

As General Howe began his campaign to occupy Philadelphia in the fall of 1777, the Continental Congress sent former Governor Penn and former Chief Justice Chew out of the

⁴¹ Pennsylvania Historic Society, Chew family papers, Correspondence: Joseph Turner to Benjamin Chew (1761-1780 Box 12 ff. 5).

⁴² Robert McCluer Calhoun, *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America 1760-1781* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 403.

city. In early October, Governor Livingston learned they had been granted a parole at Allen's Union Iron Works and protested to Congress: "We are extremely sorry that persons of their political caste and rank in life should be sent into this state, which is nearly encircled by the enemy, to say nothing of our domestic foes Of all Jersey, the spot in which they are at present is the very spot in which they ought not to be. It has always been considerably disaffected, and still continues despite all our efforts, owing we imagine, in part to the interests, connection, and influence of Mr. John Allen, brother-in-law of Mr. Penn, who is now with the enemy."⁴³ Penn and Chew employed their connections to prominent patriots and status as gentlemen to blunt the Governor's attempts to have them removed and by December, Congress decided Penn and Chew could remain on parole at the Union. They returned to Philadelphia after the British evacuated that city in 1778.⁴⁴

Timothy Lake been arrested as a suspected loyalist and called before Governor Livingston and the Council of Safety in April. He testified against John and Christopher Vought, took an oath of allegiance and was discharged. Lake's deposition recounted his experience behind General Howe's lines near New Brunswick in early December 1776, when he "did see both John and Christopher Vought of the County of Hunterdon afors. and divers others afors. at a certain meeting held . . . for the purpose of enlisting men for the British

⁴³ Governor William Livingston to John Hancock, Princeton October 4, 1777 in Larry R. Gerlach (ed.), *New Jersey in the American Revolution 1762-1783 A Documentary History* (Trenton, NJ: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1775), 374-375. Contrary to Gerlach's introduction, Penn and Chew remained at the Union through the winter.

⁴⁴ Pennsylvania Historic Society, Chew family papers, Collection 2050, Joseph Nourse to John Penn and Benjamin Chew (War Office, 29 December 1777), Benjamin Chew to Robert Morris (Union Iron Works, Jerseys, March 31, 1778).

Service” and that John Vought “did ask this deponent to enlist in such company for the Service aforesaid.”⁴⁵

On October 22, 1777, Governor Livingston and the Council of Safety ordered ten wives of Hunterdon loyalists to appear before them “to shew cause why they should not be removed with their children, into the Enemies lines according to Law, and on default of their appearance that they be removed accordingly.” The next day the council interrogated, “wives of sundry persons said to be gone over to the Enemy being cited to appear before the Council . . . Eight of them now appeared viz. The wives of Christopher Vooght, George Casner, Peter Young, Conradt Eikler, Michael Dennis, Philip Cyphers, John Mills, Joseph Lee, & Jacob Foust; And the Council having enquired into their respective Circumstances & Situation, were unanimously of opinion, That it would not be expedient to remove them for the present.”⁴⁶

The fact John Vought’s wife did not appear suggests Mary was behind enemy lines with her husband by October. The Vought family’s two slaves probably crossed to Staten Island with Mary Vought and her three toddlers. It is unlikely they were with Christopher and John Vought when they joined the New Jersey Volunteers during the British invasion. Most loyalists expected the rebellion to end quickly. During the absence of Christopher and John, their slaves would have been essential farm labor. Yet they were not living on the farm in 1778 since they were not among the movable property sold at auction that year. The two slaves who sailed to Nova Scotia with the Vought family after the war were almost certainly part of John’s household after his wife and children joined him at his new lodgings on Staten Island in

⁴⁵ New Jersey State Archives, Council of Safety Manuscripts folder 58, Deposition of Timothy Lake against John and Christopher Vaught, sworn in Council of Safety 22 April 1777, Burlington, New Jersey,.

⁴⁶ *Minutes of the Council of Safety of the State of New Jersey* (Jersey City, NJ: Printed by John H. Lyon, 1872) 155-157.

1777, leaving Cornelia without the help of daughter-in-law Mary and the family's two enslaved servants.

Mary's father, Phillip Grandin owned a large tract of land along the Raritan, downstream of the Vought Farm, with a store and a fulling mill, where woolen material pounded in water was made smoother and, as the fibers interlock, thicker and durable as felt. Grandin's mill used "heavy—a hundred pounds or more—wooden hammers lifted by water power and allowed to fall on bundles of cloth."⁴⁷ In the Vought family, Christopher and especially John Vought brought fabric to the mill. When their farm was thriving in 1775 John brought over 12 yards of worsted wool in March and in November he brought 31 yards of all-wool fabric to be processed and dyed, including 8 yards to be "dyed red and made flannel for under petticoats" and marked with a "V."⁴⁸ In stark contrast, when Cornelia Vought brought fabric to Grandin's mill for the first time in March 1778, she brought two pale blue pieces of linsey-woolsey, one for blankets, and a white piece.⁴⁹ The difference in both the quantity and quality of fabric reflected the reduced production of the farmstead which Cornelia, well past the age at which her husband had retired, managed alone after 1777. The juxtaposition of a loyalist wife and patriot neighbors is highlighted by the fact that Continental Army commissary Colonel Charles Stewart and his deputy Captain Thomas Jones patronized Grandin's fulling mill three or four times a year, occasionally ordering material for great coats and flannel.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Walter J. Young, "Grandin Fulling Mill Book, 1774-1785," *The Geneological Magazine of New Jersey*, Vol 52, Number 1, January 1977, 1.

⁴⁸ *Grandin Fulling Mill Day Book*, Hunterdon County Historical Society, Hiram E. Deats Memorial Library. Manuscript 003, November 11, 1775.

⁴⁹ Linsey-woolsey was a coarse fabric with a linen warp and a woollen weft common in the American colonies. The daybook entry of lincy no doubt referred to linsey-woolsey. Other entries note when the fabric is all wool.

⁵⁰ Walter J. Young, "Grandin Fulling Mill Book, 1774-1785," *The Geneological Magazine of New Jersey*, Vol. 53 1778, Number 1, 27, 28 and Number 3, 139.

In April 1778, the New Jersey Legislature passed an act allowing County Commissioners to sell the belongings of confirmed loyalists and to lease their real estate. Although ownership of the farm was not yet at issue, the forced sale of their livestock and farm tools would impede Cornelia's means of support. The sale of personal belongings and household furnishings would compound their losses. Juries of inquisition regarding Christopher Vought and John Vought were held at the house of Captain Thomas Jones on June 2, 1778 and a few days later, the livestock was sold at auction and the house leased. At the sale of livestock from the Vought farmstead on June 11, 1778, Cornelia Vought bought back ten hogs, fifteen "Piggs" plus two cows, one with a calf, providing her with milk and pork. Cornelia's son from a prior marriage, Henry Traphagen bought a cow and four calves. Henry also rented the farm, not for himself, since he was already married and settled elsewhere, but for his mother's use. They lost fifty-one sheep, twenty-five cows, and six horses to their neighbors but the purchases by Henry and Cornelia allowed her to remain on the family farm. Philip Grandin bought a red calf that day, possibly for Cornelia.⁵¹

Sympathetic local men of means also came to the aid of Loyalist wives. James Parker was a prominent loyalist from Perth Amboy jailed then paroled in Morristown for refusing to take the oath of abjuration and allegiance required of those the Council of Safety thought disaffected. He was exchanged in 1778 for a patriot held in New York and allowed to return to Shipley, his 650-acre estate three miles from the Vought farm, along the road to Pittstown. On December 18, 1778, the Vought family's farm equipment and household furniture were sold,

⁵¹ Ian Burrow, Damon Tvaryanas, George Cress, Nadine Sergejeff, and Douglas Scott, *Phase I and II Cultural Resource Investigation, Christoffel Vought Farm Site (28HU550), Proposed Clinton Township Middle School, Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Hunter Research Inc., 2005), 3-54.

their tables, chests, beds, and the great clock, which at 40 pounds fetched the highest price. That same day, James Parker wrote in his diary “Doctr Smith solicited my contribution to the relief of some women, the wives of some persons that had gone in to the British lines and had all their effects sold, by purchasing for them a cow apiece and their beds.”⁵² Dr. Issac Smith had purchased two heifers and a milch cow at the June auction and arranged the repurchase of personal possessions in December, perhaps out of chivalry and perhaps, like Parker, sympathy with the loyalist cause.

That fall, Mary Grandin was living with John; she gave birth to a baby girl in June 1779. This daughter, named for John’s long-suffering mother, unfortunately died in September. Back in Hunterdon, Cornelia was losing her hold on the family real estate. The New Jersey legislature declared these loyalist men guilty of treason by approving bills of attainder, which removed the need for a judicial trial. Article I of the Federal Constitution, approved a decade later, would explicitly state “No Bill of Attainder or ex post facto Law will be passed.” The charge of treason allowed confiscation of loyalists’ real estate. The auction of the 488-acre Vought farm with an excellent barn and impressive stone house in April 1779, three years after John led the attack on Jones’ Tavern, completed the transfer of the family’s personal property and real estate under authority of the new state they had protested that night. The sale of the original 285-acre farmstead for the large sum of 8,550 pounds reflected “the

⁵² *Shiple: The Country Seat of a Jersey Loyalist*, Charles W. Parker (Proceedings of New Jersey Historical Society, Vol. XVI No. 2 April 1932) 132.

extensive improvements to and the overall desirability of the farm.” The relatively unimproved 203-acre parcel brought 3,451 pounds, just over half as much per acre.⁵³

After their farm was sold, Cornelia may have lived with her son Henry or with Philip and Eleanor Grandin but she also spent time across enemy lines, on Staten Island, visiting her husband, and John’s family. Cornelia and Mary were wives of loyalists yet both crossed enemy lines at least once. It is unlikely these women slipped secretly across New Jersey’s border risking the danger of approaching the front lines from enemy territory. Cornelia traveling alone and Mary with three toddlers and two servants probably received passes to cross the lines to visit family. Even low-level officers, such as captains would issue passes. Both Washington and Livingston became concerned with the number of people, men and women who received passes. Yet it was relatively easy for women to get a pass to cross into enemy territory and back since they were considered “nonentities in the political sphere,” their lives defined by familial relations.⁵⁴ The wives of John Penn and Benjamin Chew obtained passes to leave British occupied Philadelphia, visit their husbands at the Union, and return to Philadelphia. The vigilant Governor Livingston vehemently objected in October 1777 to the presence of Penn and Chew and their potential influence in Hunterdon County, yet later that month he and the Council of Safety unanimously decided eight loyalists’ wives living near the Union posed no significant threat. Cornelia remained on the farm until the sale of the Vought’s stone house, great barn and 488 acres finally dislodged her in April 1779. She passed enemy

⁵³ Ian Burrow, Damon Tvaryanas, George Cress, Nadine Sergejeff, and Douglas Scott, *Phase I and II Cultural Resource Investigation, Christoffel Vought Farm Site (28HU550), Proposed Clinton Township Middle School, Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Hunter Research Inc., 2005), 3-54.

⁵⁴ Judith L. Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies, Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 63.

lines to visit Staten Island in November 1781, when her grandson Philip Grandin Vought was almost ten months old. She evidently intended to return to Hunterdon, where she may have resided for the duration of the war.⁵⁵

After the British defeat, approximately 60,000 loyalist refugees left the colonies.⁵⁶ In September 1783, John's family left New York as part of the exodus of almost 30,000 loyalists to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Tens of thousands of black loyalists had escaped slavery by joining the British during the war. In New York, over 2,000 Africans recorded in the "Book of Negroes" to assuage patriots seeking the return of their "property" received passes to leave for Nova Scotia as free men and women, a fraction of the approximately nine thousand runaways who left America with the British as free people.⁵⁷ Ironically, those men and women enslaved by loyalists had no such opportunity. In September 1783, Christopher, John and Mary, their four children, nephew George, and two slaves left New York harbor aboard the *Ranger* for life as expatriates in Nova Scotia. Cornelia was not listed on the ship's return and may have joined them later.⁵⁸ They lived on the outskirts of Parrsboro, Nova Scotia for the next eight years.

Loyalty to the British had cost the Vought family their large productive farmstead, with its large stone house and fine furnishings, their crops in the ground, livestock, great barn and

⁵⁵ Ian Burrow, Damon Tvaryanas, George Cress, Nadine Sergejeff, and Douglas Scott, *Phase I and II Cultural Resource Investigation, Christoffel Vought Farm Site (28HU550), Proposed Clinton Township Middle School, Clinton Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: Hunter Research Inc., 2005), 3-55.

⁵⁶ Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles, American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 353.

⁵⁷ Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys to Freedom, Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press 2006), 71. Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles, American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 89-90.

⁵⁸ <http://www.royalprovincial.com/military/rhist/njv/njvretn2.htm> accessed May 4, 2014. Citation: Great Britain, Public Record Office, War Office, Class 60, Volume 32, part 1. Royal Provincial.com maintained by Todd Braisted

several outbuildings. In a claim filed with the British government's Loyalist Claims Commission, John Vought produced a valuation sworn "at New York City, by William Rutherford and Philip Grandn (Grandin), at 5 pounds 10 shillings per acre." He also had "a certificate of sale sworn to before Henry Traphagen made by Peter Brunner, one of the Commissioners to dispose of the Real and Personal Estate of Refugees"⁵⁹ Although John's father-in-law confirmed the value of his lost property and his step-brother Henry certified the sale, they both remained on the patriot side of the great divide. Nonetheless, the Vought family retained friends and relatives in Hunterdon. Over time, the intense hatred of loyalists faded in New Jersey and New York, two provinces where the civil strife had been greatest. By the time Bev Robinson, son of the prominent New York loyalist Beverly Robinson, returned in the 1790s, "legal sanctions had largely been repealed or suspended. He like many relatives of attained loyalists, fought for years in state courts for the restitution of confiscated property and unpaid debts, with some success."⁶⁰ John Vought's claim for lost property before the British commissioners included two thousand acres near Albany Christopher had purchased in 1772 as an inheritance for his son and daughter. John was able to recover title to this land and in 1792 decided the family would migrate yet again, from Nova Scotia to this larger, more fertile property in New York State.

~ ~ ~

Christiana Vought had barely known her birthplace in Lebanon Township. She and her cousin George were only four years old when they left the fine stone house near the Union

⁵⁹ William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family; being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 10.

⁶⁰ Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles, American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 319.

Iron Works with her younger sister and mother in 1777. She was only ten when they sailed to Nova Scotia in September 1783. Eight years later, in May 1792 Christiana began a travel journal as her “father with his family Embarked on board of the Scooner Alice, Comanded by John Osburn.” They sailed from Parrsboro Nova Scotia, past Partridge Island and down the Bay of Fundy, along the Atlantic coast to New York City where a river sloop would take them up the Hudson.⁶¹

At New York, they dined on board Captain John Bogart’s sloop and spent a few days in the city before embarking “for Albany at 9 o’clock in the morning with a fine breeze” which continued the next day with a “good wind and everything agreeable, our Capt. is very Polite and obliging.” On Friday, they lay “at anchor before Mr. Timbrooks house; here Capt. Bogart leaves us as he is obliged to be in Albany at an appointed time. In the afternoon we were invited ashore to tea by Capt. B’s. Sisterinlaw, A young Lady where we were treated with Politeness—they are Dutch People and apear to be very Neat and Clean.” Captain John Bogart had been drafted into the New York militia at age fifteen. As captain of the sloop Magdeline, he transported patriot troops and supplies up and down the Hudson. After the war, John continued working the river and married Catherine Ten Broeck (“Timbrooks” above) who died in February 1792. The Voughts anchored at the Ten Broeck house until Sunday, when Christiana reported our “Captain is Come down from Albany in a scooner, you are Welcome Sir on Board, again is Echo,d through the Ship. This is about 2 o’clock in the afternoon. We find him more agreeable as we are more acquainted with him.”⁶²

⁶¹ C. V., “Diary of Christiana Vought,” in William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family; being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 21.

⁶² C. V., “Diary of Christiana Vought,” in William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family; being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 23.

Christiana lived in a different world than her parents and grandparents; the upheaval of war had produced a cultural shift. New Jersey's 1776 constitution had allowed "inhabitants" worth fifty pounds to vote. The gender-neutral language encompassed the same widows and other single women of property who had accounts at stores and mills. New Jersey was the only colony to extend the vote to women and although the legislature reverted to the perhaps universal pronoun "he" to reference voters in 1777 and 1783 it explicitly defined voters as "he or she" in 1790.⁶³ As Jan Ellen Lewis notes, "the problem - or the possibility - of Revolutionary thought was that it could not easily be contained. Once revolutionary principles were articulated, there was no controlling them." Britain's crisis of empire began as American colonists echoed one of the "most hallowed principles of British constitutional thought," no taxation without representation, to protest Parliamentary taxation of the colonies. So too, New Jersey "carried Revolutionary doctrine to its furthest - but logical - extreme." If property ownership provided the independence of thought necessary for citizens of a republic, then why should women with property not be allowed to vote?⁶⁴ The rise of Federalist and Democratic-Republican political parties brought increasing numbers of women to the polls. The impact of a significant number of women voting, intense partisanship, and transparently corrupt voting practices provided the impetus for a post-Revolutionary backlash and

⁶³ Jan Ellen Lewis, "Rethinking Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807." *Rutgers Law Review* 63:3 (Spring 2011): 1020. See also, Lois Elkins, "The Petticoat Electors: Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807." *Journal of the Early Republic* 12:2 (Summer 1992): 159-193.

⁶⁴ Jan Ellen Lewis, "Rethinking Women's Suffrage in New Jersey, 1776-1807." *Rutgers Law Review* 63:3 (Spring 2011): 1022.

disenfranchisement in the early 19th Century but in the early republic, more egalitarian notions prevailed.⁶⁵

During the recent conflict, women had been encouraged to participate in political actions, to forego tea and imported luxuries. They engaged in 'gender-appropriate' activities like making homespun to aid non-importation and collecting blankets or donations for the troops. By the war's end, the prospect of women being involved in politics had become less exceptional. Their explicitly continued franchise to vote in New Jersey shows the Revolution's radical impulses were not without effect. Even within the bounds of a *femme covert* legality, the ideals of the revolution, women's overt political actions, and widespread experience of managing farms for absent husbands served to undermine patriarchal family relations. A new model of the affectionate family was gaining favor, especially among genteel young women where ideals of romantic love and physical attraction could be more significant in selecting a life partner.⁶⁶ "Dependent on the ability of young people to choose for themselves, the struggle was not easily won, particularly where the economic function of the family was paramount."⁶⁷ In choosing a husband Christiana Vought may have responded to parental advice, but unlike her Grandmother Cornelia who even as a widow secured a written license from her father before marrying Christopher in 1749, Christiana would have found it odd for a minister to require parental consent prior to a marriage.⁶⁸ Her attraction to the "very polite and

⁶⁵ Ibid, 1030. See also, Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash, Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

⁶⁶ Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters, The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 45,46.

⁶⁷ Stephanie Grauman Wolf, *As Various as Their Land: The Everyday Lives of Eighteenth-Century Americans* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 72.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 74.

obliging” John Bogart, whom she found “more agreeable as we are more acquainted with him,” led to their marriage at the Albany Dutch reformed church four years after the loyalist Vought family sailed up the Hudson.

With their arrival in Albany, Christiana’s journal provides a glimpse of the society she was about to enter. Her family went “to the house of Captain Bogart’s parents we met the old lady (his Mother) on the Porch Who Conducted us in a well furnished room then turn.d about ‘your welcom here’ said she— Now Comes in Miss Bogart (Sister to Capt. B.) ‘Miss Vought you are welcome here I hope you will make this as your home’. ‘I thank you Madam’, said I; ‘you have had a long Passage’; ‘Yes, but A very agreeable one, Miss Bogart’. So the Conversation turn,d--Now in Comes Garet B. ‘I am hapy to see you here Ladys I wish you not to Make Strange’. Mamah returned the Compliment; When diner was ready we were bid in, Garet and Miss B. did the honours of the table; their Parents is old People wich I expect is the reason they take this on themselves—After Tea Miss Bogart Took My sister & I thro the Most Capital Streets of the City. When we returned Mr. Garet asked us if we would not walk up to the Springs (this is a Spring about 3 quarters of Mile out of Town where many walks about Sun set and after). ‘I have no objection’ was the General answe; accordingly we went and saw A Number of People there Drinking of this Very Cold Water—We all sup.d at Mr. Bogarts and then returned to the Sloop where we Lodged.”⁶⁹ The next day, “At Eleven o’clock we left Albany, at 2 o’clock din,d 7 mile from Albany and at 9 in the evening arrived at Voughts Patton our Place of residence. C.V.” Christiana’s journal ends at their new home, where John

⁶⁹ C. V., “Diary of Christiana Vought,” in William Gordon Ver Planck, *The Vought Family; being an Account of the Descendants of Simon and Christina Vought* (New York: Press of Tobias A. Wright, 1907), 24.

divided the two thousand acre parcel, half for George the nephew he and Mary raised from infancy, and half for his household, his aging parents Christopher and Cornelia, wife Mary, Christiana and Eleanor, two sons named for their grandfathers Philip and Christopher, and two slaves.

Christopher Vought's grandson and namesake was born on Staten Island four months before the Paris Peace Treaty and grew to manhood on the Vought patent in New York. He fought with the New York militia in the War of 1812, a war that finally forced Great Britain to respect the full sovereignty of a now federated United States of America. Just as the balance between states and the union would be a major point of contention before the Civil War and even today, so to the revolutionary principles cited to resist Parliamentary authority and articulated in the Declaration of Independence. Struggles to achieve "unalienable rights" to freedom and equality for all men and women would become a central theme in American history over the next two centuries. As Captain Christopher Vought returned home from the War of 1812, that American Revolution had barely begun.