



The Two Governors: An Exploration of Loyalist and Revolutionary Thought

Central issue, problem, or question: Why did New Jersey's last royal governor, William Franklin (son of Benjamin), remain loyal to his king, despite disagreeing with many British imperial policies? Why did wealthy lawyer and landowner William Livingston become a leader of New Jersey's revolutionaries?

Significance: This lesson uses biography to explore the difficult choices facing American colonists during the American Revolution. It requires students to compare and contrast the two governors' views of British policies and colonial politics, focusing on the reasons why Franklin became a loyalist and Livingston a revolutionary.

New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies:
Standard 6.4 (United States and New Jersey History). **Middle School: E-2** (Discuss the major events and personalities of the American Revolution); **E-4** (Explain New Jersey's critical role in the Revolution). **High School: E-1** (Discuss the social, political, and religious aspects of the American Revolution); **E-2** (Analyze the social and economic impact of the Revolutionary War); **E-5** (Analyze New Jersey's role in the American Revolution).

Objectives: After examining biographical materials and reading primary source documents, students will be able to:

- Describe arguments for and against independence from Great Britain.
- Compare and contrast the experiences and beliefs of William Franklin and William Livingston.
- Explore the consequences of Franklin's and Livingston's decisions.

Abstract: Middle school students will read and analyze two primary source documents, one from each governor and write a short essay, explaining which side they would have supported in the American Revolution. High school students will be assigned to small groups, each of which will analyze a different primary source document and present their findings to the class. Based on the group work and presentations, they will write a short essay comparing the two governors.

Duration: Two 45-minute class periods.

Sources

Secondary Sources

Sheila Skemp online lecture: "A Choice of Loyalties: Governor William Franklin and the American Revolution," July 2003; available on the New Jersey History Partnership Project website, <http://nj-history.org>, in the "Two Governors" section.

Carl Prince online lecture: "William Livingston, the War for Independence, and New Jersey's Internal Revolution" July 2003; available on the New Jersey History Partnership Project website, <http://nj-history.org>, in the "Two Governors" section.

Carl E. Prince, *William Livingston: New Jersey's First Governor* New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience 21 (Trenton, 1975).
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/secondarySources/Livingston.pdf>

Larry R. Gerlach, *William Franklin: New Jersey's Last Royal Governor* New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience 13 (Trenton, 1975).
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/secondarySources/WFranklin.pdf>

Sheila Skemp, *Benjamin and William Franklin: Father and Son, Patriot and Loyalist* (Boston, 1994).

Paul A. Stellhorn and Michael J. Birkner, eds. *The Governors of New Jersey 1664-1974: Biographical Essays* (Trenton, 1982). Available online courtesy of the New Jersey State Library at
http://www.njstatelib.org/NJ_Information/Digital_Collections/Governors_of_New_Jersey/ghead.pdf

Primary Sources

William Franklin to Lord Hillsborough, 23 November 1768.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc1.pdf>

William Franklin's Speech to the New Jersey Assembly, 13 January 1775.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc2.pdf>

William Franklin to the Lord Dartmouth, 5 June and 2 August 1775.

<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc3.pdf>

William Livingston's Speech to the New Jersey Legislature, 13 September 1776.

<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc4.pdf>

William Livingston's "Hortentius" Essay, *New Jersey Gazette*, 9 September 1778.

<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc5.pdf>

William Livingston's Message to the New Jersey Assembly, 19 May 1783.

<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc6.pdf>

Materials: Teachers will require dictionaries and copies of primary source documents.

Background: The illegitimate son of founder Benjamin, William Franklin was critical of many of Britain's policies toward its North American colonies, but as royal governor of New Jersey, he was responsible for promoting the Crown's interests as well as the colony's welfare. Franklin was a popular governor who believed in the identity of British and American interests and sought to reconcile differences. However, the conflict unleashed by the Stamp Act and compounded by policies like the Townshend duties, the Quartering Act, and the Coercive or Intolerable Acts proved irreconcilable, forcing Franklin to choose sides. Until he was arrested in June 1776, Franklin continued to look for compromises, but his primary commitment was to the king who appointed him. He believed that colonists were unfit to rule themselves and that only a minority wished to sever ties with Great Britain.

The year before Franklin's arrest witnessed the steady erosion of the Crown's authority in New Jersey and the other colonies. Rebellious colonists formed extralegal militias, committees, and congresses to protect and govern the soon-to-be-independent state. Franklin remained at his post, even after New Jersey's Provincial Congress took de facto control of the state; he hoped to convince New Jerseyans to stop short of rebellion. He failed and was arrested by order of the Provincial Congress. Released through a prisoner exchange in 1778, Franklin helped found the Board of Associated Loyalists, which organized guerrilla raids on New Jersey. At the end of the war, he left the United States for exile in Great Britain, having lost his position, his property, and his father's affection.

A prominent New York lawyer and landowner, William Livingston moved to New Jersey in 1772 to retire from business and politics. His retirement was short-

lived. A well-known political satirist and critic of British colonial policies, Livingston was elected to the Continental Congress in 1774 where he served until 1776 when he took command of the East Jersey militia. Months later he became the state's first governor and would remain in that office until his death in 1790. As military commander, governor, and member of the New Jersey Council of Safety, Livingston battled not only British troops but also New Jersey's loyalists whom he characterized as "destable Parricides." Ignoring due process, he sought to rid the state of loyalists by ordering the arrest or expulsion of men and women who actively supported the British cause and of those he suspected of disloyalty to the new nation.

Despite the limited powers of the office of governor under New Jersey's 1776 constitution, Livingston was a forceful leader who dominated the state government. He presided over the state's Council of Safety, which exercised police powers in the name of internal security. The extra-constitutional power of the office of governor also derived from the power of Livingston's pen. A prolific writer, he effectively publicized his views and his goals for the state in published essays and in letters to New Jersey legislators. He also sought to act as a moral leader when in 1787 he petitioned the state legislature to manumit his two slaves so that others might follow his example.

Key Words:

Stamp Act
Declaratory Act
Townshend Duties
English Constitution
Royal Governor
Committees of correspondence
Battle of Lexington
Provincial Congress
Continental Congress
Militia
Board of Associated Loyalists
Council of Safety
New Jersey's 1776 Constitution

Middle School Procedures

For homework, the night before this lesson begins, students should read the section of their textbook that examines the conflicts leading up to the American Revolution. The teacher should start the class by asking students a series of questions about loyalists and revolutionaries:

- Why did some Americans decide to rebel against the British crown and demand independence? What did they argue?
- Why did some Americans wish to remain loyal to the British crown? What did they argue?

- Which arguments do you find more persuasive? Why?

The teacher should then deliver a short lecture (based on Sheila Skemp's and Carl Prince's online lectures) on William Franklin and William Livingston and their roles in the conflict that engulfed the state before and during the American Revolution. Both the Skemp and Prince lectures are available online at the New Jersey History Partnership Project website, <http://nj-history.org>, in the "Two Governors" section.

Afterwards, the teacher should assign students to small groups to read and analyze primary source documents, beginning with William Franklin's January 1775 speech to New Jersey's colonial legislature, <http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc2.pdf>

Before they begin reading, students should be asked to recall the conflicts of the past ten years and the colonists' attempts to collectively redress their grievances. Students should know that when Franklin delivered this speech, the first Continental Congress had already met four months earlier and that armed conflict would break out in April 1775, when British troops attempted to capture a weapons cache in Concord, Massachusetts. This information will help students place the document in its proper context. Franklin wished to convince New Jersey legislators to abjure collective action and instead seek to resolve the colony's grievances by petitioning the Crown. He correctly recognized that the colonies were heading toward civil war.

Each group will probably need to consult a dictionary in order to make sense of Franklin's eighteenth-century use of language, and teachers might wish to have students translate Franklin's words into a more modern style before asking them to analyze Franklin's arguments.

Teachers can help students better understand the document by asking leading questions, like:

- What is the tone of this speech? (jubilant, angry, pleading, concerned?)
- What is Franklin's advice to New Jersey legislators?
- What does Franklin fear will happen if legislators do not heed his advice?
- If you were a New Jersey legislator, how would you have responded to this speech? (Note: Many of these men would become leading revolutionaries.)
- Did Franklin accuse the legislators of failing to perform their official duties?
- Do you think the New Jersey colonists could have resolved their grievances by following Franklin's advice and petitioning the Crown?
- Do you think New Jersey legislators might have averted a civil war if they had followed Franklin's advice?

The same groups will also read and analyze an extract from William Livingston's September 1776 speech to the legislature,

<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc4.pdf>

Before students begin reading the speech, the teacher should explain that much had changed in the year and a half since William Franklin delivered his speech to the legislature. Franklin was arrested, and New Jersey declared itself an independent state with a republican form of government. The new legislature elected William Livingston the state's first governor. He governed a very divided state; more than half the population was either loyal to the Crown or neutral. And the British Army was on the verge of invading the state.

Again, student groups should consult a dictionary when reading this document and might wish to translate it into modern language before analyzing it. Once the students have translated their document, the teacher should ask them leading questions to help them analyze it:

- What is the tone of this speech?
- Did Livingston believe that the United States' decision to separate from Great Britain was justified?
- How did Livingston characterize British rule in North America?
- Do you think the residents of New Jersey uniformly approved of the state's new constitution? (The document was created by the Provincial Congress and was never put to a popular vote.)
- What did Livingston call on the legislature to do?
- What was his vision of a new state?
- How do you think legislators might have responded to this speech?

After students had read and analyzed both documents, the teacher should ask them to write a short essay explaining which side of the conflict they would have chosen. Would they have attempted, like William Franklin, to preserve the government and find a peaceful solution, or would they, like William Livingston, have advocated revolution?

Note: This lesson can be simplified and shortened by dividing the class into two groups, loyalists and revolutionaries. The loyalists will analyze the Franklin document. The rebels will analyze the Livingston document. Both groups will present their findings to the class or engage in a debate over the issues that divided loyalists and revolutionaries.

High School Procedures

Before they begin this lesson, students should have learned about the conflicts between Great Britain and her colonies, beginning with the Proclamation of 1763 and the Sugar or Revenue Act of 1764. William Franklin took office as royal governor of New Jersey in 1763, just as the problems began.

The teacher should begin the lesson with a short lecture (based on Sheila Skemp's and Carl Prince's online lectures) on the lives and experiences of William Franklin and William Livingston. Both the Skemp and Prince lectures are available online at the New Jersey History Partnership Project website, <http://nj-history.org>, in the "Two Governors" section.

Afterwards the teacher should divide the class in half. One half the students will read documents by William Franklin; the other half will read Livingston documents. The teacher should further divide students into small groups of three or four students. Each mini group will be assigned to translate and analyze one of the following documents:

- William Franklin to Lord Hillsborough.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc1.pdf>
- William Franklin's Speech to the New Jersey Assembly.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc2.pdf>
- William Franklin to the Earl of Dartmouth.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc3.pdf>
- William Livingston's Speech to the New Jersey Legislature.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc4.pdf>
- William Livingston's "Hortentius" Essay.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc5.pdf>
- William Livingston's Message to the New Jersey Assembly.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/documents/theTwoGovernorsDoc6.pdf>

Each of these documents reflects a different period in the lives of these two men and in the history of the state. In 1768, Franklin was chastised by the secretary of Britain's American Department, Lord Hillsborough, for allowing the New Jersey Assembly to correspond with other colonial legislatures with the goal of combating the Townshend Acts. Fearing to lose his job, Franklin defended his record. In January 1775, armed conflict with Britain had not yet begun, but revolutionaries had already formed local committees-of-correspondence and created a national body, the Continental Congress. In his speech, Franklin sought to persuade legislators to oppose such organizations. In April of that year, the fighting began, and Franklin's letters to Lord Dartmouth reflected his fear that civil war was inevitable; the revolutionaries controlled the state. Franklin was arrested the following year.

New Jersey became an independent state with a republican form of government in July 1776, when members of the Provincial Congress adopted a new

constitution. William Livingston was elected the state's first governor in August. His September address to the legislature was his first. By 1778, when Livingston published his satirical essay under the pseudonym "Hortentius," the state had weathered an invasion by British forces, but the war was not over, and many New Jersey inhabitants were ambivalent or hostile to the revolution. The Treaty of Paris meant the end of war but not of revolution, as Livingston observed in his 1783 address to the New Jersey legislature. He challenged his audience to live up to the new nation's founding ideals.

In order to translate these documents into modern language, students will probably require dictionaries. After they have translated their document, each group will answer a set of questions about their document that will help them prepare for their presentation; they should use quotes from the document as evidence or to illustrate their answers. The following worksheets contain lists of questions about each document:

- Worksheet on William Franklin's Letter to Lord Hillsborough.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS1.pdf>
- Worksheet on William Franklin's Speech to the New Jersey Assembly.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS2.pdf>
- Worksheet on William Franklin's Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS3.pdf>
- Worksheet on William Livingston's Speech to the New Jersey Legislature.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS4.pdf>
- Worksheet on William Livingston's "Hortentius" Essay.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS5.pdf>
- Worksheet on William Livingston's Message to the New Jersey Assembly.
<http://nj-history.org/americanRevolution/theTwoGovernors/lesson/theTwoGovernorsWS6.pdf>

Once they have finished translating and analyzing their document, each group will present what they have learned about New Jersey and the two governors to the class. The presentations should be organized chronologically, beginning with Franklin's 1768 letter and concluding with Livingston's 1783 address, and the teacher should encourage students to explore how the two governors responded to external events (the Townshend Acts, the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the Treaty of Paris, etc.). Students in the audience should take notes on these presentations; they will be required to know this information when they write an in-class essay on the final day of this lesson.

After the students have presented what they learned, the teacher will lead the class to develop a composite sketch of the character and aspirations of each man by asking questions like:

- What were his views on the relationship between England and its North American colonies?
- How did he view his role as governor?
- What were his hopes for the colony/state?
- What did he fear?

On the final day of the lesson, the teacher will assign an in-class essay: Compare William Franklin's and William Livingston's experiences as governor of New Jersey. Who was the better governor? Did circumstances favor one man over the other? Use primary and secondary sources to support your argument.

Comments and Suggestions: In conjunction with this lesson, teachers might take students on a field trip to William Franklin's Proprietary House in Perth Amboy or to William Livingston's Liberty Hall in Union.

Possible geography assignment: The eight towns where William Livingston governed during the American Revolution are Hackettstown, Pittstown, Princeton, Bordentown, Mount Holly, Haddonfield, Woodbury, and Salem. The students could be given a map of New Jersey and asked to find the eight towns and then be asked to discover what the towns have in common in terms of location. The students may discover that the towns are in close proximity to the Delaware River, which was the primary mode of transportation.

Instructional Technology: Students might use PowerPoint to make their presentations.