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"Jimmy Carter's wide-ranging versatility is rivaled only by his unfailing energy or whatever it is that drives him, even now in his late seventies, to conquer new worlds. . . . *The Hornet's Nest,* Carter's first work of fiction, is a historical novel of ambitious scope. . . . Any lover of history will find satisfying confirmation, and the average reader a richer understanding, of the causes of the rebellion, as seen and felt through the personal experiences of struggling colonists."

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JIMMY CARTER

THE HORNET'S NEST

A NOVEL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

SIMON & SCHUSTER PAPERBACKS
NEW YORK LONDON
TORONTO SYDNEY

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This book is a work of fiction. Many names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. The major events of the war are historically accurate.

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In memory of
my parents, Earl and Lillian,
my brother, Billy,
and my sisters, Gloria and Ruth

Acknowledgments

This novel was begun more than seven years ago and, while writing three other books, I turned constantly to it with new ideas and information about my own ancestors and others who played a crucial role in achieving our nation's independence. Most Americans know very little about major events of the war in Florida, Georgia, and the Carolinas, and I wanted to present as accurate an account as possible of the complex and crucial interrelationships among colonists, British officials, and the Indian tribes during the twenty years that led to the war's successful end in 1783.

I would like to thank the librarians at Emory University and others in Georgia and North Carolina for providing me with maps and more than two dozen history texts and biographies, written by both English and American authors. They also helped me understand how people traveled, fought battles, grew crops, made shoes, and what words were used during the eighteenth century.

My wife, Rosalynn, was my earliest editor, and her questions about the interrelationship of characters, both historical and fictional, were incisive and helpful.

The strong influence of Michael Korda and Alice Mayhew, editors at Simon & Schuster, provided the necessary incentive for me to arrange the text in a more logical fashion and, with some pain and reluctance, to reduce its original length.

As with all my other books, Faye Perdue provided easy and pleasant communication with the editors and librarians and handled the myriad details of a book's being born.

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BOOK III: 1778–1785

Cast of Characters

Note:
◊ Character is fictional.
† Character is mentioned in history books, actions fictionalized.
All other characters are historical figures, actions recounted accurately.

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

◊ Epsey Pratt, wife of Ethan Pratt
◊ Ethan Pratt, frontiersman, later Georgia militiaman
◊ Henry Pratt, cobbler, member of North Carolina Regulators
◊ Sophronia Pratt, wife of Henry Pratt
◊ Kindred Morris, naturalist, neighbor of Ethan Pratt
◊ Mavis Morris, wife of Kindred Morris
◊ Newota, young Indian, neighbor of Pratts and Morrises
Elijah Clarke, organizer and leader of Georgia militia
† Thomas Brown, organizer and leader of Florida Rangers
Lachlan McIntosh, Georgia military commander
Button Gwinnett, Georgia political leader
† Quash Dolly, slave woman

OTHER CHARACTERS

Aaron Hart, aide to Elijah Clarke
Alonzo Baker, deputy of Thomas Brown
Alured Clarke, final British defender of Savannah
Andrew Pickens, South Carolina militia commander
Archibald Bullock, President, Georgia council of safety
Augustine Prevost, British military commander in Florida
Banastre Tarleton, bold and brutal British cavalryman
Benjamin Lincoln, Continental Southern commander
Charles Cornwallis, British Southern commander

Charles Lee, second in command to George Washington
† Chesley Bostick, Son of Liberty, Brown's persecutor
◊ Chief Sunoma, Indian aide to Thomas Brown
Count D'Estaing, French naval commander
† Daniel McGirth, Tory militia leader
Daniel Morgan, Continental general in South Carolina
Earl Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia
† Emistisiguo, distinguished Indian chief
Francis Marion, South Carolina militia leader
Francis Sumter, Commander, South Carolina militia
George Washington, Commander-in-Chief, Continental forces
Herman Husband, leader of Regulators
Henry Clinton, British supreme commander
Horatio Gates, Southern commander, Continental forces
James Jackson, Georgia militia commander
James Oglethorpe, Royal Governor, founder of Georgia
James Wright, Royal Governor of Georgia
John Adam Treutlen, Georgia's first elected governor
John Ashe, Continental general from North Carolina
John Dooly, Georgia militia leader
John Houstoun, Georgia's second elected governor
John Stuart, Royal Indian Superintendent
† Joseph Maddock, Quaker leader
Lighthorse Harry Lee, Continental Southern commander
"Mad Anthony" Wayne, last Continental commander in Georgia
Nathanael Greene, Continental commander, Southern forces
Patrick Ferguson, British commander, Continental forces
Stephen Heard, rescued patriot, later governor
Thomas Gage, British defender of Boston
William Tryon, Royal Governor of North Carolina
William Bartram, naturalist, explorer
William Campbell, Royal Governor of South Carolina
William Few, Georgia militia leader
William Henry Drayton, South Carolina firebrand patriot
William Howe, British supreme commander


Yorktown
VIRGINIA
WATAUGA VALLEY
Guilford
Hillsborough
NORTH CAROLINA
Neuse R.
King's Mountain
New Bern
Cape Fear R.
Cowpens
HORNET'S NEST AREA
Camden
SOUTH CAROLINA
Ninety Six
Wrightsborough
Santee R.
Orangeburg
Augusta
Savannah R.
Briar Cr.
Ogeechee R.
Edisto R.
Cooper R.
Charleston
Ocmulgee R.
Purrysburg
Beaufort
GEORGIA
Savannah
Altamaha R.
Fort McIntosh
Darien
St. Illa R.
St. Marys R.
Fort Tonyn
FLORIDA
St. Johns R.
St. Augustine
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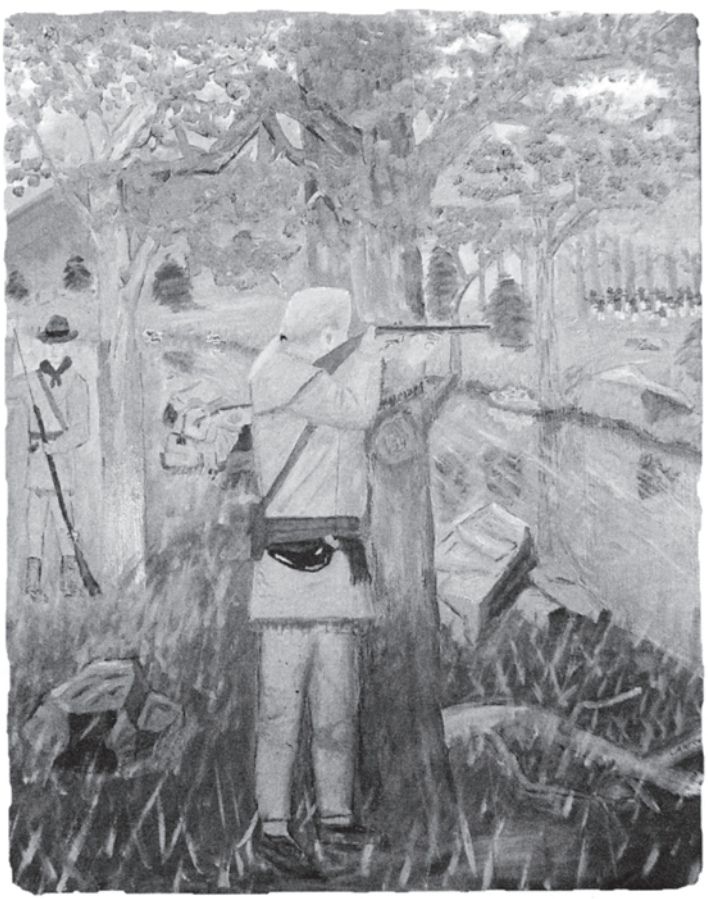
BOOK I

1763–1773



Chapter 1

The Philadelphia Cordwainers

1763

The young girl stood quiet and unseen behind the trunk of a large walnut tree, its leaves and branches scarred on one side by a recent fire. Her demeanor and even her clothing would have indicated to a careful observer that she led a relatively protected life in a family of modest means. Although concealed, she didn't appear to be ill at ease, but quite sure of herself. Her high-topped shoes were polished but plain, like new ones designed for a long life, and her black dress was of good quality but without frills of any kind. She wore a bonnet that only partially concealed her thick and somewhat unruly hair, most of it twisted into a tight bun on the back of her head. Hers was almost but not quite the same as clothing worn by the many Quaker families in Philadelphia.

From her vantage point on the edge of a side street among modest houses and shops, she could survey most of a small vacant lot—or one that was almost empty. There were the remnants of a burned house, its outline delineated by a rim of scorched weeds and grass. The lone chimney was standing and some of the foundation pillars were still visible, flat rocks only partially held together by blackened mortar. When the unoccupied house had burned the previous month, the neighbors had been successful in limiting the blaze to the one structure, largely because the nearest home was twenty feet away.

There was a boy working just beyond where the house had stood. She knew his name was Ethan, and that his father was Samuel Pratt, the neighborhood shoemaker. Recently she had volunteered to carry her father's shoes to be repaired and was disappointed when only Mr. Pratt had been in the shop. This was the third time she had come to watch Ethan, and she felt somewhat guilty. Her parents would have been surprised to see her doing anything devious or surreptitious. She was not afraid or embarrassed, but only reluctant to confront another person her age, and especially the boy she was watching.

On previous days she had seen him use a pinch bar to remove the few

remaining cut nails from charred boards and timbers, and carefully straighten each nail with a hammer and put it into an old bucket. Then he had gathered the wood debris against a leather apron that extended from his upper chest down to his thighs, and laboriously arranged the pieces in neat piles on the ground, each parallel to the others. Only after the ground within the foundation was cleared and swept smooth had the boy prepared his garden plot in what had been the backyard. He had cut down the weeds with a scythe, broken the ground with a pick and mattock, raked it level, and laid off rows with a hoe. He used two stakes and a taut string to make each furrow perfectly straight before moving to the next one. Now he was planting small pieces of white potato from a bucket in regularly spaced hills almost exactly a foot apart. The girl was fascinated by the care, persistence, and precision with which he labored, totally absorbed in his work. She noticed that there were no wasted movements of his agile hands.

Now she made a deliberate decision to move a few inches out into the open, and the boy looked up and saw her, she presumed for the first time. For a few seconds, they both seemed uncomfortable, not knowing what to say. She finally made a remark that she had carefully rehearsed: "It's interesting that those potatoes are akin to tomatoes."

Ethan, somewhat aggravated to be observed without knowing it, replied, "That's foolish. A potato grows under the ground, and tomatoes on a bush."

The girl thought for a while and said, "Then maybe my father's book is wrong."

"What kind of book?"

"It describes the different food plants produced in Europe."

Ethan was intrigued, but reluctant to continue talking with a stranger. He said, with something of a smile, "Well, you'd better take another look."

He turned to continue his work, and when he glanced up again, the girl was gone. This was one of the few times in his life that he had spoken directly with any girl other than his two sisters. He figured that she was probably about his age, since she was larger than his sisters. She was not unattractive, but dark eyebrows gave her face a somewhat brooding appearance. He was pleased that he had been able to correct her mistake, hoped that he had not hurt her feelings, and then forgot about her completely. He had no premonition that they would spend a good portion of their lives together.

Late the next afternoon he was watering some new onion plants and saw the girl approaching from across the nearby street. She had a book in her hand and walked directly toward the garden plot, without hesitation. When she arrived at the edge of the lot, she waited for him to speak first.

"Well, what did you find about the vegetables?"

Trying not to sound superior in any way, she glanced in the book and said, "Tomatoes and potatoes are both in the nightshade family, with a Latin name spelled *s-o-l-a-n-a-c-e-a-e*. They came from South America. My father has a special interest in the names and origins of plants." She paused for a few seconds and added, "And so do I."

She turned the book around and held it out to Ethan as he approached her, and without touching the pages, he read the text. Then he wiped his hands on his trousers, took the book, and thumbed through its pages, stopping to read a few sentences about corn, peas, okra, carrots, sweet potatoes, and other plants that he knew.

She said, "I told my father about your garden, and he said you could borrow the book if you wish."

When Ethan nodded and kept the book, the girl turned and began to walk away. He called after her, "I'm grateful. What is your name?"

"Epsey Nischman." She hesitated a few moments and then added, "My father is a Moravian minister, who teaches in our church's boarding school. We live about two hundred yards from here, and I have seen you working in the garden. My grandparents used to live in Savannah, Georgia, and my grandmother lives with us now."

They exchanged a little more information about each other, with Epsey describing a house "full of books" and parents interested in helping Indian tribes improve their lives with religious instruction and better farming practices. Epsey soon knew that Ethan was eighteen years old and he found out Epsey was two years younger.

Ethan said, "I've had a very small garden plot for several years just behind our house, but it's mostly in the shade. Only last weekend Mr. Parvey came in our shop to get his shoes repaired, saw me working in the backyard, and said if I would clean up this lot I could plant a garden. I'm to save the boards and nails for him and give him a third of the vegetables I grow."

"Why didn't you plant in the clean place where the house stood?"

"Because my father said that a hot fire would kill the ground for a year or two, so things won't grow on it."

Epsey offered to help him with his work, but he declined politely. She told him where she lived, and he promised to return the book the next Saturday morning.

As night approached, Ethan walked down a path behind the shops and small houses to the back door of the Pratts' home and entered the kitchen. His father and sisters were at the table, and his mother was preparing to serve supper.

"You're late again," she said. "We were just getting ready to eat."

"I've been in the new garden. I only have a couple of hours each day after the shop closes to work in it."

His father said, "You're not like Henry was. He always wanted to stay in the shop as long as he could."

Ethan decided not to reply.

The shop was not an unpleasant place. There were four workbenches in the center of the main room, spaced evenly around a lighting source that supplemented what came in through the windows and doors. A single high-quality candle burned in the center of four small globes filled with water, each the size of a large man's fist. Each created a prism that focused the candle's light in a small spot, and the shoemakers shifted their work to be in the brightest place. The soft leather for the upper shoe was stretched into proper shape, holes were punched with an awl, and strong linen or flax thread was used for sewing. Although steel needles were available, everyone preferred to use stiff hog bristles, which were enmeshed in the end of the thread and guided the fibers through the holes. The thick soles were often attached with small maple pegs. All the toes were square, and the shoes could be worn on either foot.

Samuel Pratt was from a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian family and had come from Ulster to Philadelphia as a young man. Most of his earlier friends had moved on into western Pennsylvania, but he had stayed in the city to ply his trade. He was a member of the Guild of Cordwainers, the older name for their craft. Mr. Pratt was proud of his shop and his trade, commenting often about its value to the community, the breadth of its contact with even the most elite members of Philadelphia society, and the fact that the Worshipful Company of Cordwainers had helped to finance Captain John Smith's first expedition to America in 1607, long before the Pilgrims came to Massachusetts.

The family lived in the heart of Philadelphia, where Mr. Pratt earned

enough to support his wife and four children, somewhat crowded into two rooms above the shop. In the larger room upstairs, two old blankets hung from a length of rope, with a bed on each side. The boys used the space nearest the door and the girls enjoyed a window that looked out on the street. On the ground floor, a narrow room extended all the way across the house behind the shoemaker shop, with a long table surrounded by two benches and two chairs occupying much of the floor space. The fireplace at one end provided warmth and a place for cooking, and supplies of leather goods were stored in shelves along the walls. Mr. Pratt sometimes worried about the future, but the other members of the family took it for granted that they would never lack anything they really needed.

Although Henry was the one who seemed to be interested in his father's trade and loved to be at the shoemaker's bench, the making and repairing of shoes and other leather goods just made possible the camaraderie and political discussions with customers and loungers that he really loved. He was small for his age, loved to be with people, and had many boyhood friends. Even when quite young, Henry joined in the discussions about the exciting political life of Philadelphia and its cultural and economic affairs. He worked rapidly and with great skill but despised taking orders and keeping records. Competition from other shoemakers in the city was intense and his father showed no inclination to retire and permit either of his sons to run the shop, so from an early age Henry's ambition was to move away from home, own his own place, and live an independent life. Influenced by some broadsheets distributed by the Guild of Cordwainers, Henry planned to travel to Norfolk, Virginia, and later to settle in western North Carolina, where he'd read that a number of Quakers had established new homes. He was never insubordinate to his parents and didn't want to cause them concern, so he shared his plans only with Ethan.

Ethan was the youngest child, born in 1745, two years later than his brother. He had little love for either the work or the talk of the shoemaker's shop. He was interested in tools, machines, and how things worked, but was even more fascinated with plants and how to grow them. Even as a small child, Ethan had felt closed in and restricted, and wanted mostly to be alone. He had always been quiet and aloof, disappointing his older sisters when he rejected their efforts to cuddle and care for him. Ethan was now tall, thin, blond, and handsome in a rough way. There had been a time when Henry was dominant, but Ethan was larger even before they became

teenagers, and after their first bodily contest they had learned to respect each other as physical equals. As soon as he could obtain his mother's permission, Ethan had begun moving his bedroll downstairs to a corner of the shop, but only for privacy during the night and not because he was attracted to the place during the working day.

He watched Henry with interest and sometimes embarrassment during busy hours in the shop. The conversations were often lively, and Henry would make loud, confrontational statements about political affairs, and was sometimes personally critical of prominent people in the city, including Benjamin Franklin and some of the more influential Quakers. The age or substantiality of other men in the shop never dampened his provocative opinions. Ethan soon realized that his brother would take diametrically opposite positions in subsequent discussions, obviously just to engender lively exchanges. Their father rarely commented except on matters that involved his own profession, and seemed to realize that part of his business was due to Henry's helping to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Ethan realized that when his brother left home, he would be expected to become his father's apprentice, customarily a commitment of six or seven years. He was always uncomfortable around other people and, taking advantage of Henry's presence, he escaped whenever possible to visit a nearby blacksmith or a cabinetmaker, where he volunteered to help them and carefully observed them at their craft. Without explaining or really expecting to have a place to use them, he asked Henry to help him acquire tools of his own with which he could work with wood. Henry found a small collection for sale at a low price in the estate of an older friend of their father. For years, Ethan had enjoyed working behind their shop in a small garden plot, only about twice the size of their kitchen table. He had experimented with various kinds of seeds and cultivation practices, and was proud when his vegetables helped supplement the family's diet. During the growing season he had tended the garden while the shop was closed or without customers, and considered it a source of pride to be called "farmer" by the other children.

He had finished planting his new and larger garden when Saturday morning came, and was strangely excited as he walked toward the Nischman's house. He assumed it was from the possible chance of seeing the big collection of books. He knocked timidly on the door, which was immediately snatched open by Epsey. She introduced him to her parents and

grandmother. Her father, Georg, asked Ethan how he had liked the book.

"Very much," the boy replied. "It has the kind of information I've always wanted but didn't even know was written down anywhere."

They moved into the library, a small room with walls covered by bookshelves filled with stacked magazines, old newspapers, and carefully arranged books.

"I inherited many of these from my father, the church has furnished me with others, and I have bought a few. Most of them are about religion and other practical subjects," Mr. Nischman said, then glanced at Ethan. He was pleased when the boy did not respond but acknowledged his small joke with a smile.

"You are welcome to come here anytime you wish, and there are some of these books that you can take home to read."

After that, Ethan visited the Nischman home often, and he and Epsey explored the library together. Ethan soon realized that she was thoroughly familiar with her father's work and assessed even the most mundane issue through its religious connotations. God was obviously directly involved in the characteristics of seeds and the plants they produced, and engaged in how they were grown and used. She soon found that the interests of her new friend were quite narrow, focused on subjects concerning farming, animal husbandry, handicrafts, and information about life in other parts of the New World. Although their motivations were unrelated, their involvement in farming overlapped because the Moravians were dedicated to sharing agricultural knowledge with native populations in the Caribbean islands and the more western regions of the colonies.

Epsey was soon working with Ethan in his garden, and Mr. Nischman helped them locate different varieties of seeds and seedlings with which Ethan had not been familiar. Ethan learned that Epsey was somewhat solemn but not unhappy and, unlike Ethan's, her parents were eager to gratify her modest wishes. She didn't talk much, which suited Ethan well, but they communicated without restraint on the management of the vegetable plots.

Neither Ethan nor Epsey had many friends, and both families obviously welcomed their growing friendship. Their courtship was just a series of small evolutionary steps of shared experiences, mostly involving the study of botany and geography and the planting and cultivation of the garden. The next summer, it seemed natural to everyone when they decided

to marry. Much later, when their relationship had become formal and permanent, Ethan couldn't remember the first time he held her hand or when he had given her the first, dutiful kiss.

That summer, Henry Pratt announced his intentions to leave home after Christmas. Ethan and Epsey were married two weeks after his departure, and they moved in with the Nischmans. Ethan continued helping his father in the shoemaker's shop and received a small salary that was enough to meet his new family's needs.

One day Mr. Pratt surprised Ethan by offering him a larger portion of the profits and telling him that he would someday own the shop, but Ethan replied that he and Epsey planned to join Henry as soon as he was settled in North Carolina. The Pratts were disappointed and angry, but Epsey's father was delighted with the decision. The Nischmans were obsessed with evangelizing the American Indians, and they were happy for their daughter and son-in-law to be living and perhaps doing missionary work in the backcountry.

CHAPTER 2

Sons of Liberty in Norfolk

1765

When Henry Pratt left Philadelphia, he took with him only what he could carry on his back: his clothes, some shoemaker's tools and supplies, and forty-three silver Spanish pieces of eight he had been able to save during the previous five years. His ultimate goal was to settle in North Carolina, but he was not in a hurry. He followed a relatively good road down through Delaware and Maryland, paused to spend two days in Annapolis, and then crossed over the Chesapeake Bay to Virginia on a ketch that served as a ferry. After wandering around the town and observing the bustling trade in leather goods, Henry decided to spend a few months in Norfolk.

His first visit, early on Monday morning, was to the largest and obviously most successful shoemaker shop, where he insisted on speaking directly to the owner.

When Mr. Carlyle arrived shortly before noon, Henry judged him to be

a serious businessman and explained to him that he had been a shoemaker in Philadelphia and wished to continue his trade in Norfolk. He added, to avoid any misunderstanding, that he was not an apprentice, but had years of experience.

The owner said that he had a vacancy and offered to take Henry on, on a trial basis. After some discussion, they decided that Henry would craft one pair each of men's and women's shoes, and they would then seek to reach an agreement on the terms of employment. Choosing the design of Philadelphia's latest styles, Henry quickly fashioned the shoes and presented them to Mr. Carlyle with a smile. He had to acknowledge Henry's skill and offered him a job as a regular employee, to be paid by the week as were his other workers. The young man politely declined this offer and said he would prefer to work with a fixed payment for each pair of shoes. After some careful assessment of how much he was actually paying his current shoemakers for each pair they produced, Mr. Carlyle made an offer, based on Henry's shoes being examined for quality before payment was made and the terms of their agreement not being revealed to the other shoemakers.

Henry accepted, pleased by an arrangement that would give him independence from the strict control of his employer, remove any limit on his maximum earnings, and permit flexibility in his working hours so that he could travel around the city during the daytime to learn about aspects of the leatherworking trade with which he was not acquainted.

To minimize his living expenses, Henry made arrangements with a nearby family to share two simple but ample meals each day, and got permission from his employer to set up a folding cot at night in the shoemaker's storeroom, where he would serve as something of a night watchman. When necessary, he worked there by candlelight to maintain an acceptable level of shoe production. Henry pleased his employer by producing shoes of good quality at a surprisingly high rate, sometimes more than two pairs a day.

He was able to work part-time at a large tannery, where he learned how to cure, dye, and finish the hides of cattle, unborn calves, deer, and horses, and the skins of sheep and goats. He accumulated a careful list of supplies he would need to produce leather for heavy belting for drive pulleys, saddles and harnesses, work shoes, and the finer grades used for jackets, hats, dress shoes, and other light apparel.

On his cot at night, surrounded by the reassuring odor of cured leather and sometimes the stench of the tannery left on his own clothes, Henry planned for his future in North Carolina. As he worked in the shop, he constantly accumulated information from customers who were familiar with the social and political situation in the western regions of the southern colonies.

Henry also visited a local tailor shop, which specialized in the production of fine leather purses, jackets, and other clothing. After he bought a pair of relatively expensive gloves, he obtained permission from the owner to visit the working area. There were several women cutting out patterns and sewing the soft and flexible leather, keeping their heads carefully averted as he walked down the narrow aisle between them, pausing on occasion to observe their work more closely. The last worker, relatively young, looked up at him from her task after he had watched her for a minute or so. Her eyes never wavered from his, they exchanged smiles, and that afternoon he waited outside the shop until she emerged.

Her name was Sophronia Knox but she preferred to be called Sophie, and it was immediately apparent that she welcomed the opportunity to become better acquainted with Henry. They walked to a nearby public area, found a bench, and exchanged information about each other. He quickly learned that Sophie lived with an uncle and aunt, and had never been to school but knew how to read, write, and work with figures. She had been apprenticed to the tailor since she was twelve years old and had begun to be paid a small hourly rate a year later. Sophie was satisfied that her wages were paid directly to her guardians. They treated her kindly, and she was pleased that for the past year she had been given four shillings a week to save or spend as she wished. She was seventeen years old and could not remember her parents, both of whom had died in an epidemic of fever when she was a small child.

Sophie, with her sparkling eyes, curly hair, white teeth, and full, voluptuous lips, aroused Henry in an intense way. She had an apparently unconscious habit of putting her fingers on him when they were talking to each other, and there were increasingly frequent times when her fingernail dragged across his chest or one of his biceps. She impressed Henry with her candor, and he was somewhat overwhelmed with the outpouring of opinions and information about every subject with which she was at all familiar. Although the scope of her life had been limited, she was obviously a

keen observer and eager to learn from others. It seemed she would never run out of things to report about her employer, fellow workers, her aunt and uncle, their immediate neighbors, people she had met at church, or her other few acquaintances. Even the simplest and most innocuous conversations or events filled her with a great reservoir of memories that to her were worth sharing.

She was apparently interested in everything Henry had to say, and since exchanging information had always been one of his favorite pastimes, they got along well from their first meeting. They were never at a loss for words, both waiting expectantly for their next opportunity to speak. Sophie's family was from Scotland, and her uncle still worked in a firm where her father had also been employed. Their primary business was buying tobacco, grading its quality, packing it in large hogsheads, and shipping it to Glasgow. There seemed to be a deep antagonism between the Scots and the English merchants in Norfolk, so Henry heard only disparaging comments from Sophie about anything to do with London.

Henry was eager to meet her uncle and was soon invited to their home, where he immediately felt at ease. Mr. Knox was proud of his work and relished telling Henry of the firm's progress and its ability to triumph over English competitors in capturing the lucrative tobacco trade. His particular responsibility was to expand the exchange of goods with Virginia farmers, who increasingly depended on the firm's providing them with whatever was necessary to produce a crop and to survive during the winter. He was not at all ashamed of their techniques for forging an almost inseparable tie to these producers of tobacco and wheat, based on a liberal credit policy that almost invariably resulted in indebtedness that could rarely be settled with the proceeds from a single crop. The farm families were, therefore, obliged to continue the exchange of their crops and livestock for implements, consumer goods, household supplies, food staples, and a limited amount of cash during the growing season. Because of his religious beliefs, Mr. Knox was personally opposed to slavery, but his business obligations permitted him to be flexible on the subject. There were some families in the area who refused to purchase slaves and insisted on working their own land, but Mr. Knox told Henry that the average tobacco producer in Virginia possessed twenty slaves.

He explained that although otherwise highly competitive, the merchants in Norfolk usually refrained from competing with one another for business

with a family that was already obligated to a firm. Since there was usually no other source of dependable credit, this permitted the merchants to "buy low and sell high," which produced maximum profit among them all. Factors and bankers in Glasgow and London backed Mr. Knox's company and others like it that provided year-round loans to colonial farmers. Interest rates were high, and the risks of losses were minimal. The danger of unpaid bills was offset by security deeds on land, property, and slaves, which more than covered the debts, and the merchants and factors frequently wound up owning plantations and smaller farms when the owners could not pay and faced foreclosure. As often as not, the bankrupt families simply abandoned their estates to move quietly to frontier lands for a new start.

The Knoxes were devout Presbyterians, and Henry attended services with them. He found that there was little formal ceremony there, but a strong dependence on the morning sermon. The clergyman was not reticent in expressing his views on current circumstances, finding little difficulty in connecting almost any political or social issue with an appropriate selection from the Scriptures. The sessions were filled with criticisms of the dominant Anglican Church, its closeness to the political authorities, and demands for the full independence of all worshippers. Members of the congregation seemed to be caught up in these issues, and they precipitated long Sunday-afternoon talks and sometimes mild arguments between Mr. Knox and Henry.

Although there were some political comments at church that were surprising and somewhat disturbing to Henry, Mr. Knox was even more outspoken in his home.

"I've always been a loyal subject of the crown, but King George the Third is so ignorant and incompetent that he has strained my confidence in the monarchy itself."

Henry had never heard such comments in his own family. Any negative references to the royal family would have been almost as unlikely as a personal criticism of Jesus Christ. In order to disassociate himself from Mr. Knox's opinions and, at the same time, to keep the conversation going, he replied, "Well, down through history we have often had monarchs who lacked perfect judgment. In fact, a few were known to be quite sinful and even mentally deranged."

Mr. Knox replied, "But this one has violated a long-standing principle that has been honored for more than a hundred years, when Charles the

First tried but failed to impose English worship services on Scotland. Since then, the king has acknowledged that Parliament has the power to govern. In fact, ever since the Magna Carta in 1215, citizens have been assured that there would be no taxation without representation. Otherwise, we Scots would never have joined with England sixty years ago."

Henry realized that he was at a disadvantage in this discussion. Mr. Knox was much more familiar with British history, and particularly with facets of it that applied to his own people.

"I thought it was Parliament that passed the Stamp Act earlier this year, and not King George?"

"The problem is that the king no longer stays aloof from the details of administration concerning the colonies, and injects himself into almost everything that is domineering and abusive. Instead of acting as something of a sea anchor, to provide stability and restraint while parliamentarians consider legislation carefully, he is in the forefront of wild and ill-considered decisions. His voice and influence are used to inflame the public and force Parliament to act against those of us in the colonies."

Henry replied, "But the final influence is with the people, and the leaders they choose to represent them in London."

"Henry, what you don't seem to understand is that in every colony, perhaps excepting Georgia, we have developed political systems that are much more democratic than anything Great Britain has ever known. Although the crown appoints the governors and their councils, all the colonies have some form of parliaments or assemblies that deal with internal matters. From town meetings in Massachusetts to legislatures in the Carolinas, the people have gained the right to make decisions about our own lives, including the levying of taxes. Until George became king in 1760, these rights were basically unchallenged, but since then he has encouraged Prime Minister Grenville to put the screws to the colonies. They've tried in every way to interrupt all navigation except trade that benefits Britain and is carried on British bottoms. We Scots will never forgive him. On top of that, the Stamp Act imposed on us from London is a direct violation of our freedom, and a departure from the ancient principle of no taxation without representation."

"Mr. Knox, I understand what you're saying, but I don't see that the Stamp Act is all that much of a problem."

"Son, aside from the legalities involved, it is an unbearable burden for

my business and for anyone else that has to deal in contracts, deeds, bills of sale, wills, or any other kind of legal documents. The tax is even imposed on playing cards, marriage licenses, newspapers, and pamphlets. This is something we cannot accept."

"I don't understand why this has happened. Why wasn't London satisfied with the way things were going?"

Mr. Knox hesitated a moment and then replied, "The answer to that is complicated. With the end of the French and Indian War, England had prevailed over all of her historic enemies and is now dominant in North America and on the world's seas. At the same time, there is a tremendous debt that has to be paid off, accumulated from all the military action. The colonists have also been a financial burden, with few if any taxes collected over here ever sent to England."

"But why single out the colonies? Didn't we do everything possible to help in the war against France?"

"Well, to be truthful, the answer is no. Most colonial governments met the official requests from London for financial contributions, which rarely even covered the expenses of the colonies. But, in fact, a lot of merchants, including my own company, continued to trade freely with the French even during the conflict. It was very lucrative for us, and the British seem to resent it even more now than when the war was under way. This is one of the main arguments that the king has used against us. About ten thousand of the British troops that were fighting the French and the Indians are now quartered over here, and some hotheads in Parliament claim that our taxes should be used to pay this cost."

"Mr. Knox, I noticed that you said we can't accept the stamp tax. If you refuse to pay the tax, I don't see how any jury made up of your neighbors would ever punish you."

Knox nodded. "That brings up another problem, just as serious as the tax. Parliament has also mandated that any violators would have to be tried in British admiralty courts, appointed and controlled from London, and not by a jury of our peers. Many of our prominent men, including Patrick Henry and George Washington, have spoken out publicly against these threats to freedom in all the colonies."

"Then with so many British soldiers in the colonies, what can we do?"

"Some things are already being done, as I'm sure you have heard. There have been riots in some of the port cities, especially further north in New

England, and many merchants along the coast are trying not to buy British goods. I know for a fact that this has become a serious problem for my own home company in Scotland, and the financial and mercantile leaders are hurting much worse in London and are calling for a repeal of the Stamp Act."

Henry didn't respond further, but the conversation had a great impact on him. At the shoemaker's and the tannery, he repeated and even embellished on the points made by Mr. Knox. He found, however, that few of his fellow workers had any concern about the Stamp Act, since none of them had needed to use legal documents since the law was passed. Most of them were somewhat uncomfortable when Henry extended his criticisms beyond the Parliament and prime minister and referred personally to the king, and he soon had a reputation as a source of dissension against the government in England.

One afternoon, as Henry left the tannery, two young men were waiting for him at the gate.

The older one asked, "Are you Henry Pratt?"

"Yes. Why do you ask?"

"We have heard that you have spoken out against the Stamp Act. Is that right?"

"Well, that's really none of your business. Before I answer, you'll have to tell me your purpose in coming to see me."

"We belong to a small organization that is devoted to opposing this unfair and oppressive law, and we're looking to find kindred souls. We were hoping you could join us for a tankard of ale, or whatever refreshment you prefer."

"Well, I'm indeed thirsty after a hard day's work and would be glad to share a drink with you."

When seated at a nearby tavern, the men introduced themselves as Shelby Somers and Daryl Gethers, and they claimed that both their families were large landowners. Henry could soon tell that his new acquaintances were well educated and knowledgeable about political affairs in the Commonwealth, and they wanted him to join a group that they called the Sons of Liberty, also known as the Liberty Boys.

"We don't have much of an organization," they explained, "but we are dedicated to two basic activities. One is to help encourage and enforce an

agreement among all merchants to avoid buying or using goods from England. The other is to induce British officials not to use the official paper with expensive stamps on it."

Henry was quiet for a while, took a long drink of ale, and then asked, "How could you do these things?"

"First of all," said Somers, "we have the backing of the gentry, which includes most of the political and commercial leaders in Virginia. Our own fathers are prominent and influential. The basic premise is that we are loyal citizens who only demand the same rights that have been guaranteed in Great Britain for generations and that have always been assumed in the colonies. We're not blaming the king. Prime Minister Grenville, who brought about all these problems, has now been removed from office, and we believe that King George will be looking for some way out of this confrontation with the colonies. We just want to encourage everyone in England to realize what a terrible mistake the Parliament has made."

"Why do you need me, if all you aristocrats are united in opposition to the Stamp Act?"

"We've heard about your strong opinions on this matter, and we need someone who is familiar with the good people who are shoemakers, tanners, and other artisans. And to be frank with you, we know of your close relationship to Mr. Knox. He is a good man, and as a Presbyterian and a Scot, he can be very influential among the merchants who are not tied directly to London. His company might be touched by the embargo against trade with England. It would be helpful if they would join us, and you might help us avoid hurting the merchants in Glasgow and concentrating on those in London. That's where the pressure needs to be applied."

"I'm inclined to help you all, but I'd like to talk to Mr. Knox first. He doesn't tell me what to do, and I know he's as opposed to the Stamp Act as I am. But maybe he could give us some good advice."

The young men quickly agreed, and they parted company.

Henry looked forward to his next Sunday-afternoon talk with Mr. Knox, who also relished having such an eager listener. This time, Henry took the initiative and described his conversation with Somers and Gethers, but without naming them. The response was immediate and clear.

"I've known about the Sons of Liberty for several months, and I agree with their basic purpose. All the leaders in our company, including those in Scotland, are strongly opposed to the Stamp Act in the colonies, consider-

ing it to be abusive and counterproductive. Many of us believe that the purpose behind it is not just to develop something of a trade monopoly for England and raise revenue, but also to keep the colonies in a weakened financial condition. Some London factors have deliberately encouraged landowners in America to accumulate a load of debt that they know can never be repaid.

"At the same time, we're concerned about an embargo, because we fear that our own merchants in Glasgow might suffer along with those in London. We have a number of ships in the Carolinas and Georgia right now loaded with rice and ready to go to Europe, and an embargo would cost us a lot of money. Although we are prepared to suffer some consequences, we would certainly like to see maximum pressure brought where it will do the most good, by inducing London to change its policies."

Without saying so, Mr. Knox clearly approved of Henry's joining the Sons of Liberty and proceeded to tell him how the effect of trade restraints might be focused on English merchants, manufacturers, and shipowners. Henry listened carefully and soon shared this advice with the Sons of Liberty.

After that, Henry maintained an acceptable level of shoe production but cut back on his work at the tannery. He spent all his spare time with the group. He learned that Somers was the leader and that his father was a large landowner near Norfolk and also a member of the House of Burgesses, the parliament of colonial Virginia. As had been originally explained to Henry, the members of the Sons of Liberty were divided into two groups. One, in which Henry was mostly involved, obtained information about commerce in the port city. They built up a list of all goods being imported and the national origin of each item. Some, like rum, came from the Caribbean. Others, like paint, glass, and firearms, mostly came from England. In these cases, the Sons of Liberty learned where they could be obtained from other countries. Where England was the only known supplier, they decided to urge Virginians to refrain from buying the item at all, a point that had been emphasized by George Washington, a prominent member of the House of Burgesses. Although the Commonwealth's only newspaper, the Virginia *Gazette,* refused to publish anything that was critical of the mother country's government, the lists were promulgated widely on leaflets and posters, and it was soon obvious that they were having an effect.

The other group, which Henry joined on a few occasions, organized

demonstrations against officials who had custody of stamped paper, attempting to intimidate them against using the documents for the collection of the tax. Although there was news of riots and acts of violence against determined British officials in some of the colonies, most of those in Norfolk soon pledged not to distribute the stamps if the crowds around their homes and offices would disperse. Sophie was eager to join in the demonstrations, but both Henry and Mr. Knox objected that this was an improper role for a woman.

The activities of the Sons of Liberty were well known to the public, but Henry pleased Mr. Knox by informing him in advance about most of their plans. As a result, Henry received financial contributions that he was able to share with the Sons of Liberty to cover their expenses for posters and brochures.

The Sunday-afternoon conversations at the Knox home continued as usual and covered an increasingly broad range of subjects. With Henry's developing interest in political affairs, he looked forward to these sessions, and the older man was well practiced in expounding his rigid opinions and priorities. Although normally opinionated himself, Henry was able to admit his ignorance about many subjects, and both he and Sophie asked one question after another without hesitation. One afternoon Henry decided to explore a very basic question, which he was sure every educated person must understand.

"Mr. Knox, what is the difference between people who live in England and those who live over here? How can we have such conflicting ideas if we share the same history, speak the same language, and are loyal to the same royal family?"

"Henry, there is a natural difference between those who have stayed at home in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales and their kinfolk who decided to leave home and move here to America. Each group believes itself to be superior. Colonists think that those still in Europe lack initiative, are not courageous enough to depart on an unpredictable adventure, or don't have the foresight to take advantage of new opportunities. They seem to be docile, willing to accept encroachments on their political or religious freedoms, and to accommodate with little question the changing policies of their government. On the other hand, we have come to find freedom, to worship in various ways, to begin new lives, to challenge what is in effect an unknown continent, and to suffer hardship if necessary to achieve

these goals. Does this describe the attitude of most of the people you know?"

Sophie replied, "That's certainly the way I see the situation. How can the folks back in Britain disagree with this?"

"There are different opinions on both sides. Some people back in the old country agree with our views, as many of the gentry, particularly in Virginia, still consider anything in London to be superior—even the people there. Some of these are what you might call the outcasts of the gentry class, including a lot of second and third sons who received no inheritance. You can observe them here in Norfolk attempting in every way possible to copy life as it is in England and considering themselves superior to the rest of us. They think that it was mostly misfits who left home, including radical worshippers like the Pilgrims, Quakers, Baptists, Mennonites, and even Presbyterians, all inferior in the eyes of the Almighty. In fact, we have to admit that a number of the settlers have come over here as paupers and indentured servants, having failed to earn a living back home. On the bottom, maybe, are a large group of criminals who have been paroled to provide a workforce in the colonies, although often their crimes were just the nonpayment of debts.

"In any case, when someone leaves a mother country, it is a case of separation or rejection, either voluntary or involuntary. This drives something of a wedge between people."

Henry considered this for a few moments and then asked, "But aren't the colonies very valuable to Britain, to provide things like cotton, timber, rice, indigo, and tobacco, and also a market for England's manufactured goods?"

"Well, I certainly think so, but there are prominent Englishmen who disagree. They believe there is a limited amount of wealth in the world, and as much of it as possible should be attracted to the mother country. Compared to the Caribbean, India, and Africa, the colonies in America have not been very lucrative in trade, and at the same time are too costly to hold. I noticed recently that some leading members of our Parliament were condemning the decision at the end of the French and Indian War to keep Canada, calling it just thousands of acres of barren wilderness. They thought one small island in the Caribbean would be much more valuable. Another problem is that our population over here has exploded, multiplying tenfold just in this century—now almost a third as many as there are back home—and we are becoming more and more difficult to manage from such a distance."

Sophie said, "Well, I can understand the advantages of India and the Caribbean, but don't see anything attractive about Africa."

Mr. Knox hesitated a moment before saying, "This is something not much discussed, but the slave trade provides a steady stream of money back to England, a lot of it through Liverpool. The colonies in tropical climates must have workers to accommodate the extreme heat, and the British have found that a few places to buy slaves along the West African coast are as good as gold mines. The British elite pretend to disassociate themselves from slave traders, but they are deeply and eagerly involved in the accumulation of the profits, even as they look the other way."

Mr. Knox had finally touched upon a subject that he usually avoided. With this one exception, he was able to correlate his political opinions with his interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. As an honest and devout man, he could not defend the involvement of his company in the slave traffic, but he attempted to rationalize what he was doing.

"We never buy slaves," he explained, "but sometimes become the unwilling owner when we have to foreclose on a farmer and he has Negroes as part of his property. Also, when we resell a slave that we come to own, we are careful to have him resold by responsible dealers."

Sophie asked, "But don't you lend money to them to buy slaves?"

It was obvious that Mr. Knox was uncomfortable with the logic of his explanations. Although he couldn't relate his actions to his basic religious standards, he was able to compare them favorably with those of other merchants.

"This is unavoidable when Negroes are necessary for the operation of a plantation. If there is any appreciable acreage, there is no way for a landowner to produce rice or tobacco, for instance, without a lot more labor than his own family can provide. We would have to go out of business if we were the only ones who refused to make loans to meet such a need, but we try to use our influence to minimize abuse by cruel and greedy owners, so it's probably better for the slaves to have us make the loan than most of our competitors. Although they deny it by having different names as owners of the slave ships, some of our British competitors are even bringing blacks from Africa over here to be sold."

Mr. Knox went on to explain that prosperous Englishmen dominated the Commonwealth government in Williamsburg, crafting laws that were almost invariably self-serving, and often to the detriment of lower-class Vir-

ginians and those like the Scots who competed in trade between London and the colonies. A strict man in his personal habits, Mr. Knox condemned especially the wealthy families who patterned their social lives after the aristocracy of England, and who, he said, often outdid the people "back home in London" in drunkenness, frivolity, and apparent obsession with their pedigrees. Henry was surprised to perceive the intensity of his older friend's animosity toward the landed gentry, some of whom were his firm's largest customers.

Later, Henry and Sophie agreed that her uncle was not completely logical in his explanations. His sympathies seemed to be with tenants, yeomen, and small farmers, but he had to admit that, as a merchant, he was forced to cast his lot with the dominant elite on matters that affected his own company.

The next Sunday, Henry somewhat reluctantly asked a question that revealed his relative ignorance about political alignments and the history of the mother country.

"Mr. Knox, what's the difference between Whigs and Tories?"

Mr. Knox laughed softly and responded, "Well, both names came about a hundred years ago from the other side as something of a curse. 'Whig' originally meant a horse thief, and later referred to people like me–a Scottish Presbyterian inclined to question the policies of a king. 'Tory' referred to an outlaw whose first loyalty was to the pope. Later, the Whigs were inclined to be those who placed their faith in business and commerce while Tories represented the Anglican Church and honorary titles–all tied to favors handed out by the crown. Nowadays, I would say that Tories and Loyalists are about the same, while Whigs are those that are emboldened to question some of the decisions made by King George the Third. As you can well imagine, there are radicals on both sides who tend to bring credit or discredit on the names, depending on the attitude of the observer."

Sophie and Henry spoke almost simultaneously: "I guess that makes me a Whig."

Mr. Knox said, "I may be one also."

Sophie was familiar with Mr. Knox's prejudices and was reluctant to probe them openly, but alone with Henry she analyzed their conversations with pleasure, humor, and objectivity. Although she usually agreed with her uncle, she could understand and empathize even with pompous aristocrats, slave owners, English merchants, and the laggard workers in the

tailor shop. Henry, on the other hand, almost invariably had sharp and carefully defined opinions on almost every subject; there was seldom any middle ground for him. Inevitably, they argued often, but there was one subject on which they agreed: they would be going together when Henry was ready to depart for western North Carolina.

Sophie helped Henry with the next letter to his family in Philadelphia. It was an unusually long and friendly one, designed to make as good an impression as possible. Henry described what he had learned about the leather trade and thanked his father for the good training he had received as a shoemaker. He wanted Ethan to know about his plans to move to North Carolina the first week in October and wondered if his brother still planned to come to the frontier region. Henry hoped that his two sisters had found beaus and were soon to start their own families, and revealed the surprising news that he and Sophronia Knox were soon to be married. He and his wife-to-be both promised to write to their families after they arrived in their new home.

Both Henry and Sophie were eager to be married and on their way, and Henry announced that they would go to the courthouse and have the local magistrate perform the ceremony. Sophie thought longingly of her "bridal chest" and some of the fancy clothing that she and the Knoxes had accumulated since her childhood, but she kept her initial objection to herself. Somewhat hesitantly, they informed Mr. Knox of their plans as they prepared to eat their next Sunday meal in his home. Henry noticed Sophie and Mr. Knox murmuring to each other and was glad to see that both of them were smiling, obviously pleased with plans for the expeditious ceremony.

That afternoon, as the two men sat on the front porch for their customary discussion about affairs of the day, Mr. Knox said, "Henry, as you may know, Sophie has turned over to me a portion of her wages ever since she became employed, and she now has a tidy sum that will be helpful in setting up housekeeping in North Carolina."

Henry was surprised and responded, "Mr. Knox, Sophie has told me that this has always been her contribution to help pay her share of the expenses in your home."

"Nonsense! You will have unpredictable expenses, and Mrs. Knox and I are well able to help. We consider her to be our daughter, and we will add a contribution of our own to her dowry. In addition, we will purchase the required stamps for your marriage license."

Henry was startled and exploded in anger. "No, sir! I'll be damned if there will be a British stamp on anything of mine!"

Mr. Knox was very proper in his own speech, and this was the first time he had heard an expletive come from Henry's lips. Henry's face flushed, and he apologized for his outburst. Neither of them spoke for a while, until finally Henry said, "I know we can't go to the courthouse, and it might even be a problem with a public ceremony in the church."

Mr. Knox responded, "Maybe Sophie would agree to a nice, quiet service here in our home. I'm sure our pastor will not insist on a stamped marriage certificate."

Standing just inside the window behind a curtain, Sophie smiled to herself, went to her room, and began laying out the bonnet, veil, and lacy dress that she would be wearing during the ceremony in the front parlor, as she had been planning since the first day she had met Henry Pratt.

CHAPTER 3

A Corrupt Royal Government

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pratt moved to Orange County, North Carolina, and set up housekeeping in the growing settlement called Childsburg in the late winter of 1765, the year before the town's name was to be changed to Hillsborough. This was the trading center for a community in the foothills of western North Carolina, lying almost equidistant from the Neuse and Haw rivers. Many backcountry farmers had moved in from Pennsylvania, to escape the restrictive Quaker oligarchy or just seeking new land. Some families had lost their previous jobs or property, and others were dissatisfied with their relatively inferior economic and social status in the coastal regions. They were a highly diverse population, who had come originally from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, and a few from Scandinavia. They paid little attention to organized religion, except for those in a nearby settlement of Quakers. All the newcomers considered themselves to be pioneers, establishing a new society whose overall premise was freedom and individuality. By choice and necessity, they were almost totally self-sufficient, importing just a few staples like iron, rum, gunpowder,

and salt, and exporting mostly animal pelts and cattle. As soon as the farm families could meet their own needs for food grain and a garden, they cleared additional land for cash crops, mostly tobacco, and sometimes flax and indigo.

When Henry told the community officials that he was an experienced shoemaker, they welcomed him with enthusiasm and immediately offered him a choice of several empty lots near the center of town. But knowing the characteristics of a tannery, Henry suggested instead a site on the eastern outskirts of the village near a small stream so that he could wash his hides and the prevailing westerly breezes would carry the obnoxious odor of curing hides away from other residents. He and Sophie built a small shop with living quarters upstairs, very similar to what he had known in Philadelphia.

When it was completed, Sophie selected a broad and smoothly planed board and painted SANDY CREEK LEATHER SHOPPE on top, with HENRY PRATT, PROP. underneath, which Henry nailed over the front door. On the back of their property, he erected a large, open-sided shed for the curing of hides. The Pratts had no other competition in the community except for a Quaker shoemaker several miles away who served mostly other Quakers, so Henry was soon busy repairing and selling shoes, saddles, harnesses, saddlebags, and even leather fire buckets lined with pitch. Sophie was somewhat disappointed that most housewives did their own sewing, but there were enough unmarried men to buy the gloves, vests, and tunics she produced. One, a long, loose-fitting shirt called a "wamus," was especially popular, and she filled a few orders for leather caps and hats.

Both having come from the more stylish coastal area and having been involved in producing clothing themselves, they were interested in what the frontier people wore. All apparel was handmade, of durable leather or heavy woven fabric that could be taken apart and sewn back together. Some farmers and woodsmen had leather shoes, but Indian moccasins were more common, often stuffed for comfort or warmth with moss or buffalo hair. Their headgear was a slouch felt hat or, in winter, a fur cap of coonskin, bear, fox, or squirrel, usually with a tail in back.

Frontier women wore linen or linsey-woolsey dresses called "Mother Hubbards," often hanging straight down, or with a cloth belt around the waist in an attempt at style. The only undergarments were petticoats, made of the same material. Housewives usually wore aprons to protect the dress.

Woolen or quilted capes were added for warmth, and most preferred linen bonnets or shawls. Footwear was similar to that of men, except that a surprising number of women wore wooden shoes.

Emulating his father, Henry arranged for his shoemaker shop to be a place for customers and loafers to spend an hour or so, sitting on two long benches near his workplace and discussing the affairs of the day while he continued with his work. To permit the men to engage in their masculine discussions, Sophie did her work in their living quarters upstairs, where she could still overhear their arguments and ribald jokes when she chose to do so.

Although they had enjoyed a delightful and adventurous sexual relationship, it was only after they settled in Hillsborough that Henry and Sophie realized that they were deeply in love. They explored the community together on Sundays, and at other times, when the shop was closed, found it easy to share their most intimate thoughts, and yearned for each other when they were apart. Henry was even inspired, on occasion, to write a poem for Sophie, expressing feelings on paper that he could not otherwise put into words.

For the first few months Henry and Sophie concentrated their efforts on establishing a good business, and the discussions in his shop were somewhat restrained and cautious. He resolved just to listen until he knew his customers and the loungers better, but he was naturally loquacious among his peers and couldn't restrain himself for more than a few days. His first impressions were of how different life was in this frontier area, compared with what it had been in Philadelphia and Norfolk. Even though there was a clear distinction and natural incompatibility between the rich and poor families in Orange County, both groups seemed relatively satisfied with the status quo when the Pratts arrived in Hillsborough. The social and political divisions seemed secondary to a common scramble to establish new lives in a strange environment.

His impressions changed when a small group of regulars at the shoemaker shop began to stay for an hour or so after Henry quit working, to share a few pitchers of ale and enjoy a more frank and incisive discussion. Henry was caught up in the arguments and intrigues of the region and soon aligned himself with the small property owners, workers who had no businesses of their own, and farm families and tradesmen who wanted

freedom to manage their own lives. None of them shared the social status or governmental authority of the more prosperous merchants, large landowners, and courthouse politicians, most of whom derived their wealth and influence from ties to their equivalents on the coast.

Henry's new friends combined their skills as raconteurs with an eagerness to learn as much as possible about the political situation in their own area. They were fascinated with Henry's description of his involvement in Norfolk with the Sons of Liberty, and he repeated some of the political opinions he had derived from them and from Mr. Knox. One of the group, Richard Pyle, was employed as a scribe in the courthouse and, despite the danger of losing his job, was willing to share with Henry and a few others information that was recorded there on wills, tax digests, and property transfers. It was clear that, as in other communities, the powerful families were using every device to increase their wealth and influence. In Orange County, their procedures were not always legal or proper.

Ethan had planned to follow his brother to North Carolina as soon as Henry was settled. However, their father was ill when Henry arrived in Hillsborough, and Ethan felt obligated to work full-time just to take care of the shop. Though Mr. Pratt recovered well enough to walk around the city and visit with friends, he still seemed to be reluctant to resume his duties at the shoemaker's bench. Ethan and Epsey soon began to suspect that this was a pretense to prevent their leaving home, and insisted that Samuel Pratt take on a young apprentice, who proved to be ambitious and competent. While he was being trained, the young couple delayed their departure and contented themselves with studying the increasingly eloquent and descriptive letters from Henry's new wife, who seemed eager to share information about their lives.

On occasion, Epsey responded to Sophie's letters, telling little about their humdrum life in Philadelphia. Instead, she mostly asked questions that she and Ethan wanted answered about their future home, which was obviously a rapidly changing community. They learned that the population of the settlement had increased greatly, just seven years after the first permanent merchants and tradesmen had opened their stores on the site. Farmers who lived in more remote areas, where Ethan planned to settle, could exchange produce for basic necessities in small hamlets near their homes or isolated general stores owned by some of the larger landowners.

But Hillsborough was the major center of commerce and trade and also the county seat of Orange County, and all legal affairs had to be conducted in the courthouse.

There was little ongoing relationship between most families in this frontier area and those who had occupied the coastal areas for more than a century. The backcountry was in the foothills, and the upper reaches of the fast-flowing streams were not navigable: only logs could go through the numerous rapids and falls, or small cargo that could be portaged around the difficult places. Farmers had to depend on packhorses to move their goods to the nearest barge sites, and development of road transportation was slow and spasmodic. There was a natural difference of interest and in wealth between the coastal plain and the hill country.

Epsey was relieved to learn that there were few slaves in the area. For instance, as late as 1763 in Orange County, fewer than one family in ten owned any slaves and most of those had only two or three, who worked in the woods and fields side by side with the landowner. Sophie knew from Mr. Knox that in the older settlements of the coastal region, half of the households had slaves, an average of about twenty each. Also, money was scarce in the backcountry and possessions were minimal. Henry relayed information from Richard Pyle that probated wills at the Hillsborough courthouse showed an average wealth of families to be less than £200, including land, implements, livestock, crops in storage, and all personal belongings. This was a relief to Ethan and helped him plan for his financial needs before leaving Philadelphia.

It was inevitable that the situation around Hillsborough would continue to change. The western land was productive, and with tobacco prices skyrocketing and little new land available, property values increased rapidly. Many of the original settlers, especially within ten miles or so of the county seat, found that their small land holdings would sell at a price higher than they had ever expected. Their more affluent and ambitious neighbors were eager to buy land whenever a small farmer was in financial trouble or ready to move farther west. There was a surge of transactions that required action by officials at the courthouse, including land titles, bills of sale, crop mortgages, deeds to secure debts, tax assessments, and liens.

The number of lawyers proliferated to handle these legal affairs and to interpret the stream of laws and directives that were coming from the royal

governor and his council. New agreements were now being legalized among the more influential Carolinians to take advantage of opportunities opened to them, and punitive laws had to be enforced against both actual criminals and those who failed through ignorance or design to comply with the complex regulations.

Henry Pratt became increasingly knowledgeable about North Carolina political affairs as he and his friends shared ideas and information with one another. Governor William Tryon was loyal to the crown and, although unsuccessful in his efforts, used every means short of violence to suppress protesters of the British Stamp Act. A shrewd political tactician, he consolidated his hold on the colonial government, carefully maintained a subservient council, and spread a net of other loyalists throughout the colony, bound together by mutual advantage. Tryon consolidated his control over the remote areas of the colony by appointing all the sheriffs, judges, tax assessors, and clerks, and secured their loyalty through bribery, intimidation, or by tacit permission for them to enrich themselves at the expense of the general public.

Although he was criticized on the coast, the greatest outcry against Tryon's policies came from frontiersmen in the region around Hillsborough, including Orange and Alamance counties. Knowing this, and despite the rapidly growing population in the west, Tryon made sure that the eastern counties retained control by dividing favored counties into smaller units, each having its own allotment of delegates. There was no practical way to appeal these decisions, since respected British courts were thousands of miles away, and Tryon seemed to be one of London's favorite royal appointees. These concerns became an obsession with Henry Pratt and others, who shared their frustrations with one another.

Most of the Pratts' favorite customers were farmers, who came by on their monthly shopping expeditions to be measured for shoes, to buy harnesses and sometimes clothing, or to acquire tanned hides as raw material for their own handicrafts. Others who came to the shop more regularly were townsmen, who would sometimes buy an item but mostly enjoyed a congenial place for conversation. Jokingly, they began to call themselves the Sandy Creek Association, and would refer to their visits as "a meeting of the association."

Henry was one of the more aggressive members of the group. "We can-

not afford to be timid, and nobody else is speaking out for us. We've got to grab everybody's attention, and the best way is to be strong and bold," he urged them.

Richard Pyle responded, "Well, I work in the courthouse and hear a lot of complaints and also some of the responses. The people are confused about what's going on, and don't understand what their relationship ought to be with the officials. Just going public with our criticisms won't be helpful or gain much support for our position."

Henry didn't like to be questioned so clearly in his own place and responded, "Richard, we are not in the business of protecting your courthouse masters from tough criticism. Everybody knows what is going on around there, so why shouldn't we just come out with it?"

Others joined in, somewhat cautiously. "We need to keep it simple." "Maybe the high ground would be better." "Are we going to put our names on the petition?" "We ought to make some good recommendations, not just criticize."

After a long discussion, Henry found a way to back down without losing face.

"Why don't you let me draft something, based on my experience in Norfolk? I know what worked there, and I'll try to catch what all of us seem to be saying. It certainly ought to be simple, clear, and keep us on a sound footing. When I get it done, in a day or two, all of us can go over it and change it around until everybody agrees."

With Sophie's help and strong advice, Henry worked laboriously over the statement. They talked back and forth for a while, and finally Henry said, "Why don't we just call for some kind of public meeting and let people bring up their grievances and also demand a citizen's right to give instructions to the courthouse crowd?"

Sophie exclaimed, "That's it! It's simple, clear, just calls for our basic rights, and is something that could be done."

The next day Henry was proud of their work, especially when everyone else agreed with the statement. With a few changes, they had it printed up, signing it "Members of the Sandy Creek Association."

Their decision was admirable and idealistic, but most of them soon came to realize that it was politically naive. The statement dealt almost exclusively with local offices and called for regularly scheduled public meetings in which the citizens could let their views be known and also issue