

Conscience and Conflict:

The Quaker Experience in the American Revolution

Rhonda R. McClure, Senior Genealogist

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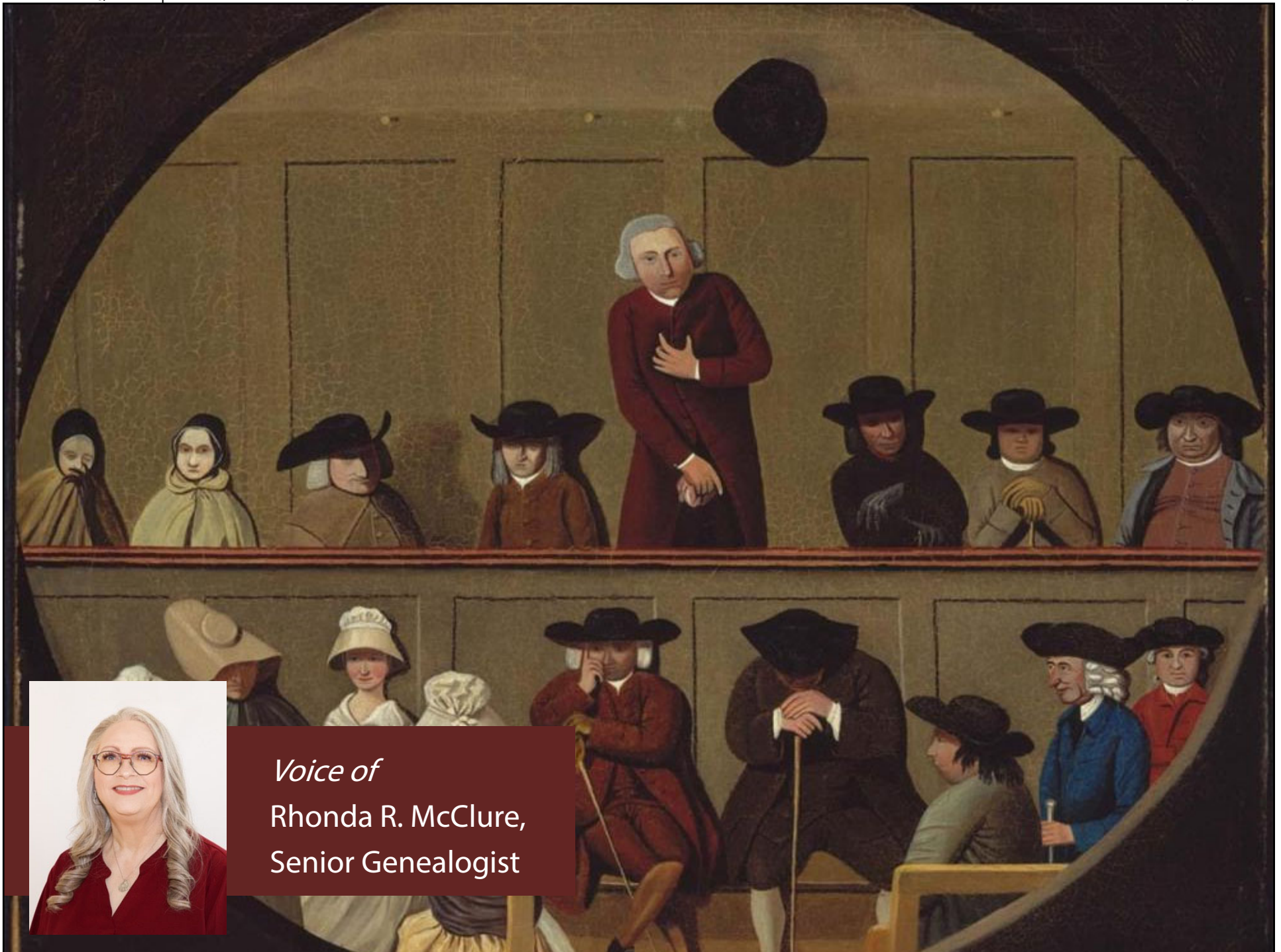
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Meet today's presenter



Rhonda R. McClure

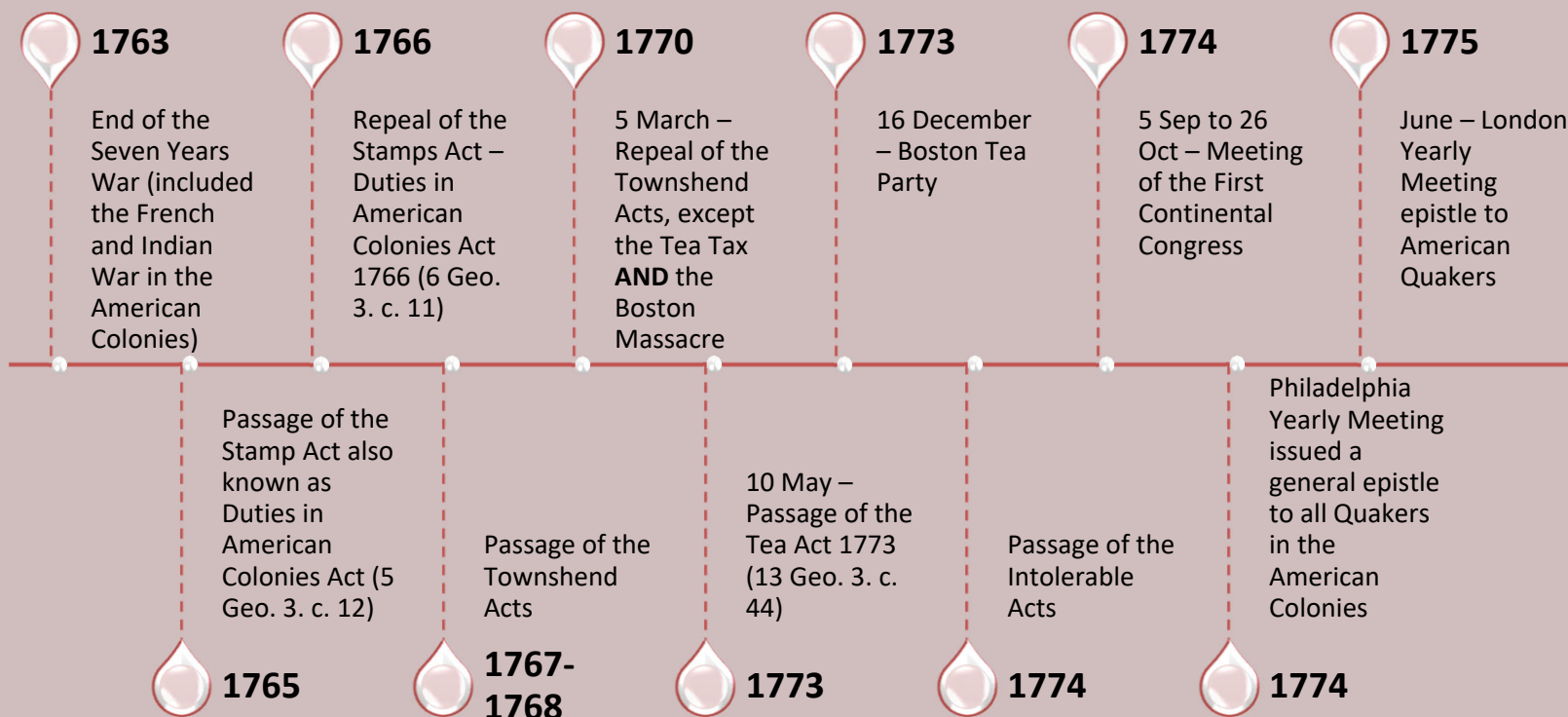
Senior Genealogist



Voice of
Rhonda R. McClure,
Senior Genealogist

Historical Context

Historical Timeline



Quaker Beliefs

- Do not take up arms
- Do not swear oaths
- Do not support paid ministry
- Do not remove their hats in admiration
- Do not pay taxes to support war

Massachusetts

Massachusetts

- Nantucket
- Boston Tea Party
- William Rotch, St.
 - Bayonets
 - Accused of Treason

Boston Tea Party

- Response to the Tea Act of 1773
- Arrival of three ships
 - Dartmouth (owned by Francis Rotch – Quaker)
 - Beaver (owned by William Rotch – Quaker)
 - Eleanor (owned by John Rowe)
- Francis Rotch tried to get permission for the Dartmouth & Beaver to return to England

Boston Tea Party





1775 Map by a British Officer

Norman B. Leventhal Map Center,
Boston Public Library

It being moved in this meeting relative to such who are in Fellowship with us & had some boats taken from them the last summer by a part of the Provincial Army whether they can consistently with our profession receive the Value of the said Boats; It is concluded that Jonathan Macy, Nathanael Gardner & Lth (Lisby) Jan^s Seth Gardner Stephen Coffin & Pelag Folger are appointed to consider of the affair & return their judgment thereof in writing to our next monthly meeting - - - A Certificate in behalf of our Friend Stephen Coffin Jun^r bound on a Visit to the Oblong & nine portholes to tarry the ensuing Winter was granted herein & signed by the Clerk Collected in this meeting - 20th 1st 10

L S &
20th 1st 10

At a monthly meeting of Friends held on Nantucket the 27th of the 11th mo 1775 Daniel Macy & Joseph Mitchel being appointed by the preparative meeting to attend this meeting are present. Tristram Folger & Nehoda Huppy appeared & declared their Intentions of taking each other in Marriage Thomas Clark & Silvanus Gardner are appointed to inspect Tristram Folgers Clearness respecting Marriage & return an answer in writing to our next monthly meeting. The Friends appointed to attend Christopher Gardners marriage returned that they had so done & found nothing but what was pretty

18th of the 11th month 1775

Nantucket MM Men's Minutes 1775

ing of their record at - - - - - The Friends appointed to examine Jonathan Furins affairs respecting his removal make return that they have so done; but do not find that he has taken such care in settling his affairs as they think Truth requires. But they are still desir'd to make further Enquiry & make return to the next monthly meeting - - - - - The Friends appointed to consider & give their judgment whether it was consistent for Friends who had their station from them by a part of the Provincial Army to take the Pay for them do make return that they have considered thereof & think Friends had best be clear of receiving any pay for them with which this meeting doth concur - - - - - This meeting is informed by the Overseers that they had treated with George Truvel respecting his joining a Company in throwing a quantity of oysters out of a Vessel without legal Authority - - - - - And Walter Tolger & Stephen Macy are appointed to treat further with him thereabout & make return to the next monthly meeting - - - - - Also that Thomas Arthur complains that Robert Coffin neglects paying him his just Due: Benjⁿ Coffin the 2^d of which Mitchel Coffin are appointed to make the necessary Enquiry thereabout & make

27th of the 11th month 1775

Nantucket MM Men's Minutes 1775

4 month
1777. Whereas Joseph Russell the Son of Caleb Russell
and David Allen Jonathan Allen & Peter Allen
being the Sons of Benja Allen all having had their
Education amongst friends, but by Departing from
their Education and the Testimony of Truth have so
gone astray as to be concerned in receiving buying or
otherwise concerned in those goods taken in the
by Sons of arms being those goods called Prize goods
and friends and friends having Labour with each other
in order to Discover to them the Evil of such a prac
but friends Labour of Love not having its Desir. &c
these are therefore Given forth as a Publick Testimo

Testimony of
Caleb
Allen
Second
page
390

Dartmouth Monthly Meeting

21st of the 4th month 1777

Ralph Allen, a birthright Quaker, enlisted
onboard a vessel of war called a Privateer

Whereas Ralph Allen son of Benjamin Allen & Allaphal his wife
 having had a Birthright among friends but hath so far Depar. Ted from our
 Profession as to Enlist or Enter on board of a Vessel of war called a Privateer and
 being gone into that service this meeting is concerned to maintain our testimony
 against such Proceedings do Give this birth as a publick denial against
 him & do hereby disown him the said Ralph Allen from being an
 member of our Society & from under the care of this meeting to
 Given forth & Signed in & on behalf of our meeting held in Dartmouth 17-2^{mo} 1777
 By Wm Anthony Jr. Clerk

Testimony
 against
 R. A.
 should be
 recorded
 in page 370

Certificate
 The

15th of 12th month 1777

Dartmouth Monthly Meeting

William Rotch

- A staunch Quaker
- Owned whaling and cargo ships
- Was at odds with non-Quaker individuals in Massachusetts for his pacifism
- Sought compromise with the British for survival of Nantucket

3.
My muskets met with a ready
sale. But whenever guns with
bayonets were chosen, I invariably
took that instrument of war
from them. The purchaser would
insist on having it but I as
strenuously resisted and I laid
them fall by. Many years
afterward I removed to another
store, leaving much rubbish
in the one I had left amongst
the rubbish were those bayonets
neglected and forgotten until
the war commenced, when,
to my surprise they were brought
into view by an application

Wm. Rotch 1814 Memoir

Mentions removal of bayonets from
muskets in 1764 when selling them

in the one I had left amongst
the rubbish were those bayonets
neglected and forgotten until
the war commenced, when,
to my surprise they were brought
into view by an application
made for them by a person
from the Continent.
The time had now come
to support our testimony against
war, or forever abandon it, as
this very instrument had a severe
test. I would not hesitate
and therefore promptly denied
the applicant. My reasons

Wm. Rotch 1814 Memoir

Mentions removal of bayonets from
muskets in 1764 when selling them

...but into many hands as necessary
another, that which I cannot
use myself in the same way,
I refuse to comply with their
demand. The person left me
much dissatisfied, others came
and received the same denial.
It made a great noise in the
country and my life was threatened.
I would gladly have beaten them
into "preaching hooks," as it was,
I took an early opportunity of
throwing them into the sea.
I shot them all and I will

After many requests, and many refusals
by William Rotch, he ended up
throwing them into the ocean.

Wm. Rotch 1814 Memoir

19
British permits were found.
I now come to the most trying
scene in my whole experience during
the war. I was with five others ~~tried~~
impeached for High Treason by
Thomas Jenkins when there was
no step between being clear & death.
The laws of this state at that
time made it High Treason for
any person to go to a British port
without the consent of the Court.
He had been well assured that
if we applied we should be refused
and if we did not apply to the
British we must from every
appearance be destroyed by them.
Under serious consideration I was
willing to be joined to the two
others and as before stated pro-
ceeded as with our lives in our

Wm. Rotch 1814 Memoir

Thomas Jenkins' Complaint

- Outlines activities of William Rotch, Sr., and others
- Calls them “encouragers, aiders, & abettors of the Enemy”
- They wanted to “induce the Inhabitants of sd. Island to settle a correspondence with & openly join the Enemy”
- Stated in court in Boston, November 1779

the House of Representatives in General Court
 assembled at Boston Nov^r 1779

Thomas Jenkins humbly sheweth

That as a true
 and Lige Subject of the State of the Massachusetts Bay,
 as well as from enormous personal Injuries received, he is
 most strongly urged to lay the following Representation
 & Complaint before the Supreme Legislature of the
 State.

Your Petitioner complains of Doctor
 Bery Supper Timothy Folger Esq. Wm. Dodge, Samuel
 Starbuck, & Hezekiah Coffin, all of the Island of Nantucket
 as Persons dangerous & inimical to the Freedom and

Initial document of complaint

290 $\frac{1}{2}$

Witnesses to the several Charges

sick John Waterman & John Ramsdell
 Benj^m Folger & sick George Hapley
 Walter Folger & Francis Chase
 unwell Michael Board
 Peter Mauy &
 Eben^r Coffin
 + Doct^r Sam^l Gelston - not present
 + Tim^o Fitch Medford
 Stephen Fish
 Michael Doorn Malpole
 Marshal Jenkins Marthas Vine
 Benj^m Hapley
 Stephen Hapley - not present
 + Seth Jenkins
 + Abel^e Worth
 Paul Pinkham Summ^d but from to Connecticut
 Will^m Hammet

Witnesses

292
In the case of Complaint Thomas Jenkins against
William Wotch, Timothy Folger & others of Nantucket
now lying before the Committee of both Houses of the
General Court. The complainant moves

That As the Nature of the Complaint was construed to
extend beyond his Intention, and a prosecution was like
to go further than he wished to carry it, and finding some
Satisfaction in conversing with some of the persons, com-
-plained of by their own construction of their Words & Conduct,
which the Complainant had been under a necessity by his
Absence from Nantucket to depend upon others Information.
Wherefore he doth

Retraction by Jenkins

Timeline

- Complaint brought November 1779
- Notice sent to “all of the Island Nantucket yeoman” to appear before General Court issues 2 December 1779
- Complaint to be dealt with “first Tuesday of the next setting of the General Court” filed 27 Dec 1779
- Witnesses interviewed in March 1780
- Jenkins’ request for dismissal of case likely March 1780

[9 April 1823] XXV 162
New Bedford 4th mo - 1823

Respected Friend
John Adams

The old Colony memorial was lately put into my hands. With a view I suppose that I might see my doom portrayed by Haffins, in a letter to J. Adams Esq. in the year 1785, lately hunted up after laying quiet thirty-seven years, and now carefully published; not by the person to whom it was addressed, who no doubt saw no cause for it; but by order of my friend John Adams, with his directions to insert it, word for word; as it was a letter of personal reflection, and fraught with falsehood and false suggestions throughout, which I should not know whether true or false, would not candor have dictated an enquiry into the truth of the charges therein contained before it was put to press; what could be thy motive in this transaction? was it the effect of old age

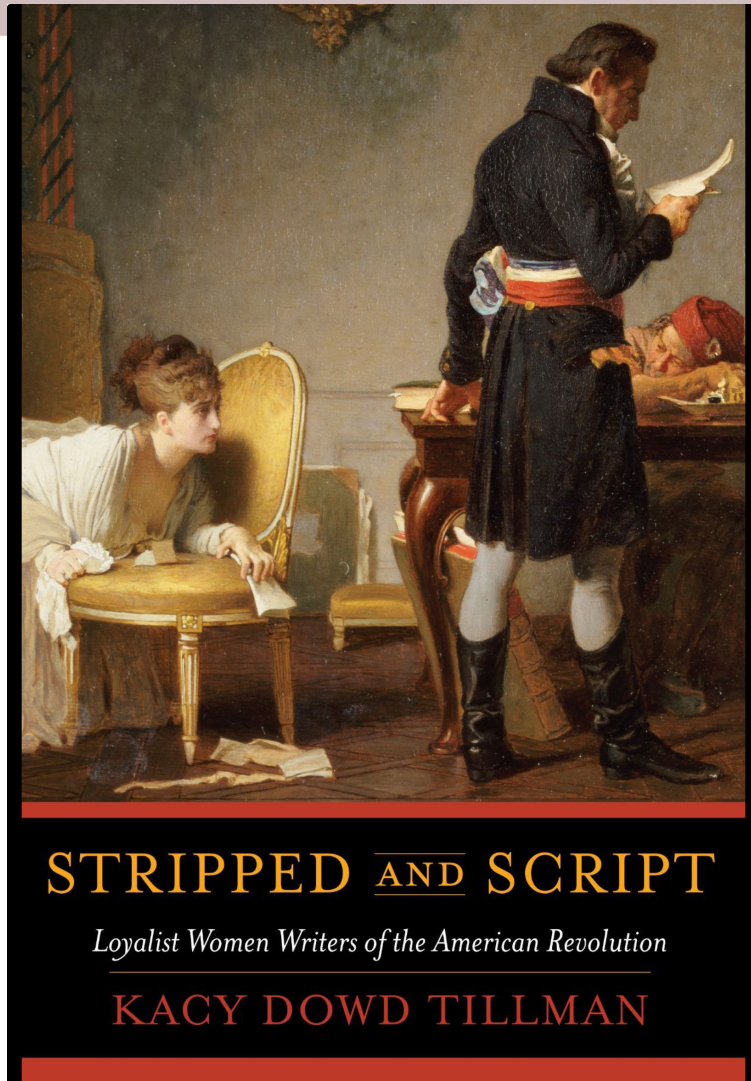
the more in some instances;

Wm. Rotch to John Adams, 1823

Adams Family Papers,
Rec. No. 230694 Pink

Pennsylvania

Stripped and Script



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Scripting Neutrality

Margaret Hill Morris

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Scripting Loyalism

Anna Rawle and Rebecca Shoemaker

[CHAPTER FIVE](#)

Scripting Patriotism

Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson

Pacifists

- Predominantly found among members of the Society of Friends (aka Quakers)
- Were distrusted by those against continued British rule
- Some found themselves punished and jailed

Sarah Logan Fisher

- Fisher family well-to-do Quakers in Philadelphia
- Thomas Fisher married Sarah Logan
- Remained neutral (result of Quaker pacifist principles)
- Were in their hearts “conscientious royalists”
- This fact known to patriots
- Her husband involved in the Spanktown Controversy, 1777

7th Day, morning Took a Walk
with Joshua & Gem, drank Tea
at Hammy's sup'd at Home, very
unwell with a pain in my Face, this
Evening a Paper came out from the
Committee of Safety, unlike anything
I ever before heard of, except the
Spanish Inquisition, declaring that

Sarah Logan Fisher, Diary, 1777

39
 every person who refused the
 Continental Money, should be liable
 for the first offence to forfeit the
 Goods & a Sum of equal value, for
 the second offence to forfeit the same,
 & to be banished whate they are pleased
 to call this State, to what place,
 & in what manner, they shall judge
 most proper, that all those who
 have been imprisoned, & whose Stores
 have been shut up by them, on the
 account of their refusing it formerly,
 are to be opened, & they are to be
 subject to this new Law, after having
 experienced all the rigours of the old
 one, a most extraordinary instance
 of arbitrary power, & of the Liberty.

we shall enjoy should their Govern-
 ment ever be established, a tyrann-
 ical Government it will prove from
 weak & wicked Men,

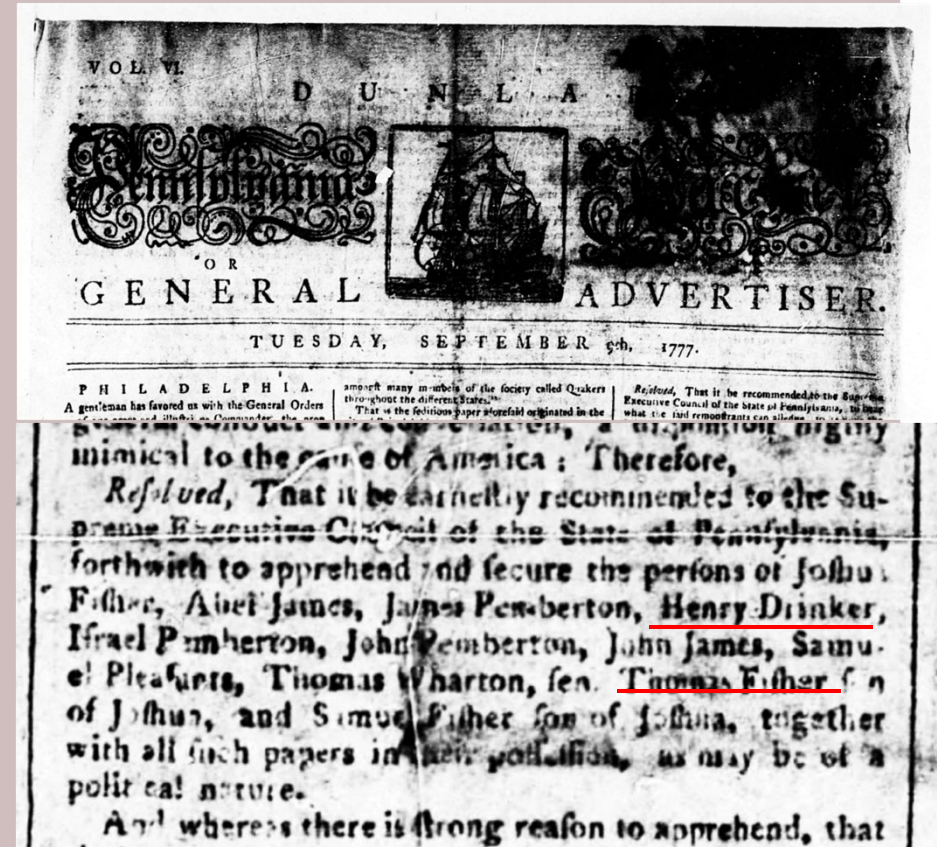
1st moⁿ 5th Day 1st Day. Did not
 go to meeting to Day, being not
 very well, had no Company all
 Day, sup'd at Sister Hetty's, heard
 no political News to Day, but
 confused reports about the
 engagement on 6th Day, sometimes
 our Hopes & sometimes our Fears
 prevail, a state of suspense, a very
 painful situation.

2^d Day, morning went down to see
 Sally Allen but found her out, stop'd

Sarah Logan Fisher, Diary, 1777

Spanktown Controversy, 1777

- Result of a forged document
- Philadelphia Quakers suspected as Loyalists
- Many of the men were jailed in Virginia



Dunlaps Pennsylvania Packet, 9 Sept. 1777, front page

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By JOHN HOWE, Genl.

Extract of a Letter from General SULLIVAN to CONGRESS, dated Hanover, August 25, 1777.

"Among the baggage taken on Staten Island the 23d instant, I find a number of important papers; a copy of three I inclose for the perusal of Congress. The one from the Yearly Meeting at Spank Town, held the 19th instant, I think worthy the attention of Congress."

No. 1. Where is Washington, what number of men or cannon?

No. 2. Where is Sterling, what number of men and cannon?

No. 3. Where is Sullivan? &c.

No. 4. Where is Dayton and Ogden, what number?

No. 5. Whether there be any troops passing or to-passing?

No. 6. Intelligence from Albany.

No. 7. Intelligence from Philadelphia.

No. 8. Be very particular about time and place.

Information from JERSEY, 19th August, 1777.

It is said General Howe landed near the Head of Chesapeake Bay, but cannot learn the particular spot nor when.

Washington lays in Pennsylvania, about twelve miles from Coryell's Ferry.

Sullivan lays about six miles northward of Morristown, with about two thousand men.

Spank Town Yearly Meeting.

Intelligence from JERSEY, Sunday, July 28.

Dunlap's Pennsylvania Packet

9 Sept. 1777, p. 3

Spanktown Controversy, 1777

perhaps may be confounded by
 their own counsels
 9th Mo 7th Day of the 6th
 of our Friends confinement very
 now indeed all the morning, went in
 the afternoon to see my dear husband
 & returned in rather better spirits
 seeing him so calm & composed &
 appearing to have got above the
 fear of Man. This morning came
 out in the New Paper a number of
 Resolves came out from the Congress
 giving their reasons for apprehending
 our Friends, & ordering that 11
 Papers that they had belonging to
 Friends, & which they apprehended

7th To be of a criminal nature
 might be published, & accordingly
 this afternoon they were printed
 & appeared to be nothing more
 than divers testimonies that have
 been wrote at different times, for
 this two years past, & which they say
 show a disposition inimical to the
 cause of America, but the last
 paper number 11 being sent they
 say by General Sullivan & taken
 by him on Staten Island, appears
 to be a notorious forgery, it being
 a Paper signed Spank Town
^{where no Quaker meeting}
 & is no different from all the

rest that any impartial person
 must see how great a falsehood
 it is.

2^d Day - went again in the morning
 to the Lodge Prison to see my dear
 Tommy & his fellow sufferers, found
 them much engaged in writing, &
 in the afternoon saw a very fine
 Remonstrance which they had
 sent in the morning to the Council
 & which is to be published to morrow
 & in the evening they received a
 Letter from Timothy Matlock
 informing them,

7th Day - words can but faintly
 express the distress & anxiety of my

therevolutionarycity.org/islandora/fisher-sarah-logan-diary-volume-3

New York

A Study in Queens County

- Undertaken by Joseph S Tiedemann
- Published in results 1983
- Looked at 3,074 white males over 16 residing in Queens County on 1 January 1776
- Augmented info from this census with additional records in a “Collective Biography”
- Compared Loyalists, Neutrals and Patriots

TABLE I
LOYALTY IN QUEENS COUNTY (1775)

Loyalty	Collective Biography		Queens County Quakers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Whig	368	12.0	19	4.5
Tory	824	26.8	38	9.0
Trimmer	27	0.9	1	0.2
Neutral	1855	60.3	366	86.3
Total	3074	100.0	424	100.0

Whig = Patriot
 Tory = Loyalist
 Trimmer = "fence sitter"
 Neutral = Neutral

"Loyalty in Queens County (1775)"

TABLE II
QUAKERS AND NEUTRALITY IN QUEENS COUNTY (1775)

Percentage					
Town	Total Popu- lation	Neutral	Quaker	Of Quakers Neutral	Of Non- Quakers Neutral
Flushing	246	76.4	24.4	91.7	71.5
Oyster Bay	660	74.0	22.7	89.3	70.8
Hempstead	935	57.3	12.0	78.6	54.4
Newtown	394	54.6	5.1	70.0	53.7
Jamaica	407	28.0	1.5	16.7	28.2

One of the friends appointed in the Case of Lancaster Beerlin reports that he has had an Opportunity with him that Lancaster said he could say nothing more than he had said But further informed him that he had undertaken to build a ship supposed for a ship of War which he intended to finish if Health permitted. The Meeting after considering His case is of Opinion that the said Lancasters conduct in acting on a Publick Committee, Superintending the appointment of militia officers And building a ship of war is inconsistent with our religious principles And has a Tendency to lay waste our Testimony against wars & fighting This Meeting therefore Testifies against such practices & said Lancaster And disowns him from being any longer a Member of our Society - Untill he shall condemn his out-going to the satisfaction of this Meeting. And Oliver Hull & Isaac Martin is appointed to acquaint him with the Judgment of this meeting his right of appeal and report next month.

The friends appointed on Samuel Farringtons case reported in writing And as there appears a backwardness in him to mention the necessary assistance His case is still continued under the care of the same Friends who are desired to give him such assistance as they find on inquiry he may stand in need of without confining the inquiry to him alone.

The friends appointed on Charles Wrights Case report they have not had an Opportunity with him they are still continued and are desired to report Next month.

The Friends on Obediah Wrights case after taking the same into

Flushing Monthly Meeting

6th day of 3rd month 1776

Lancaster Burlin

- Building a ship “supposed for a ship of war”
- Served on a ”Publick Committee”
- Oversaw “the appointment of militia officers”
- Was Disowned 6th of 3rd month 1776

[eI

If mention of being
disowned, check earlier
meetings for more
information

measures, and is desired to call on Daniel Browne for money
of Books, & report

The Friends appointed to labour further with William
Kenyon report another opportunity with him and that he
informed them he could see no inconsistency in dealing in
slave Goods, after a time of deliberation thereon, the same
Friends are desired to inform him the Meeting has come to a
Judgement to disown him and report

The Friends appointed to treat with Offingham Law:
rence report no opportunity with him they are continued

Flushing Monthly Meeting

William Kenyon

- Brought up in meeting of 15th of 5th month 1782
 - Purchasing “prize goods”
- Meetings in which they mention working with him:
 - 5th of 6th month 1782
 - 4th of 7th month 1782
 - 7th of 8th month 1782
- Disowned 7th of 8th month 1782

North Carolina

William Borden

- Son of original R.I. Quaker settlers to Core Sound Monthly Meeting (N.C.)
- Disciplined in July 1754 for activities including drinking
- Reinstated to membership in 1773
- Stood before the meeting in 1778 for discipline (minutes vague on the issue) and apologized and was forgiven

William Borden had this published in the 17 June 1778 issue of the *North Carolina Gazette*

These are to informe the publick that whereof the people called Quakers differ in opinion and Sundry things which I can't hold with and especially about this disturbance in the Nation and [they] do not be conformably [sic] to laws and good orders a rated by the states [,] I therefore have for some time past and do at this time diannul these proceeding of theirs and cant be conforably [sic] to their rules [,] I therefore disannul myself from being in community or members of them or with them for those reasons.

Abstracted in Neva Jean Sprecht's "Being a Peaceable Man, I have Suffered Much Persecution: The American Revolution and Its Effects on Quaker Religious Identity" *Quaker History*, vol. 99, no. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 37-48.

William Borden's Published Statement

Minutes recorded in response to Borden's announcement in the *North Carolina Gazette*

The said Wm. Borden a few years past was very desirous of being [shielded] from mustering under our denominations; and we charitably hoped he acted on just principles and the bottom of conviction, but this last and new levy of troops, soon proved his foundation and we believe was the cause of his foresaid advertisement. Therefore we can no less in our time then publicly declare our disapprobation of such unfaithfulness and double dealing, and that we disallow having any further fellowship with said Borden.

Abstracted in Neva Jean Sprecht's "Being a Peaceable Man, I have Suffered Much Persecution: The American Revolution and Its Effects on Quaker Religious Identity" *Quaker History*, vol. 99, no. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 37-48.

Core Sound Monthly Meeting

The Queries

The Queries

- Question used as a spiritual practice to guide personal reflection and group worship
- They are not about what to believe, but how to live
- During difficult times they may reflect what is going on in the outside community

5th We know of any differences among us
 14th Clear of taking Oaths, paying Priests wages, bearing
Arms or defrauding the King of his dues, but not clear
of Military Services and dealing in Slave Goods and
some care taken
 17th Clear of buying & selling Negroes, but believe not quite
 clear in one Instance of retaining in Slavery, and some
 care taken to instruct the Youth
 20th A care remains on the minds of Friends to deal with
 the Mind of men & women as well as to discipline

Flushing MM, Mens Minutes

4th of the 7th month 1782

Seeking Records

Monthly Meeting Minutes

- Best resource is the Men's Meeting Minutes within the Monthly Meeting of the individuals
- Seldom completely searchable
- May be digitized and available on a number of sites
- If mention is found, must be reviewed before and after mention found for full story

Sites of Use

- Ancestry.com
- FamilySearch.org (Quaker records often require at least affiliate library access)
- Archive.org (has some digitized monthly meeting minutes)
- Friends libraries (usually associated with colleges founded by Quakers)

Additional Resources

- Manuscript collections via historical societies
- Manuscript collections via libraries and museums
- JSTOR (for articles about Quakers and the American Revolution)
- Genealogical journals (with articles about Quaker families)

know the result of our mission. Fanning thought this reasonable, and put the question to all the p
agreed until it came to —, who

We then proceeded to New York
Commodore Sir George Collier of
of the army.

On representing our case to Sir
us an order forbidding any British
out of our harbor. This was a gr
the state of our captured seamen,
were partial, that as we made no p
consequently ours remained in t
died. On his understanding the
ordered that all our men should b
armed vessels (for such we had no
not be so in future as long as he h

We also applied to Sir Henry
Maj. André, that fine young man
could get no written order from hi
direct that those in his departmen
no doubt did, as they gave up the
quiet until Sir George Collier's c
persuaded by the arrival of Admi
mills then came upon us.

Timothy Folger was then sent t
like order to that obtained from Sir George. ~~He was to~~ ~~we got~~
permits for a few vessels, about fifteen, to whale on our coast, which
were successful; but it was with great difficulty that distinction
could be made between English and American cruisers, as the latter
would make prizes of us if British permits were found.

I now come to the most trying scene in my whole experience
during the war. I was with four others impeached for high treason,
by Thomas Jenkins, when there was no step between being clear
and death.

The laws of this state at that time made it high treason for any
person to go to a British port without the consent of the court. We
had been well assured that if we applied we should be refused, and
if we did *not* apply to the *British*, we must from every appearance
be destroyed by them. Under serious consideration, I was willing
to be joined to the two others, and as before stated, proceeded as
with our lives in our hands. This was made one of the great
charges in the impeachment.

We were examined before a committee of the court on the im-
peachment, but knowing we were to appear again when the wit-
nesses should attend, we made no defence, which we afterwards
found was an error in judgment.

By this means the court thought us guilty, and were about to

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with our lives in our hands. This was made one of the great
charges in the impeachment.

COMPLAINT AGAINST WILLIAM ROTCH AND OTHERS, 1779.

Communicated by FREDERICK C. SANFORD, Esq., of Nantucket, Mass.

IN the autobiography of William Rotch, published in the REGISTER, he states (vol. xxxii. p. 38) that in 1779 he was "with four others impeached for high treason by Thomas Jenkins, when there was no step between being clear and death." Appended to the manuscript autobiography is the following copy of Mr. Jenkins's petition to the Massachusetts General Court. The reader is referred to the above autobiography of Mr. Rotch for his account of these matters. See also Mr. Starbuck's "Nantucket in the Revolution" (REGISTER, xxix. 50) for reference to them.

Copy of Thomas Jenkins's Complaint against Sundry Persons.

To the Honorable Council and the Honorable House of Representatives in General Court assembled at Boston, State of Massachusetts Bay, November, 1779.

Thomas Jenkins humbly sheweth, that as a true and liege subject of the State of Massachusetts Bay, as well as from enormous personal injuries received, he is most strongly urged to lay the following representation and complaint before the supreme Legislature of the State.

Your petitioner complains of Dr. Benjamin Tupper, Timothy Folger, Esq., Wm. Rotch, Samuel Starbuck and Kezia Coffin, all of the Island of Nantucket, as persons dangerous and inimical to the freedom and independence of this and the other United States of America, as encouragers, aiders and abettors of the Enemy, in making inroads on the state territories, and depredations on the property of the good subjects of this State.

It can be clearly proved, if your honors should see fit to order an in-

NEHG Register, vol. 33, p. 305

 American Ancestors.

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF WILLIAM
ROTC.

WRITTEN IN THE EIGHTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

Communicated by FREDERICK C. SANFORD, Esq., of Nantucket, Mass.

[Continued from vol. xxxi. page 264.]

WE* arrived in the harbor of Newport, where Capt. Dawson commanded the navy and Gen. Prescott the army, but the refugees had made interest with the general not to permit us to land, and we were ordered to depart by Capt. Dawson. We interceded with him to let us stay a little longer, for we found the expedition was progressing rapidly, and unless we could arrest it, it would be in vain to proceed to New York.

Again Dawson, by request of Gen. Prescott, under the influence of the refugees, ordered us immediately to depart. Dr. Tupper

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF WILLIAM
ROTCH.WRITTEN IN THE EIGHTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.¹

Communicated by FREDERICK C. SANFORD, Esq., of Nantucket.

Memoranda.

A FRIEND of mine has repeatedly requested me to put on paper some of the occurrences of about twenty years of my life, from 1775 to 1794, which he had heard me relate in conversation.

When the revolutionary war broke out in 1775, I saw clearly that the only line of conduct to be pursued by us, the inhabitants of the Island of Nantucket, was to take no part in the contest, and to endeavor to give no occasion of offence to either of the contending forces. A great portion of the inhabitants were of the denomination of Friends, and a large number of the considerate of the other societies united in the opinion that our safety was to be found in a state of neutrality, as far as it could be obtained, although we had no doubt that suffering would be our lot, and which we afterwards experienced from both parties. Our situation was rendered more difficult from having among us a few restless spirits who had nothing to lose, and who were often thwarting our pacific plan and subjecting us to dangers, not caring what confusion they brought upon us, if

¹ William Rotch, an enterprising and successful merchant of Nantucket and New Bedford, was born at Nantucket, Oct. 14 O. S. (15 N. S.), 1734, and died at New Bedford, May 16, 1828. For his biography and genealogy, see Ricketson's "History of New Bedford," pp. 103-15. See also "Nantucket in the Revolution," in the REGISTER (*ante*, xxviii. 272-8, 436-42; xxix. 48-53, 141-5. This autobiography is dated "New Bedford, 2d month, 1814."—ED.

Beginning of transcription



An Inventory of the Rodman-Rotch Families Family Papers, 1738-1915

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Finding aid written in English

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An Inventory of the Rodman-Rotch Families Family Papers, 1738-1915

Collection Inventory

Ser. 1. Journals, biographical and genealogical, 1803-1809, n.d.

Journals

Diary, [Rodman, Eliza?] Phila., 1803 Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Scope and Contents

AMs. Eliza Rodman? (1782-1864), attending Quaker meetings, accounts of travels.

Diary, [Rodman, Eliza?], 1805, 1807. Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Scope and Contents

AMs. Includes visits to Stafford Springs, CT, and visit to Shakers. In 1807 visits to Boston, Plymouth, and Sandwich. First part of the volume was used by Benjamin Rodman as student work book.

Rotch, Joseph: "Journal of a Southern Tour", 1809, 5 mo Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Scope and Contents

AMs. From New Bedford to NYC, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Virginia

Rotch, William (1734-1828): "An autobiographical Memoir of William Rotch written in the eightieth year of his age" Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Physical Facet

Ms. copy. An account of events in Nantucket during the years 1775-1794, written ca. 1814.

Genealogical material, dealing with ancestors of Julia W. Rodman:

Material on Rotch, Starbuck, Rodman, Prior, Haydock Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

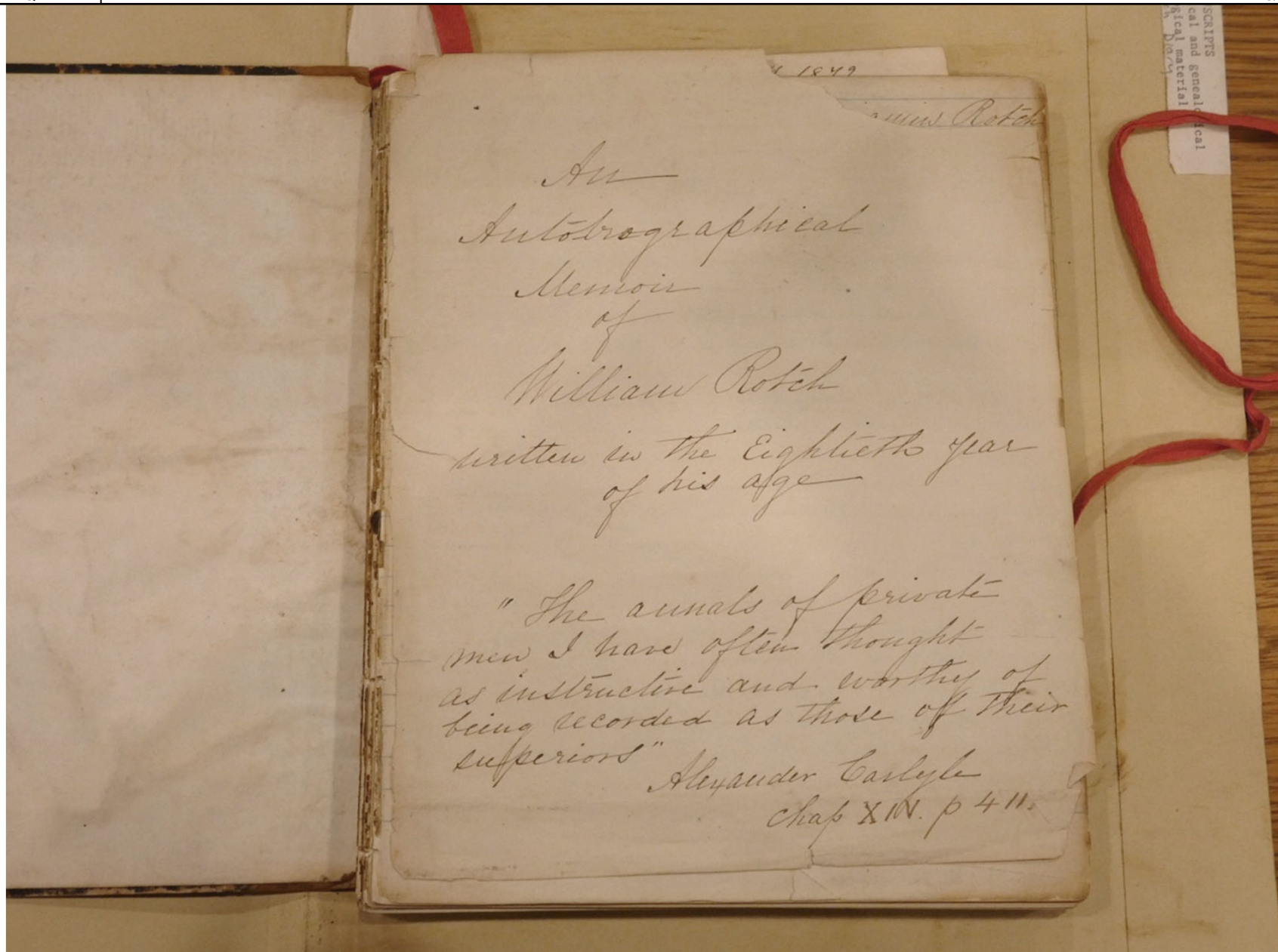
Chart of Robert Susanna Heath's family Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Chart of Tristram Coffin descendants Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Memo of Mary Prior to her children Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Memorial for Mary Prior Box 1 (Mixed Materials)

Finding Original



The Diary

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Upcoming Events



IN-PERSON LECTURE

Preservation Roadshow: Caring for Your Family Treasures

August 29, 2026, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET



ONLINE LECTURE

Tracing Loyalist Lineages: Sources and Strategies

Presented by Sheilagh Doerfler

September 12, 2026, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET



IN-PERSON EXHIBIT

Patriots of Color

April 23–December 31, 2026

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