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ANDREW HAMILTON (d. April 26, 1703) served as deputy governor of East Jersey from March 1687 to August 1688. He held the position of governor of both East and West Jersey from April 1692 to April 1698 and again from December 1699 to April 1703. He also briefly filled the office of deputy governor of Pennsylvania.

A talented and effective administrator, Hamilton ranks as one of the most attractive governors of proprietary New Jersey and the foremost figure in New Jersey politics of the 1690s. His career proved highly uneven, the successful administrations of his middle term contrasting sharply with those of the last years, during which New Jersey's proprietary era came to an inglorious end amidst disorder and chaos.

In the 1680s, supervision of East Jersey colonization shifted from English Quakers to Scottish businessmen. Hamilton, an Edinburgh merchant, aided in the recruitment of settlers. He acquired a financial stake in East Jersey, procuring one-twentieth of a proprietary share and investing in ten servants, who came to the province in 1683. The future governor made his move to the colony in the summer of 1686 as a confidential proprietary agent. Immediately a man of influence, he held seats on the governor's council

and on the resident Board of Proprietors. He began his long career as chief executive in New Jersey in March 1687 when he was named deputy governor.

Throughout that career Hamilton labored under serious problems. Royal authorities challenged the right of East and West Jersey proprietors to govern and sought to bring all private colonies under the control of the monarch. New York claimed jurisdiction over Raritan Bay and required ships trading at Perth Amboy to clear customs at the port of New York. During the war with France, authorities in London regarded the defense of New York as vital and expected New Jersey, itself in no danger, to aid in that defense. New Jersey had internal troubles as well. At best, inhabitants tolerated proprietary rule. Governors appointed by the proprietors appeared as the representatives of unpopular absentee landowners whose interests clashed with the people's well-being. Groups in East Jersey contested the proprietors' land title and resisted efforts to collect quitrents.

These problems existed when Hamilton first took office. In 1686, quo warranto proceedings had been instituted calling on the proprietors to show "by what authority" they pretended to govern. New York officials seized vessels at Perth Amboy for failure to pay customs at New York. In addition, the Stuarts' consolidated province, the Dominion of New England, had been organized; initially it consisted only of New England colonies, but both Jerseys were included from the spring of 1688 to April 1689.

This term was brief and only mildly productive. Several governmental activities concerned New York. A council of November 1687 issued proclamations to implement a recent decision of the Lords of Trade that ships bound for Perth Amboy might legally enter that port so long as they paid the same customs as were collected in New York. When war threatened, New York called on East Jersey for military assistance that would require a grant of tax revenues by the legislature.

Hamilton convened the general assembly in May 1688, and it passed seven acts, including a tax to raise money for the defense of New York. The lower house showed no enthusiasm for the tax bill, but Hamilton secured its passage and even ward off an attempt to include as taxable the proprietors' unimproved lands. Meantime, in April 1688, the East Jersey proprietors had surrendered their government to the crown in apparent despair of maintaining their authority, and four months later, Sir Edmund Andros, the governor of the Dominion of New England, arrived to annex New Jersey, and Hamilton's term as deputy governor ended.

The Glorious Revolution caused the Dominion of New England to collapse and its component provinces to resume their former status. That development paved the way for Hamilton's return, this time as governor of both East and West Jersey. Robert Barclay, the nonresident governor of East Jersey, died in 1690. Subsequently, Dr. Daniel Coxe, governor and largest proprietor of West Jersey, sold his holdings and the right of government to a London company known as the West Jersey Society. In the spring of 1692, the society and the East Jersey proprietors in England chose Hamilton to govern both of their provinces.

Although the Stuart monarchs and Governor Andros had been removed, old problems persisted for the New Jersey proprietors and their governor. In 1692 the Lords of Trade ordered a writ of scire facias impeaching the proprietors' right of government. Nothing immediately resulted from this action, but it demonstrated that crown authorities retained their design to transform private colonies into royal provinces. Any wrong moves by Hamilton would further that design. During this administration, from 1692 to 1698, Hamilton avoided providing grounds for serious new complaints by officials. He also muted antiproprietary sentiments within the two provinces and provided both with orderly governments.

Evidence of East Jersey's political har-

mony can be found in the regular functioning of the courts, the governor's council, and the general assembly. From 1692 to 1696, the assembly met annually and usually had worthwhile sittings. Four tax measures supplied monies for the support of government and for the defense of New York. Although the military taxes were smaller than Hamilton desired, they removed a possible criticism by authorities against the proprietors. At times the assembly proved obstreperous, as in 1695 when it successfully resisted Hamilton's recommendations, which included a plan for the collection of quitrents. (The quitrents issue also came before the courts, where juries, reflecting popular feelings, ruled against the proprietors.) East Jersey men seemed to appreciate the worth of their governor, but they remained hostile to the proprietors who had appointed him.

West Jersey presented Hamilton with a unique problem. The governor had to secure approval of war taxes, despite the pacifism of the Quaker majority in the lower house. Conflict with Quaker scruples was avoided by omitting mention in tax acts of the specific purposes for which funds were raised. This left expenditures to the discretion of Hamilton and his non-Quaker councilmen, who appropriated money to aid New York in the war. For his part, Hamilton accepted the Quaker political hegemony and defended Friends against their critics. The cooperation between Hamilton and the Quakers resulted in annual legislative sessions which passed numerous useful bills. In November 1697, when Hamilton received notice that he would be dismissed as governor, the usually tightfisted assembly voted him £200 as a token of the people's "Gratitude and Affection."

The termination of Hamilton's administrations in both provinces proved unnecessary and unfortunate. Anxious lest their deeds be grounds to end their political jurisdiction, the proprietors in London decided that an act of Parliament of 1696 made Scots ineligible for positions in colonial governments, and in 1697 they

named Jeremiah Basse governor; there followed a year of turmoil, confusion and intense factionalism in both provinces. Responding to that sorry condition, the East Jersey proprietors late in 1698 petitioned the king on behalf of Hamilton's eligibility, and subsequently the crown's attorney general ruled that Scots were not disqualified. In March 1699, Hamilton was reappointed to office in both colonies.

During Hamilton's absence from New Jersey, conditions had changed drastically and irreversibly. The turmoil of the Basse interim persisted and, indeed, intensified because of the news that the proprietors were once again negotiating to surrender their right of government. Hamilton's caretaker position was most precarious, since like Basse before him he had not obtained the required royal approval of his appointment. His final years as governor witnessed popular disturbances and factional feuds. Division appeared among the proprietors in England; a majority sought the designation of Hamilton as the first royal governor, and a minority actively opposed it. A deluge of angry petitions and counterpetitions from both sides of the Atlantic persuaded the Board of Trade (which had replaced the Lords of Trade under the Navigation Act of 1696) to recommend as the first royal governor someone unconnected with the bitter factionalism.

During Hamilton's last term in West Jersey, Quakers prevailed in both the council and the assembly. Despite their support, the governor could not maintain an effective administration. The assembly met three times and approved some beneficial legislation, but it became preoccupied with partisan maneuvers. The Hamilton-Quaker regime moved against its enemies on several fronts. The assembly reduced the number of its seats to ensure continued Quaker control. Opponents of a tax act of 1700 were imprisoned. These measures provoked resistance, and in a riot in March 1701 a large number of men descended on the Burlington jail and set free several persons confined by the administration.

In East Jersey, a half dozen riots occurred. Most resulted from efforts to disrupt provincial courts on the grounds that the government lacked legitimacy. That charge was also asserted at the only general assembly to meet, and it caused the governor quickly to dissolve the legislature. Hamilton's authority met challenges even within his council, most dramatically when a councillor displayed a commission as governor he had received from anti-Hamilton proprietors in England. Beginning in the summer of 1701, with the courts disrupted, the assembly dissolved and the council divided, no government prevailed in East Jersey. Only slightly better conditions existed in West Jersey. Not until August 1703 and the arrival of the first royal governor did provincial government again function.

In April 1703, when Hamilton died, he had not yet been officially relieved of his Jersey positions. He was also wearing a third hat, having begun his duties as deputy governor of Pennsylvania in November 1701. His attendance at numerous meetings of the Pennsylvania council during the next year accounts in part for his frequent absences from New Jersey; more significant, however, New Jersey had become hostile territory for its last proprietary governor.

Hamilton married three times. When he died, he was survived by his third wife and by John, the son of his first marriage. His second wife had been the daughter of a former deputy governor of East Jersey, Thomas Rudyard. John Hamilton followed in his father's path, and during the first half of the eighteenth century he held important offices in the provincial government of New Jersey and on the East Jersey Board of Proprietors.

In addition to his political career, Andrew Hamilton merits attention as the architect of an early postal system in colonial America. In 1691, the English government granted Thomas Neale, a minor courtier, a private monopoly for carrying mail in the colonies. Neale never went to America, but authorized Hamilton to establish and operate a postal system.

The New Jersey governor persuaded the assemblies of five colonies to enact the necessary legislation, although neither of his own governments joined the system. Commencing operations in 1693, the service consisted of weekly mail deliveries carried over routes between major towns in New England and the Middle Colonies. The system worked as well as could be expected until 1699, when it declined. In 1707 the English government purchased the private monopoly, established a royal post office, and appointed John Hamilton as postmaster general.

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JEREMIAH BASSE (d. 1725) served concurrently as proprietary governor of East New Jersey and West New Jersey from April 1698 (when he presented his commission to the council) to November 1699, filling a hiatus in the gubernatorial career of Andrew Hamilton. Conspicuous because of the rapid descent of both colonies into fierce factionalism and confusion, Basse's administration began the final disintegration of proprietary government in New Jersey that culminated in 1702 in the creation of a new royal province. The difficulties in East and West Jersey were inherent in the proprietary system of gov-

ernment as practiced in the Jerseys. Basse probably merits a more favorable place in New Jersey history than he generally receives: though his conduct as governor added fuel to the fire, he was more victim than perpetrator of the strife and disorder.

In 1696 the newly formed Board of Trade intensified an intermittent campaign to extend royal authority over charter and proprietary colonies. Several conditions made the Jersey proprietorships especially vulnerable to that campaign. The challenge by officials in England to proprietary authority encouraged critics in the provinces, such as the East Jersey townsmen who contested proprietary land titles. The tactful Andrew Hamilton had avoided overt antagonism between proprietors and townsmen, and in West Jersey, where dissatisfaction existed among non-Quakers resentful of the hegemony of the Friends, he had formed an effective partnership with the Quakers so that anti-Quakerism could only mark time. His removal as governor unleashed the dissident elements. The resulting turmoil would have severely tested even a resourceful and seasoned executive; Jeremiah Basse, having limited talents and virtually no experience in public affairs, was particularly ill equipped to deal with the situation.

Little is known of Basse's early life. In 1676 a half brother, Joshua Barkstead, migrated to West Jersey; Basse himself first appears in New Jersey records as a resident of Cohansey in 1686, when he was designated Barkstead's agent to sell land. After that he served as agent or attorney for numerous landowners, including Dr. Daniel Coxe, William Penn and the West Jersey Society. The society, a company of Londoners claiming extensive proprietary landholdings and the right of government in West Jersey, was organized in 1692, when Basse was in England. Recruited by the company, he returned to New Jersey and during Governor Andrew Hamilton's first term performed various services as agent. A non-