

Before the Constitution: Interest Groups from 1763-1789

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The movement for American independence from Great Britain was closely associated with interest group activity, and cannot wholly be understood without reference to the phenomenon. This association is documented with reference to a consistent definition of "interest group." Lesser known is the role that interest groups played in the movement to adopt a new constitution. Still, this paper argues, the growth of interest group activity during this era seemingly would have happened, although perhaps to a lesser extent, even without these movements.

The year 1763 often is cited as a landmark in the political development of what eventually became the United States of America, and rightly so: it is the year that Parliament first began to play a significant role in the management of the American colonies. Among the many well-known repercussions of Parliament's colonial policies is the resistance created in America by the Sugar Act of 1764 and, especially, the Stamp Act of 1765. These were important preludes to the break with Great Britain that was formalized a decade later.

It already has been aptly noted that the movement for American independence from Great Britain significantly stimulated organizational activity here and — as will be shown in this study — much of this was interest group activity,¹ a topic which has been hardly touched upon for this period (the most notable exception, by far, is Olson 1992). Although it is difficult to consider the other events of that time in America without at least some reference to the pervasive movement for independence, it seems clear that some of this increase in organizational activity would have occurred anyway, later if not sooner. After all, interest group activity in America already had been steadily growing for nearly three centuries.

For example, it seems likely that science would have continued to develop in that Age of Enlightenment and lead to a certain amount of associated organizational activity even without the movement for independence. American doctors would have gotten around to organizing permanent medical societies sooner or later. The Royal College of Physicians, which had 228 American members in 1770, already had been in existence since 1660 (Cassedy 1976). One was attempted in America as early as 1735, in Boston, but did not survive. Additional attempts were made, successively, in New Haven, New York, Charleston, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Philadelphia, and New Haven again before one lasted: it was formed in 1766 in New Jersey (McDaniel 1959, 133-137; Marks and

Beatty 1973,194-197; Burns 1976,288-289; Shryock 1960,31-32; Bates 1958,16-18). The Revolutionary War (1775-1783) generally acted to inhibit this sort of organizational development, as no new societies were successfully organized until after the end of the war (Shryock 1960,31; Bates 1958,16-17; McDaniel 1959, 136-137).

These medical societies were involved in interest group activity. The medical society formed in Charleston in 1755 convinced the legislature to enact a fee schedule, which created so much controversy that the society dissolved (Marks and Beatty 1973,195). Before they folded, both the Connecticut (1763) and the second New Haven society (1766-1769) lobbied the assembly, unsuccessfully, for physician licensing (Starr 1982,44; Hindle 1956,112). The New Jersey Medical Society, already a pioneer, was more successful with its own effort of this sort: in 1772 it convinced the colonial assembly to license physicians (Marks and Beatty 1973,197-198; McDaniel 1959, 136; Shryock 1960, 32-33). The Massachusetts Medical Society went one better: the charter that it obtained from the legislature in 1781 accorded licensing authority to the society (Cash 1980,69-100; Whitehill 1976,162; Starr 1982,46).

It also seems inevitable that activity by learned societies would have increased in any case. The colonies' first scientific organization, the American Philosophical Society, emerged in 1766 from extended inactivity. This emergence was mostly due to its new rivalry with the newly-founded American Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge, formed that same year by Philadelphians interested in improved agricultural methods and the promotion of domestic manufactures and internal improvements. Even before the merger of these organizations in 1769 (Hindle 1956,127-138; Bates 1958,6-8), the Philosophical Society convinced the colonial legislature to again fund observations of the transit of Venus, this one occurring in 1769 (Bates 1958,134-135,150-152).² The rejuvenated organization mounted at least three additional successful lobbying efforts in the Pennsylvania assembly in the next few years: to appropriate 1,000 pounds sterling for silk production in 1771, to grant 300 pounds sterling to the development of a planetarium by David Rittenhouse in 1771, and to appoint Rittenhouse as the colony's Public Astronomer in 1775 — the last of which was postponed in the wake of the British-American skirmish in Lexington (Bridenbaugh 1955,413; Hindle 1956,140-141,167-170,201-202).

A second learned society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, was founded in Boston in 1780. It, too, was politically connected: its organizer was John Adams, who convinced the Continental Congress in 1776 to encourage each state to establish such a society. His first organizational task was to lobby for a charter from the Massachusetts legislature; the first president, James Bowdoin, later was elected governor (Ford 1904-1937, Vol. 4,224; Bates 1958,9-11; Whitehill 1976, 151-154).

Other philosophical societies were just as politically connected: one formed in New York in 1784 elected the state's governor as its first president and another, formed in Connecticut in 1786, elected the lieutenant governor as its president and held meetings at the same time and place as the assembly (Hindle 1956, 273-274).

The formation of the first permanent American agricultural societies, in both Charleston and Philadelphia in 1785, was long overdue: they had been forming in Europe since 1723 (True 1929, 6-8; Boorstin 1958,264; Jameson 1940,51). These organizations had few farmers (Rossiter 1976,279,284-285), but they had plenty of politically-connected members. The first 12 officers of the Charleston society included a future Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, five members of Congress, four governors, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The first president of the Philadelphia society served two terms as mayor; by 1794, the society was lobbying the state legislature to charter a state society (True 1929,7-8).

That the competition among the land speculation companies — which had hardly yet begun — would have continued in any case seems clear, too; even the French and Indian War (1754-1763) and King George III's 1763 proclamation that purported to limit the westward spread of colonization caused only a pause. Even as they struggled to obtain as much land as possible, the land-speculation interest groups also began to reach for such collateral projects as the construction of canals, for example, the efforts by the Ohio Company as early as 1762 to promote a canal for the Potomac River (Dorfman 1947, Vol. 1,124-125; Woodward 1926,396; Ferling 1988,333; Nute 1923,498). This project would prove to have particular significance for the substance — and very existence — of the U.S. Constitution, as well as lead to the siting of what now is Washington, D.C.

The issue that led to the most signatures on any petition submitted to the New Jersey assembly during the colonial era is one that could occur in any era: in 1774, 2,686 signed petitions offering one view or another on a scandal involving public funds and the East Jersey treasurer (Purvis 1986,183).

Still, the movement for independence left an undeniable mark on the American interest group system no less than on other aspects of the political system. For example, it is an indication of how much political activity generally increased during just the start of this era that petitions to the New Jersey legislature increased from 76 a year to 187 between 1763 and 1768 (Batinski 1987,7,185,187).³

Early Resistance to London's New Colonial Policies

In 1763, while Parliament still was considering the Sugar Act, the merchants of Massachusetts formed the Society for Encouraging Trade and Commerce, which spent the next five years lobbying against various trade

acts (Pole 1966,65; Andrews 1917, 59-61; Schlesinger 1957,59-60). The merchants of New York and Philadelphia organized against the Sugar Act early the next year (Schlesinger 1957,60-61; Harrington 1964,320-321). A popular campaign was commenced to boycott the British goods that were covered by the law; through hundreds of interest groups this campaign would be waged, off and on, for an entire generation.

None of this compares, however, to the American reaction to the Stamp Act of 1765. Hundreds of organizations, mostly local, arose throughout the colonies. They were loosely associated; many of them called themselves the Sons of Liberty. These interest groups employed a variety of tactics, including petitions, demonstrations, and mobs (Morgan and Morgan 1962, 157-262; Conser 1986,22-88; Gilje 1987,44-52). Suddenly, petition campaigns encompassed whole colonies (Batinski 1987,186).

The first interest groups of note comprised of women also were formed during this period: the Daughters of Liberty and, later, the Anti-Tea Leagues concentrated on the boycott of British imports (Hymowitz and Weissman 1978,26-27; Evans 1989, 49).⁴ Even the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, to which nine colonial assemblies sent delegates to organize further resistance to the Stamp Act (see Morgan and Morgan 1962,137-148), qualifies as interest group activity because the assemblies were acting well beyond the scope of the governmental authority granted to them.⁵ In any case, intercolonial interest group organization would undoubtedly have been furthered by the congress of the Sons of Liberty that was proposed by the New York chapter. The congress was cancelled when the Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 (Decker 1964,67-68; Starr 1991,232).

Despite the repeal, Parliament was determined to assert its authority over the colonies, which some leaders of the American resistance well knew and planned to counter (Walsh 1959,40; Morgan and Morgan 1962,359-360). To a significant extent, the colonials' efforts took the form of interest group activity. For example, when the government in London dissolved the Massachusetts and Virginia assemblies in 1768, interest groups stepped into the breach by starting colony-wide organizations that, in effect, replaced the assemblies by providing a unified — albeit unofficial — voice (Morgan 1956,45-46, 49; Brown 1970, 29-31).

America was soon rife with interest groups, and they diverted much of the effort that once was directed toward London — but with more success — to the colonial assemblies (Olson 1992,58-166). The same interest groups that dominated before 1763, business and churches, continued to lead in their level of organization.

Merchants tended to organize at the local level, including formation of the first Chambers of Commerce, in New York City in 1768 and Charleston in 1773. Both engaged in interest group activity from the outset, one of the stated goals of the New York chamber being "procuring such laws

and regulations as may be found necessary for the benefit of trade in general" (Stevens 1971,3-73; Cherington 1976,491; Harrington 1964,285-287; Bridenbaugh 1955,287-288; Schleisinger 1957,116, 296-297; Davis 1917, Vol.1,102; Egnal 1988,185,265-266; Sellers 1934,73).

Churches were more likely to organize on a broader scale, typified by the corresponding committees established by dissenters after 1769 (Kammen 1975,289; Olson 1992,162-163; Brown 1970,45-46). There also were some new pitfalls: an annual convention for dissenters proposed for 1766 was nixed lest it too much resemble the Stamp Act Congress and thus alienate British supporters (Morgan 1962,244-245; Bonomi 1986,207).

The occasional cancellation aside, business and church interest groups now were more inclined to adopt the tactics of forming coalitions with other interest groups and appealing to the general public (Olson 1992,164). In this, they were adjusting to the reality of what was a new interest group system in America, one that often required the cultivation of public opinion for success.

Historian Alison G. Olson refers to relatively informal mass-membership interest groups that specialize in political action that is centered on a "cause" and feel free to openly criticize the government as "public opinion lobbies," an apt term. Her contention that public opinion lobbies were first developed by British politician-journalist John Wilkes in the late 1760s (see Olson 1992,136,143-146) is inaccurate, however, because the interest groups that arose in America during the Stamp Act controversy of 1765-1766 and persisted even after repeal fit this description exactly; Olson herself seems to acknowledge this elsewhere (see Olson 1992,165).⁶ Public opinion lobbies may well have existed even in Britain earlier than Olson suggests; Wilkes became a hero to groups like the Sons of Liberty long before his return to England from exile in 1768 precisely because he had so agitated public opinion against the government from 1762-1764.

As Olson notes, the propriety of public opinion lobbies, which, after all, had a purely political purpose, and their tactics were the subject of some controversy. The questions served to disrupt some of the London lobbies that dealt with Anglo-American matters (and which might have helped soothe the proverbial waters of the Atlantic) by plunging them into internal disputes about tactics (Olson 1982,22,32-41; Olson 1983,384,386-388; Olson 1992,136,143-153). Even as this controversy developed, Samuel Adams and Arthur Lee speculated in 1771 that a system of allied societies could be developed at the local, colonial, and intercolonial levels that could associate itself with Wilkes' Bill of Rights Society (Cushing 1906, Vol. 2, 234; Henderson 1974, 16-17), thus creating, in effect, an Anglo-American public opinion lobby. As Adams began to develop these societies, while Lee worked in London as the lobbyist for Massachusetts, he avoided the controversy associated with use of the name "Bill of

Rights Society" by adopting a name with which Americans already had become comfortable: committees of correspondence (Brown 1970,45-48).

The Rebellion Matures

The evolution of the movement for resisting London's colonial trade and taxation policies into one for American independence presents increasingly thorny definitional problems. Although obviously the colonial assemblies and towns were governmental in nature and thus would ordinarily be excluded from classification as interest groups, they acted well outside of the authority conferred by the British government when taking such actions as organizing intercolonial committees of correspondence (1772-74) or convening the First Continental Congress (1774).

Of course, the question of how much autonomy the colonies had was the very essence of their ongoing dispute with the British government, and eventually the colonists attempted to resolve the impasse by claiming total autonomy. Prior to this, however, the colonies stayed just that way, that is, within the British domain, even if only *just* within it. Thus, the extralegal actions of the colonial assemblies and towns — that is, those not authorized by the British government — were interest group activity up to the point that the revolutionary governments were established.⁷

This classification rationale also disposes of the question of the status of the various committees of safety (or inspection), which were charged in 1774 by the First Continental Congress with enforcing nonimportation and, in the process, effectively assumed many governmental functions; the committees were interest groups, too.

Definitional problems aside, there now was more organized political activity of an indisputably private nature afoot than ever before; the American interest group system never lost the pattern of steady — sometimes even prodigious — growth that was initially spurred by Parliament's consideration of the Sugar Act in 1763. A particular notoriety is attributed to the interest group that held the Boston Tea Party of 1773 (which provoked London into a showdown) by scholar Karl Schriftgiesser, who called it "the first pressure group in this country to attain immortality."

One of the ironies of the era is that as the rebels assumed more and more governmental authority, they inevitably became the targets of interest group pressure, and with the emergence of a nascent nationality immediately came interest group activity to match. Consider, for example, the experience of the Massachusetts delegates to the First Continental Congress, who were lobbied thrice while en route to Philadelphia: by merchants, a local committee of correspondence, and the resistance coordinating committee of New York City (Schlesinger 1957,405-407; Montross 1950, 31). While the Congress was still in session, the delega-

tion was lobbied once again: a committee of interest group representatives from several colonies headed by Baptist minister Isaac Backus of Massachusetts obtained an audience. The committee initially intended to lobby the entire Congress, but decided against it on the advice of John Adams. The sophistication of the committee's organization went beyond crossing colonial boundaries: it was not only *intercolonial* — it was also *interdenominational* (Hovey 1972, 203-213; Mecklin 1934, 202-205; Douglass 1965, 140-141; McLoughlin 1967, 128-133; McLoughlin 1979, Vol. 2, 912-913). Disappointed with the results of their lobbying effort, in 1775 the Baptists contemplated a "Continental Congress of Baptists" and, in 1776, one of all Christian denominations (McLoughlin 1967, 137-138).

State Campaigns After the Declaration

The former colonies — now states — had no sooner set up their own government shop than interest groups began to lobby them.

The most impressive interest group campaign at the state level in the early independence era was commenced in Virginia in 1776. The campaign attempted to capitalize on the recent break with England by proposing the disestablishment of the Church of England and the reduction of restrictions on dissenting religious sects. Over the years, those sects, and the interest groups that they formed, had been increasingly assertive. For example, in 1772 they killed a toleration bill before the Virginia assembly because it would prohibit evening meetings (Lingley 1910, 190-197; James 1971, 29-67; Bailey 1979, 150-152).

The cornerstone of the effort in 1776 was the submission of petitions to the House of Delegates seeking disestablishment. The most impressive of these, which was from the Baptists, was 200 feet long and had 10,000 signatures (Little 1938, 489; James 1971, 68-75; Singleton 1985, 158-161; Bailey 1979, 153; Mecklin 1934, 264-268; Ryland 1955, 99-101). A Presbyterian petition that was presented to the assembly may have been drafted by James Madison, a new member of the Virginia assembly who was already in the forefront on the issue (Ketcham 1990, 71-76; Brant 1941, 293-298). The Anglicans were slow to react, and eventually mounted only a relatively weak counter-effort (James 1971, 75-78; Bailey 1979, 153). By 1779 this neglect would prove to be fatal to continuing the establishment.

The dissenter interest groups pressured the legislature in the ensuing years for additional measures, such as a successful effort to obtain recognition of marriages performed by dissenting ministers (James 1971, 84-100, 112-121; Bailey 1979, 53-154; Mecklin 1934, 268-271). These matters came to a head in 1784 when a bill providing for a tax on Virginians for the support of the former Church of England, now the Episcopal Church, seemed likely to clear the House of Delegates following a petition campaign on its behalf; no opposing petitions had been received. When it

decided to postpone final action until the next year, the House invited Virginians to express their sentiments on the matter (Singleton 1985,157-166; Brant 1948,322-323,343-347; James 1971, 122-133; Bailey 1979,153-154; Mecklin 1934,271-278).

The opponents of the measure took this opportunity to organize their own petition campaign. Madison, back in the state legislature after a stint in Congress, drafted the best known of these petitions, his "Memorial and Remonstrance." It was printed in newspapers across Virginia and contributed to an eventual disparity in the signatures on petitions presented to the state legislature of about 11,000 to 1,200 in favor of Madison's coalition. The momentum of the campaign was enough to defeat the general assessment bill and then some; Madison also dusted off and passed the bill for religious liberty that was drafted in 1779 by Thomas Jefferson, who now was in France (Hutchinson 1962-, Vol.8,295-298; Bailey 1979,154-158; Lingley 1910,190-211; Singleton 1985,166-168; Pfeffer 1988,283-312).

Another impressive early interest group campaign at the state level was the continuation of the debt relief movement centered in western Massachusetts, which grew out of various conventions first held in 1774 to protest against the British. The courts' role in debt collection continued to be the target of protests utilizing such tactics as interstate conventions, petitions, and mobs following the conversion of Massachusetts into a sovereign state in 1775-1776. This effort was sustained until early 1787, when it erupted into a full-fledged revolutionary movement in which 1,100 armed men, mostly farmers, assaulted the state arsenal and were routed by the state militia. This was Shays' Rebellion.

Lobbying Congress

During this era there were two particularly significant interest group campaigns to influence the Continental Congress.

Land Speculation Companies

In its initial phase, the first of these two campaigns involved land speculation companies, often with overlapping investors and claims, that were intent upon establishing their ownership of land on the western frontier, especially in the Ohio River Valley. Their political difficulties stemmed from the refusal of the State of Virginia, which claimed jurisdiction over the land under the terms of its colonial charter and had the strongest jurisdictional claim of any state, to recognize their titles. The land companies were not outside their element when it came to politics, however, for their very origins were in lobbying campaigns.

A group of political entrepreneurs that included Benjamin Franklin and his son, William, formed three overlapping organizations in 1763: traders, or their successors in interest, who claimed losses from Indian raids during the recent wars and were eventually organized as the Suf-

fering Traders and the Illinois and Indiana land companies. After lobbying in London produced neither monetary compensation nor land grants from the Crown (Abernethy 1959,22-33; Lewis 1941,19-59; Philbrick 1965,28,35), the two land companies made large land "purchases" from Native American tribes.

In 1768 the Indiana Co. negotiated a treaty with the Six Nations of the Iroquois to receive, as compensation for losses suffered by traders at the hands of other tribes led by Pontiac, nearly two million acres of land south of the Ohio River in what now is West Virginia. This eventually became associated with a larger claim that included this same land that was asserted by the Vandalia Co., also known as the Walpole or Grand Ohio Co., which had successfully lobbied the Crown for a grant of land that included that claimed by the Indiana Co. The claims of the Vandalia Co. effectively collapsed with the break between Great Britain and the United States (Livermore 1968,113-115; Lewis 1941,59-154; Abernethy 1959,36-58; Bailey 1939,233-249).

The Illinois Co. purchased two tracts of land from the Illinois tribe along the Mississippi River and north of the Ohio in 1773 (Abernethy 1959,28-30,118; Philbrick 1965,16,28,42). A later spin-off of this group was the Wabash Co., which purchased lands to the east in 1775 from Native Americans. When the Illinois and Wabash companies merged in 1779, together they laid claim to some 60 million acres (Smith 1956,160; Abernethy 1959, 93-194, 202; Philbrick 1965,42).

Thus, with the break of 1775-1776 it was a natural step for these companies to begin to lobby the Continental Congress. The investors of the Illinois, Wabash, and Indiana companies were a veritable who's-who of political influentials in the "landless" states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Jersey, plus a few others. This was due, in part, to such tactics as the gift of stock made in 1775 by the Illinois Co. to nine congressional delegates (Abernethy 1959,121-122). The Illinois-Wabash Co. set aside 12 per cent of its shares "for purposes most conducive to the [company's] general interest" (Smith 1956,160).

Not surprisingly, the investors in one or more of these companies soon included such political luminaries as Charles Carroll of Maryland (Congress, 1776-1778); Samuel Chase of Maryland (Congress, 1774-1778, 1784, 1785); Silas Deane of Connecticut (Congress, 1774-1776); Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1775); his son, William Franklin of New Jersey (governor, 1763-1776); Joseph Galloway of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1774-1775); Conrad Gerard (French minister to the U.S., 1778-1779); Patrick Henry of Virginia (Congress, 1774-1776, governor, 1776-1779, 1784-1786); Thomas Johnson of Maryland (Congress, 1774-1777, governor, 1777-1779); William Johnson of New York (superintendent of Indian affairs, 1755-1774); Henry Moore of New York (governor, 1765-1769); Robert

Morris of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1776-1778, congressional superintendent of finance, 1781-1784); William Paca of Maryland (Congress, 1774-1779, governor 1782-1785); George Ross of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1774-1777); James Smith of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1776-1778); Samuel Wharton of Delaware (Congress, 1782-1783); Thomas Wharton of Pennsylvania (state council president, 1776-1777); and James Wilson of Pennsylvania (Congress, 1775-1777, 1782, 1783, 1785-1787). And these were only the investors who had been made public (Jensen 1940, 211-212; Jensen 1939, 325; Jensen 1936, 38-39; Abernethy 1959, 29-30, 121-122, 142, 193-194, 210-211). While serving in Congress, Wilson took a fee in 1776 to render an opinion that was favorable to the Indiana Co.'s title claims. He became president of the Illinois-Wabash Co. in 1780 (Jensen 1939, 327; Abernethy 1959, 143-144, 154; Smith 1956, 160).

When he returned from London and entered Congress in 1775, Benjamin Franklin proposed a draft of confederation that implied congressional jurisdiction over the western lands. However, Virginia and the other "landed" states, with the assistance of New England, were able to prevent the inclusion of a congressional jurisdiction provision in the draft of the Articles of Confederation that was submitted to the states in late 1777.

By 1779, however, the leaders of Maryland, the only state that had not ratified the Articles, were making clear their willingness to hold out indefinitely unless Virginia relinquished jurisdiction over its western lands. The Virginia assembly, which had been receiving (and ignoring) petitions from the Illinois, Wabash, and Indiana companies since 1776, then invited them to present their case at a joint session. Before the hearing, the Indiana Co. was careful to first spread some stock and legal retainers among such prominent Virginians as Edmund Randolph (attorney general, 1776-86; Congress, 1779-82; governor, 1786-88) and William Grayson (state assembly, 1784-85 and 1788, Congress, 1785-1787). (Jensen 1940, 206-208; Lewis 1941, 199-216)

However, this strategy was not successful. After the hearings, the legislature declared invalid all land titles based on purchases from Indians. To stave off ruin, the Indiana Co. tried, but failed, to get a consolation grant of land similar to that given earlier to the Henderson Co. by Virginia and North Carolina. The legislature also declared invalid all land grants made by the Crown, which finally ruined whatever hopes were left for the old Ohio Co. under its grant of 1749. George Mason, a member of the assembly who doubled as the lobbyist for the Ohio Co., was unable to obtain even a hearing for the company, which claimed much of the same land as the Indiana Co. but had never been able to perfect its title through the required surveys. However, Mason did present the case against the Indiana Co. in the assembly, sponsored the land legislation adopted by the assembly that year, and was the primary author of

Virginia's subsequent complementary proposal to Congress for resolving the western land problem. The Ohio Co.'s old political rival, the Loyal Co., benefited the most from Virginia's policies and also had lobbyists who were active before the state assembly during the critical decisions of 1779 (Rowland 1964, Vol. 1,333-336; Rutland 1970, Vol. 2,549-550; Brant 1948,92-93; Lewis 1941,217-218; Sosin 1967,153-158; Jensen 1940,208-209; Abernethy 1959, 217-229; Bailey 1939,253-279; James 1959,165-170). Virginia moved immediately to open a land office to accommodate western land purchases, which set the stage for a renewal of the lobbying campaigns directed at Congress.

The British invasion of the lower Atlantic coast in 1780 imparted fresh incentive to resolve the standoff. In 1781, it finally was agreed that Maryland would ratify the Articles and Virginia would cede its lands north and west of the Ohio River. However, Virginia retained the conditions that it had attached to its earlier cession, one of which was that the land would be under the control of Congress and used to create new states rather than to add to the territory of existing states. Another condition was that the titles from Indian purchases be declared void, which cleared the way for confirmation of the titles of the competing Virginia speculators. This delayed acceptance of the cession by Congress and set off a flurry of petitions to that body. As historian Irving Brant has noted, this was "a notice of congressional jurisdiction in Western affairs."

Although the land speculation companies were hardly the only factor accounting for the congressional politics of the time, even on the western lands,⁸ their lobbying was significant enough that in 1782 Arthur Lee of Virginia wrote to fellow congressional delegate Samuel Adams of Massachusetts that "these Agents [of land companies] are using every art to seduce us and to sow dissention among the States, I think they are more dangerous than the Enemy's Arms" (Burnett 1963, Vol. 6,331).

Another indication of the new authority of Congress over western lands was the submission in 1782 of the boundary dispute between Pennsylvania and Connecticut that underlay the Wyoming Valley land title disputes to a court convened under Article IX of the *Articles of Confederation*, which was the only case ever decided under this provision for resolving disputes between states (Boyd and Taylor 1930-1971, Vol.7,xx-xxxiii). The extent to which the State of Connecticut's position on the matter was tied to that of land speculators is reflected in the payment by the Susquehanna and Delaware land companies of half of the state's legal costs in the matter and their hiring as their own agents the same men who represented the state government in the litigation. Wilson, of the Illinois-Wabash Co., was one of the attorneys hired to represent the State of Pennsylvania (Boyd and Taylor 1930-1971, Vol. 7,xi,35-136; Smith 1956,171-177). Jurisdiction over the disputed area was awarded to Pennsylvania by the Article IX

court. However, many of the Wyoming Valley settlers who had bought land from the Susquehanna Company still refused to move, and much blood was shed. Pennsylvania finally put the matter to rest in 1787 by confirming those titles on lands settled prior to 1782.

Acceptance by Congress of the land cessions of the landed states, which was essentially on the terms proposed by Virginia, did not come until 1783. While acceptance resolved many of the land title controversies, it also created a vast national domain that was at the disposition of Congress and initiated the second phase of the land speculators' lobbying of Congress, which involved competing for grants from Congress.

Investors immediately began to form new land companies to capitalize on these opportunities, the most successful of which was the Ohio Company of Associates. One of the first acts of the company after its organizational meeting in 1786 was to hire Samuel Holden Parsons to lobby Congress for a western land purchase on favorable terms. Parsons was ineffective, but his replacement, Manasseh Cutler, was quite successful.

Cutler allied himself with William Duer, a former member of Congress (1777-78) who was the secretary of the U.S. treasury board. Cutler and Duer became so optimistic about their lobbying prospects that instead of the original objective, congressional agreement to sell 1.5 million acres at the statutory price of \$1 each, they sought to buy 5 million acres at \$.67 each for the Ohio Company of Associates in what is now southeastern Ohio plus an option on another 3.5 million acres at the same price for yet another new group of investors. A Congress that was hungry for capital agreed, and even allowed the Ohio Company of Associates to pay only half of the purchase price down and the other half when the land survey was completed. Additionally, payment could be made in government securities worth about 12 per cent of face value (Myers 1983,107-110; Davis 1917, Vol. 1,130-138; Belote 1971,12-21; Cutler and Cutler 1888, Vol. 1,228-242,292-305; Roseboom 1976, Vol. 5,43-144).

The terms of this deal were worked out at the same time as the details of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, described by historian Richard B. Morris as "the most important piece of legislation ever enacted by the Congress of the Confederation." Cutler drafted much of the ordinance, perhaps including its prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Territory (Finkelman 1989,8-71; Cutler and Cutler 1888, Vol. 1,242,292-305).

In order to gain a key ally, Cutler also successfully proposed that Arthur St. Clair, the president of Congress, be named as the first governor of the new Ohio Territory (Davis 1917, Vol. 1,134; Cutler and Cutler 1888, Vol. 1,288,301; Morris 1987,229).

Public Creditors

From the time that he was appointed as the superintendent of finance

by Congress in 1781, Robert Morris was determined to raise money for the war effort. First he stopped paying interest on loans to Congress and salary to the soldiers of the Continental Army at least partly because he hoped that this would build enough public support to bring about an increase in public revenue (Morris 1987,41; Ferguson 1961,140-143,149). When that did not succeed, in 1782 he organized a committee of public creditors in Philadelphia that was assigned the task of circulating in all of the states written materials that advocated lobbying for public revenue increases. Organized activity by public creditors then occurred in New Jersey, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and, most notably, New York. The New York group, which was organized by Alexander Hamilton, among others, resolved to promote conventions of public creditors in each of the counties of the state, in each of the states, and nationally. However, these conventions were never organized (Ferguson and Catanzariti 1973, Vol. 5,47,200,357,398-399,483-484,495,514,548-549,588-589,598, Vol. 6,xxix, xxxvii,36,48-51,53-54,56,62,82, 235,603-604,657,695-697, and Vol. 7,xxvii-xxx, xxxv,142-146,332, 366,413-414,417-418,426,468,513; Ver Steeg 1954,156,172; Ferguson 1961,148-152; Jensen 1950, pp.66-67; Syrett and others 1961-1987, Vol. 3,71-177,290-293; McDonald 1982,44; Gerlach 1987,483-484).

This omission may have been due to the sudden presentation of what appeared to be a better opportunity: a deputation of army officers came to Congress with a threatening petition demanding financial relief. This was by no means the first lobbying effort by army officers: an organization formed by virtually all of the generals had successfully petitioned Congress in 1779-80 for half-pay for life for all officers who finished out the war (Myers 1983,3-5).

Hamilton, who had just entered Congress, and Gouverneur Morris, a former member of Congress (1777-78) who now was the assistant congressional superintendent of finance, worked to coordinate the officers' lobbying with that of the other public creditors' groups (Henderson 1974,332-334; Ferguson 1961,157-160; Miller 1959,92-97; Myers 1983,6-10; McDonald 1982,44-47; Skeen 1974,274-275;Kohn 1970,193-194). Soon the officers threatened to refuse to disband, the war now being all but over. In a private letter, Gouverneur Morris wrote:

The army have swords in their hands. You know enough of mankind to know much more than I have said and possibly much more than they themselves yet think of. . . although I think it probable that much of convulsion will ensue, yet it must terminate in giving the government that power without which government is but a name. . . On the wisdom of the present moment depends more than is easily imagined and when I look round for the actors — let us change the subject (Morris 1980,485-486).

Commander-in-chief Washington had been slow to learn of the threat, which he believed had been "managed with great Art." He attended the famous meeting of the officers at Newburgh, N.Y., in early 1783 despite his lack of an invitation and quieted the scheme with a simple but devastatingly effective emotional appeal (Fitzpatrick 1931, Vol. 26,216-217; Kohn 1970,202-212; Myers 1983,2,10-13; Flexner 1965,500-508; Flexner 1969,234-235).

A month after the showdown at Newburgh, and just before the army disbanded, many of the same officers organized the Society of the Cincinnati, a national officers' organization whose activities were to include lobbying for the compensation of the war's veterans. Washington was selected as its first president. Two months later, Congress was petitioned, unsuccessfully, to grant western lands to the recent war's officers by 285 officers; 87 per cent of them became members of the Society. By the end of 1783, the Society had organized chapters in all 13 states (Myers 1983,15-19,25,31-34).

In the Society of the Cincinnati, the United States had its first national interest group of any permanence. It was, essentially, the only national organization of any type other than Congress (McDonald 1965,33; Myers 1983,ix,92; Flexner 1969, 66).

The Society immediately proved to be controversial, both externally and internally. Public meetings that criticized the Society and its potential influence occurred in Connecticut and Rhode Island and criticism was heard in several state legislatures (Jensen 1950,262-264; Myers 1983,50-52).⁹ At the Society's first national convention, in Philadelphia in 1784, Washington proposed seven changes to the Society's constitution, including a deletion of all references to political activity. However, the titular ban on political activity often was ignored and the changes were not ratified by the state chapters until 16 years later (Ferling 1988,348-349; Myers 1983,58-63,77-81). The extent of the political connections of the Society's 2,300 members is evident in this statistic: they comprised 21 of the 55 delegates who attended the Constitutional Convention of 1787 (Myers 1983,97).

The Push for a National Commerce Power

The movement that resulted in the adoption of the U.S. Constitution was fueled, in significant part, by interest groups that came forward to press for the adoption of a national power over commerce.

In 1784 a Philadelphia merchants' committee led by Tench Coxe began to organize a statewide chamber of commerce and a national campaign to promote business. One of its first efforts was to convince both the Pennsylvania assembly and a congressional committee formed at the group's request to endorse greater congressional power over navigation and foreign trade. When Congress moved from Trenton to New York

City in early 1785, it was met by an address from "the Artificers, Tradesmen, and Mechanicks of the city" and two petitions from the local Chamber of Commerce requesting such a measure. In response to the petition, the assembly endorsed the idea. The participants in a Boston merchants' group elected John Hancock, recently the governor, as its chair and agreed to organize the rest of the state behind the cause and petition Congress. There also was a second Boston group, the Association of Tradesmen and Manufacturers of the Town of Boston, which began to contact similar organizations in other cities; answers were received from Newport, New Haven, New London, Hartford, Baltimore, and Charleston. The Charleston Chamber of Commerce soon received communications on the issue from both the New York Chamber of Commerce and the Boston merchants' group, following which it endorsed the idea and sent a petition to the state legislature (Crosskey and Jeffrey 1980,166-183,203-205,237; Morris 1946, 203-204; Morris 1987,151; McDonald 1992,378; Kornblith 1988,355; Cooke 1978,2-74; Beard 1986,40-41; Steffen 1984,82-84).

There was other interest group activity that took a *less direct route* and that arguably had as much eventual effect on the form and nature of American national government. Upon Washington's resignation as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, he resumed a private life which included the promotion of his long-standing dream to build a canal on the Potomac River that would link the drainage of the Chesapeake Bay with that of the Ohio River. In 1785 he successfully lobbied the legislatures of Maryland and Virginia to grant a charter to the Potomac Canal Co., of which he became the first president. He served as either the company's president or board chairman until his death in 1799 (Ambler 1936,187-190; Woodward 1926,396-397; Dorfman 1947, Vol. 1, 248-251; Ferling 1988,333-334; Flexner 1969,73-77; Brant 1948, 365-374; Bacon-Foster 1912,33-60).

At the suggestion of Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Madison, the state legislatures of Maryland and Virginia called a convention in the spring of 1785 to discuss how they might share the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. Washington capitalized on confusion concerning the arrangements for the meeting to score a lobbyist's coup: he convinced the delegates to make use of his estate at Mount Vernon. Later, the delegates cooperatively endorsed the proposed Potomac canal in their report on the convention to their legislatures. The convention was important to the movement for a national commerce power because the participants agreed to meet again, following which the Maryland legislature decided to also invite the other two states whose participation in a Potomac canal would be desirable, Pennsylvania and Delaware (Hendrick 1937,11-13,50-54; Rowland 1964, Vol. 2, 81-82; Crosskey and Jeffrey 1980,219-221,225-229; Dorfman 1941, 248-251; Flexner 1969,73-77,89-90; Jackson and Twohig 1976-1979, Vol. 4,107-108,140; Ketcham 1990,169-170;

Brant 1948,365-376). The Virginia legislature then topped even that, extending invitations to all 13 states to what became known as the Annapolis Convention of 1786, whose delegates convinced the Continental Congress to convene the Philadelphia Convention of 1787. It is for this, as well as its support of interstate commercial cooperation, that the report of the Mount Vernon Convention, shaped significantly by Washington, one of the first "super-lobbyists," has been termed by Burton J. Hendrick as "next to the Constitution itself, the most historic paper in our constitutional history."¹⁰

The push for the Annapolis Convention was fueled in Virginia later that year by additional interest group pressures there for a national commerce power. In November 1785 alone, the state assembly received five petitions supporting such a measure. After the Constitution was submitted to the states in 1787, interest groups such as these were important supporters of ratification (Crosskey and Jeffrey 1980,221-222).

Interest Groups and the Constitutional Convention

The relative lack of interest group pressures at the constitutional convention of 1787 is due, in large part, to the secretive nature of the proceedings, and that appears to have been much the purpose of the secrecy. Judging by the apparent relative lack of interest group influence at the convention, the attempt to insulate the delegates was about as successful as could have been hoped.

Of course, virtually all of the delegates to the convention had interest group affiliations of one sort or another, and most had several. However, they do not appear to have overtly injected these affiliations into their roles as delegates; if they did, no documentary record appears to have been left. Even Charles A. Beard, who made his famous argument in 1913 that the delegates were primarily influenced in their decisions by their comparative knowledge of and affection for realty versus personal-ity, did not describe any organizational activity by the delegates (Beard 1992,73-151).¹¹

Even the Society of the Cincinnati, with its 21 members among the delegates to the convention, was mentioned only twice on the record, and at the time the Society was holding its second national convention elsewhere in Philadelphia. Recognizing the delicacy of the situation, Washington did not participate in the Society's meeting despite being its president, limiting himself to a single dinner with its members. The Cincinnati who were delegates to the constitutional convention did not vote there as a bloc (Daves 1925, Vol. 1; Myers 1983,91-100; Farrand 1937, Vol. 2,114, 119).¹²

Although it is common to assert the effect that Shays' Rebellion (1786-87) had on the convention, this effect did not ensue from any direct attempt to influence the delegates.

The only general category of interest group that made anything resembling a concerted effort to lobby the constitutional convention was the anti-slavery societies, and they were decidedly ineffective despite having influential members of their own among the delegates.

Standing abolitionist societies were just beginning to appear on the political scene. The first of these displayed what may almost be termed the classic American pattern: the Pennsylvania Abolition Society was organized in Philadelphia (in 1774, and reorganized in 1787) and Benjamin Franklin was its president; Benjamin Rush and Coxe also were officers. It soon convinced the state legislature to move toward the gradual emancipation of slaves. The second such group, the New York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves, was formed in 1785 with John Jay as its president and Alexander Hamilton its secretary. The group lobbied the state legislature, unsuccessfully for many years, for abolition (Jensen 1950, pp. 135-136; Zilversmit 1967, 125, 147-151, 159-163; Syrett and others 1961-1987, Vol. 3, 597, 604, 654; Van Doren 1938, 774-775; Cooke 1978, 92-93; Bruns 1977, 84-385, 504-506, 512-515).

Of course, opposition to abolition was even stronger in the South than in Pennsylvania or New York. In Virginia, a 1782 statute permitting manumission in some circumstances and petitions for emancipation submitted by Methodists to the Virginia assembly in 1784-85 prompted an impressive backlash in 1785 in the form of proslavery petitions with 1,244 signatures (Schmidt and Wilhelm 1973, 133-146; Morris 1987, 181; Bailey 1939, 123-124; runs 1977, 506-507).

The explosiveness of the issue was offered by Franklin and Hamilton, both of whom were delegates, to explain why they squelched the lobbying efforts of the abolition societies of which they were officers. When Franklin, who, at that point, had only lent the considerable prestige of his name to the society without actively participating, was asked by the Pennsylvania society to present to the convention a petition to abolish the slave trade, he suggested that it be let to "lie over for the present." While temporarily away from the convention in New York, Hamilton persuaded the society there to forego submitting an antislavery petition that Jay had drafted (Dillon 1974, 15-17; Zilversmit 1967, 166; Drake 1950, 101-102; Morris 1987, 181; Cooke 1978, 93, 110; Morris 1985, 192-194; Finkelman 1987, 188-226).

There may well have been more interest group lobbying at the convention than can easily be detailed. For example, Coxe lobbied the delegates to support a strong national power over commerce even while leading the formation of the Pennsylvania Society for the Encouragement of Manufactures and the Useful Arts, the functions of which included lobbying. Coxe also demonstrates that organizational affiliations can work both ways: he also lobbied the delegates against the presenta-

tion of the antislavery petition of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society of which he, too, was an officer (Coxe 1982,33-62; Cooke 1978,92-93,102-108,110). One interest group lobbyist who did make an appearance in that capacity was Manasseh Cutler of the Ohio Company of Associates, who still was orchestrating his congressional triumph in New York (Cutler and Cutler 1888, Vol. 1,253-254,267-270; Van Doren 1948, 128-131; Morris 1985,192).

The Ratification Campaign

The news blackout that was imposed by the Philadelphia convention of 1787 began to show holes even before adjournment in September. Reports of the proceedings leaked by the allies of New York Gov. George Clinton led to the publication of various newspaper articles that criticized the proposed constitution even while it still was being written. After adjournment but before the delegates dispersed, some of the supporters of ratification began to confer concerning a coordinated strategy,¹³ thus launching what became one of the most significant interest group campaigns in American history.

Disputes about the nature of the organization formed by the federalists to advocate ratification usually focus on whether it was a political party. However, the federalists were not a political party, as no "Federalist" candidates were nominated for either the state ratifying conventions or any other public office. The candidates in the popular elections for the state ratifying conventions often indicated where they stood on ratification, but they did not claim to be the candidate of a political party.

Neither can the federalist organization have been a precursor of political parties, since a legislative bloc did not play an important role in it. For example, of the authors of *The Federalist* — Madison, Hamilton, and, until he took ill, Jay — only Madison was even a member of a legislature, having been returned to Congress in late 1786. Madison's work for the federalists was outside the scope of his duties as a delegate to Congress, which merely submitted the proposed Constitution to the states for ratification without an endorsement and met only occasionally while the federalist braintrust operated. Neither was this work within the scope of the duties of Hamilton and Madison as delegates to the constitutional convention, which had adjourned. Nor was it within the scope of being a delegate to a state ratifying convention, as which they all served; the elections for the conventions had not yet been held.

Scholarly recognition of the federalists as an interest group is rare. A clear explanation of the basis of the classification is even more rare. David B. Truman, for example, seems to base it on the federalists' work in the state ratifying conventions. However, the ratifying convention delegates were public officials and so this particular portion of the ratification cam-

paign was public activity, that is, it was not interest group activity.

In any case, while in New York City during the fall and winter of 1787-1788, the supporters of ratification met regularly. Together, they acted as a national coordinating committee for the pro-ratification forces, passing on all sorts of information, including their suggestions for strategy. In order to marshal the arguments for ratification, Jay, Hamilton, and Madison wrote the series of newspaper pieces that became, collectively, *The Federalist*. Madison, of course, wrote *Federalist* 10, the first important discussion of American interest groups.¹⁴ The more interesting aspects of the federalist organization include a pony express between Poughkeepsie, the site of the New York convention and Hamilton's coordinating efforts, and other convention sites (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 10,1572,1672-1675,1723-1725).

The antifederalists also formed a national interest group, coordinated on Clinton's behalf by John Lamb, an organizer of the Sons of Liberty in New York a quarter-century earlier and a general during the War of Independence (Leake 1971,304-336; McDonald 1965,213,222,224-226; Boyd 1979,128; Ross 1933,555-556; Main 1964,221,226,235-236,244,252; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 9,788-793,811-829,845-846, and Vol. 10,1547n,1572, 1589-1590, 1630). The antifederalists had their own pony express system (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 9,845-846, and Vol. 10,1589n).

Interest groups were active during the popular elections for the state ratifying conventions. For example, Madison left New York in order to campaign for election as a delegate to the Virginia ratifying convention after learning that his old supporters, the Baptists of Orange County, were upset that the proposed constitution neglected to guarantee religious liberty. On his way home, he visited John Leland, a prominent Baptist minister who had petitioned against ratification. Although Leland and the Virginia Baptist organization remained opponents of ratification, he was converted enough by Madison to withdraw himself as a candidate and endorse Madison (Hutchinson and others 1962-, Vol. 10,515-516,540-542; Ketcham 1990,250-251; Ryland 1955,133-134; Mecklin 1934,150-158; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 8,424-427, and Vol. 9,596n). The mechanics' association of Baltimore successfully supported a federalist candidate there (Steffen 1984,90-92).

Predictably, various group petitions were sent to the conventions in New Jersey (McDonald 1992,123), Delaware (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 3,107-108), and Pennsylvania (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 2,298-299,309-311,316-319). Group petitions supporting ratification were sent to the state assembly in Delaware (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 3,54-55) and New Jersey (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 3,135-137) before there even was a chance to organize the ratifying convention.

Ad hoc citizens' groups were formed. In Massachusetts, a mass federal-

ist rally was staged in Boston for the sole purpose of gaining the endorsement of Samuel Adams, who was a delegate, and Boston's tradesmen endorsed the Constitution in a mass meeting (Wright 1961,174; McDonald 1965,216; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 15,289-295. In Pennsylvania, several local antifederalist societies were formed, and Coxe, James Wilson, and Rush formed the federalist coordinating committee (Cooke 1978, 111; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 2,306-309,695-696). In Virginia, a federalist society was formed in Berkeley County (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 8,3,22).¹⁵

Standing organizations of one sort or another also debated or expounded upon the merits of the proposed Constitution. In Connecticut, the Congregational clergy of New Haven County endorsed the Constitution (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 3,351.) In Virginia, the issue was discussed by the aforementioned Baptists, the Union Society of Richmond, the Danville (Ken.) Political Club, the "court party" of Danville (Ken.), Washington County's Society of Western Gentlemen, and the Political Society of Richmond (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 8,3,170-173,292,408-417,433-436,472-474, Vol. 9,769-779, and Vol. 15,561-562). In North Carolina, a Baptist minister denounced the Constitution to his congregation (McDonald 1992,311). In New Jersey, the Newark Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge endorsed it (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 3,135). In Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Baptists' Association endorsed it, too (Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 8,374-375).

The other means by which interest groups communicated their views on the proposed Constitution were varied. Of course, everywhere there were pamphlets and newspaper articles. In New Hampshire, federalist riders were dispatched to the remote corners to promote ratification (McDonald 1965,220). In New York, antifederalists conducted effigy parades (Gilje 1987, 97).

There also was violence. In New York, 18 were injured when rival parades of federalists and antifederalists in Albany came to blows (Miller 1959,212). In Pennsylvania, a federalist crowd literally dragged two assembly delegates into session at Philadelphia in order to obtain a quorum for the purpose of organizing the elections for the ratification convention, a mob threw stones through the windows of a Philadelphia boarding house that was popular with antifederalist delegates, and there were eight reported fatalities from a battle between the two sides in Washington County (Van Doren 1948,180,182; Beard 1992,231-232; Cooke 1978,151; McDonald 1992,164; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 2, 104,110n,713n). Even adjournment by a state's ratifying convention did not necessarily end the interest group activity there. In Pennsylvania, petitions with 6,005 signatures were presented to the state legislature requesting that the ratifying convention's approval of the Constitution be reversed and the state's delegates to the Congress be instructed to resist its adoption. The feder-

alists, apparently happy enough with the convention's action, gathered only 31 opposing signatures (Boyd 1979,123-137; Jensen and others 1976, Vol. 2,709-725; Morris 1987,302). In North Carolina, ratification supporters who were disappointed with the first convention's rejection of the Constitution started a successful statewide petition campaign to convince the legislature to call a second convention (McDonald 1992,312).

Conclusion

The ambiguity of the authority of Parliament to adopt and enforce the colonial policies that proved to be so unpopular in America spurred many Americans to form and join interest groups in unprecedented numbers during the first part of the 1763-89 period.

The assertion of a new domestic constitutional authority to replace that which was denied to the British also stimulated interest group activity. Suddenly, there were new possibilities to be achieved through interest group initiatives such as increased religious liberty and land ownership. Land speculation, especially, served to affect the new constitutional arrangements by fueling the competition for authority between the states and Congress.

The western land cessions notwithstanding, the national constitutional authority over commerce remained so weak that many interests associated with commerce agitated on behalf of an improvement, leading to the drafting and ratification of the Constitution itself.

Even as the constitutional arrangements were being shuffled, there was a corresponding rearrangement of nonpolitical organizational relationships. In part this resulted from the split between America and Britain, as the various trans-Atlantic organizational partnerships necessarily were reconfigured during the war. It also resulted from a significant increase during the period of the tendency to form organizations of all types; in this sense, what occurred was not so much a rearrangement as it was a blossoming of general organizational activity.

Notes

1. Definition of the term "interest group" has been imprecise and inconsistent among all branches of the social sciences. It is defined here as a private organization that seeks to influence governmental policy but does not nominate candidates for public office—i.e., is not a political party. See Yoho 1998.
2. It was from the platform built by the Society to observe the transit that the Declaration of Independence was first read in public, seven years later (Hindle 1956, p. 233).
3. Of course, not all petitions are from interest groups.
4. For an interesting discussion of the class patterns of participation in

- these organizations, see Hoff 1991, p. 51.
5. At the peak of the resistance to the Stamp Act, the authority of those colonial institutions of government that were acting under authority from London—e.g., the governors and councils—was all but extinguished.
 6. In fairness, Olson might be read as meaning to say that Wilkes created only the first public opinion lobbies in Britain, as distinct from America.
 7. Revolutionary state governments were not formed in some of the colonies until 1777.
 8. The other factors included the interest of the “landless” states in using the western lands to raise revenue and for grants to their military officers.
 9. It is a misconception that the Tammany Society, organized in New York City in 1787, was intended to counteract the Cincinnati (Myers 1983, p. 192; Mushkat 1971, pp. 8-11).
 10. The text of the report is in Conway 1963, pp. 11-15.
 11. Of course, Beard’s evidence, which he described as “frankly fragmentary,” has been persuasively refuted by, in particular, Forrest McDonald in *We the People*. McDonald notes that, contrary to many characterizations of his work, Beard “carefully and explicitly denied that he was charging the members of the Convention with writing the Constitution for their personal benefit” (McDonald 1992, p. 6n).
 12. The context of the references to the Society was whether its members would dominate a popular election for the American presidency.
 13. A good account of the early organization of the federalists is in Ketcham 1990, pp. 232-239.
 14. As to what Madison thought of interest groups, see Yoho 1995.
 15. This meeting is distinguished from seven others held by the freeholders of other towns and counties for such purposes as instructing their delegates; these were arguably official assemblies of local voters rather than meetings of interest groups.

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