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The Autobiography of Levi Allen

*Levi Allen referred to himself as a
citizen of no nation, but of the world.*

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Jails, when not frighteningly brutal, are notorious for being excessively boring. Confined to a Quebec jail on 29 June 1797 for suspicion of high treason, Levi Allen passed the time by reading and by copying favored passages from the popular press into his large daybook. The tedium of St. Limbo, as he called his jail, provoked Allen's muse, and he penned a number of largely forgettable poems about the perfidy of lawyers, the uncertain but valuable nature of friendship and family, and the abysmal quality of jailhouse food. In the midst of these jottings, Allen began a brief autobiography, seeking to explain to himself how he had come to this unfortunate pass.

At his death in 1801, Levi Allen's papers passed to his brother Ira Allen. The latter's son, Ira H. Allen, sold off the bulk of the Allen family papers to that inveterate collector Henry Stevens of Barnet, Vermont. Levi Allen's daybook was just one of the nearly thirty-four thousand items collected by Stevens that were purchased by the New York State Library in 1875 for two thousand dollars.

Damaged by the Albany State Capitol fire of March 1911, Levi Allen's daybook was hastily packed into a box, where it remained largely undisturbed for nearly eighty years. To view the Stevens documents in Albany was no easy task. There was no indexing of any kind and, after receiving

permission to descend into the dark room where the old boxes full of ancient documents were stored, one had to turn the pages with steel tongs provided for the purpose. (I am informed that the library used to supply ivory tongs, but someone kept them as a souvenir.) Obviously, under such circumstances something so common as a badly burned daybook would receive no attention.

And so Levi Allen's autobiography, like so many other treasures in the Stevens Collection, remained unknown to scholars. But in 1985, Vermont's State Archivist Gregory Sanford and Jim Corsaro of the New York State Library agreed that these papers deserved a better fate. Thanks to the efforts of Corsaro and Sanford, and to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Stevens Papers were moved to the Vermont State Archives, where Eleazer Durfee arranged and indexed the documents, and Linda Bluto microfilmed them for public use.¹

In 1988, while in Montpelier researching the economic attitudes of the Loyalists, I first came upon Levi Allen's daybook. Allen's fascination with the latest free market theories proved most intriguing, and his poetry kept me turning the pages. One of the rare pleasures of the historian is to stumble upon something completely unexpected. On one page, without heading of any kind, appeared the words: "Levi Allen was born on the mountains of Cornwall." So begins Allen's brief autobiography, a rare insight into the mind of the sole loyalist member of a prominent patriot family.²

What emerges from these few pages is, as his closest friends realized, an eccentric character full of fervor and ironic wit, an intelligent and loyal individual not always appreciated by his contemporaries—or even his family. But Allen's is also a tragic tale of one life caught in the maelstrom of the American Revolution. Constantly certain of his ability to control events, Levi Allen was consistently swept away by historic forces he could not fully appreciate.

Allen's life is full of contradictions. On the one hand, he was excited by new economic theories that did not yet enjoy widespread application in his society, and he came to despise England's traditional ways of conducting business, with their emphasis on connection and birth. But on the other hand, Allen loathed the new democratic theories and practices unleashed by the American Revolution. Allen proved himself resilient and passionate, committed to his family and able to come up fighting, no matter how disastrous his latest failure. He found his closest friends and allies in his family, yet always felt victimized, especially by his brother Ira. A few pages before his autobiography begins, Levi wrote a poem expressing his sense of where he fit in the family:

*I attended Zimri, till all hopes were gone
But did not wish to see his untimely urn
I attended Heman till all hope vanished*

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*But would not See him breathe his last
I attended Lucy till all hope was over
And left her with her babe to cover
I always fled from death you See
But death and I must Still agree
Ira always came in when life was over
to get what worldly goods remain
to which my feeling n'er could bend
Ira—the executor to what remained
to where my friends went I can't tell
I know little of heaven, less of hell.³*

And still, somehow, Ira remained Levi's friend and confidant, the recipient of scores of letters and a store of unasked-for advice. They worked together to increase the family's fortune and stood surety to one another's loans. Warning Ira of "a bitter enemy to the Allen Family" in 1788, Levi admitted that "I have always depended on you and still depend."⁴

The same complexities marked Levi's relations with his brother Ethan. In his daybook, Levi calls Ethan "No Brother in the first place," and a "monster, in human Shape; highly dangerous to the progress of morality and Virtue." When Ethan charged Levi with being a Tory, Levi challenged Ethan to a duel. "I never considered any one action of my life, with more Serious Philosophical Attention." But "the old Soldier" refused to fight Levi, and looking back at the matter from the perspective of 1797, Levi was not certain that he had been correct in his actions. "However the termination gave me Pleasure, and the fortunate consequences Infinitely more," in helping to reunite him with Ethan. And news of Ethan's death touched Levi deeply. As he wrote George Washington, Ethan "was not only a brother, but a real friend."⁵

Curiously, just two years after Levi Allen wrote his memoir, his brother Ira also wrote an autobiography in jail. While the two memoirs validate each other on a number of key points, their tone is entirely different. Where Ira Allen is cold and analytical, and concerned primarily with land deals, Levi Allen is intense and idiosyncratic, concerned with personal affairs and proving that blame for his many failures lay elsewhere. Yet Levi and Ira share an emphasis on family. It would be unusual for the author of a modern memoir to devote as much attention and emotion to family as do the Allens. Throughout their lives, the Allens seemed to be constantly measuring themselves against one another, defining their experiences and identity within a family context, and, despite their occasional misunderstandings and resentments, relying on one another.⁶

In many ways Levi Allen is but a footnote, even to the history of Vermont. Interesting only because he was the loyalist brother of Ethan and Ira Allen, he usually appears in historical accounts solely to provide comic relief. The only extended scholarly biography of Levi Allen is a

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master's thesis by B. F. Cockerham.⁷ Otherwise most accounts of Levi Allen focus on the lawsuit filed by Ethan and Ira Allen in 1778, charging their brother with loyalism and seeking the confiscation of his property by Vermont. Such narratives draw heavily on the very curious collection of letters Levi Allen published in the Connecticut Courant in March 1779. Levi does not actually refute the charges, presenting instead a chronicle of familial affection. It is an odd defense, one that did not succeed in saving all his lands from expropriation.⁸ But perhaps these letters did attain Levi's real intent, to effect a reconciliation with his family. The minute Ethan Allen actually met with Levi, all past animosities were swept away, and the political prodigal was accepted back into the clan.⁹

Levi Allen's loyalism has appropriately troubled a number of biographers. Present at the taking of Ticonderoga from the British in 1775, Levi devoted himself for two years to obtaining Ethan Allen's release from British captivity.¹⁰ On the other hand, Levi traveled with the British army, spoke critically of the new government of the United States, fought Vermont's entry into the union, and filed a loyalist claim after the war. Allen was indeed a loyalist, but one driven by economic motivations.

Allen originally joined the British army in New York City in an effort to arrange his brother's release. But the temptation to trade with the British for specie overwhelmed any hesitation he may have felt about conducting business with his brother's captors. Following the army South, Levi mixed his two goals: working to win Ethan's freedom and to make a profit.¹¹ While with the British army in the South, Levi became aware of the opportunities available in the Floridas, which the British planned to make a refuge for the Southern loyalists. New colonies provided major opportunities to those who invested early. Allen hoped to be one of those lucky investors, purchasing land rights in East Florida and opening a store there in 1781.

It seemed obvious to Allen that everyone would benefit economically if the Americans and British just quit their senseless fighting and got down to what really mattered: business. Thus he blamed the Continental Congress not just for failing to gain his brother's release—it took a British officer, Archibald Campbell, to accomplish that goal—but for rebuffing all efforts at reconciliation. He blamed the British, in turn, for continuing "the damned war" and not perceiving the economic opportunities in American independence. For Allen, that new disease, nationalism, served no purpose but to hinder trade. And free trade offered the best hope for the future.¹²

Levi Allen referred to himself as a citizen of no nation, but of the world.¹³ A product of the Enlightenment and of that radical new thinker, Adam Smith, Allen saw free trade as the one weapon that could shatter

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*all the barriers and superstitions of the dead past. Since the United States first refused, and then could not sign a free trade treaty with Britain, Vermont would best serve its citizens by staying independent. By signing a free trade treaty with Britain, Vermont would become the conduit for British productions to the northern part of the United States. Goods would travel from Montreal up the Richelieu Valley, through Levi Allen's store in St. Jean, to the other Allens in Vermont, from there to be spread throughout the northern states.*¹⁴

Levi Allen's imperial visions did not end there. He sought the same goal in East Florida. As a colony of the British empire, East Florida would serve as the entrepôt for British manufactures into the southern states. At each end of this trade pincer would be Levi Allen, merchant for the Atlantic world.

*But Britain betrayed these dreams. In 1783, Britain shocked its loyalist supporters by ceding East Florida to Spain. In Allen's eyes, Britain had broken its contractual relationship with its most loyal subjects and deserved no further respect. Like most of those who had settled in the region, Levi Allen felt forsaken, and took his bitterness with him into yet another exile.*¹⁵

In 1790, Allen filed an angry demand, more than a request, for recompense from the British government. Allen's loyalist claim complained that this "unnatural war" had separated him from his family for nearly six years and ruined his fortune. Though the peace treaty had allowed for the safe return of refugees and the retrieval of debts, Levi found "that instead of collecting his debts, agreeably to the Treaty, or obtaining any Part of his Property, he was obliged to fly by night to Vermont for Refuge."

*Allen felt trapped by the complexities of British law. It was a Bleak House in which he kept knocking on the wrong door and seeing the wrong official, only to finally discover that he had filed his claim too late. Allen did not know whom to blame; both sides had stolen his property. Writing in the third person, Allen charged that the "vile re[p]tiles whom neither Faith of Treaties, Laws of Man, or even God can bind; drove . . . [Allen] into So many Misfortunes by depriving him of his Property." Not surprisingly, given the document's tone, the claims commission rejected Allen's appeal.*¹⁶

*Allen reflects well the difficulty historians have generalizing about loyalists, who supported Britain for a variety of reasons.*¹⁷ *The more ideological loyalists distrusted those like Levi Allen whose loyalty hinged so obviously on self-interest. Allen never earned the trust of other loyalists in Canada, who continued to think, not unreasonably, that he sought to cheat them. Allen beat his chest in sorrow for all he had lost, and then moved in for the kill. In one petition, he complained that "the truly un-*

happy rebellion" had reduced him "to such a degree, that I only ask the favour of being at the head of a Party of Peasants, to cultivate the deserts of Canada." He then tried to cheat another group of loyalists out of some of the best land in the Richelieu Valley. As William Jarvis wrote Samuel Peters, they had to keep an eye on "that worthless fellow Levi Allen" for the protection of their fellow loyalists.¹⁸

The American Revolution and its aftermath convinced Allen that neither the United States nor Britain deserved his trust. That did not mean, though, that they could not be useful to him. Allen made several attempts to persuade the British government to issue him and hundreds of supposed partners an enormous land grant. In the name of just over two thousand "ancient loyalists," Allen requested all the land between Missisquoi Bay and Lake Memphremagog from the U.S. border to the St. Francis River. The Council for Crown Land, after determining that most of the names appeared to have been written by the same hand—Levi Allen's—found little reason to proceed with this grant.¹⁹

After failing to acquire this mini-empire, Allen turned his efforts to negotiating a free trade agreement with the British, acting unofficially in the name of Vermont. But Allen discovered that he lacked the proper qualifications: he had no connections and he had failed to buy them. For some reason, Allen would not stoop to bribery and apparently did not purchase the influence of a member of Parliament, a step necessary to his plan. As a consequence, he spun his wheels in London for several years. Even his effort to fight a duel in defense of Vermont's honor was haughtily rebuffed—Allen did not have the correct status to duel a gentleman. He finally gave up and returned to Burlington, Vermont.²⁰

Levi Allen did persist, though, in his efforts to extort land from the British empire. He petitioned for one land grant after another and worked to keep alive the dream of a Quebec-to-Burlington trade route. These efforts, and his tendency to pursue questionable business practices, landed Allen in jail several times in the 1790s. "Keep yourself or your body clear of prison," Levi Allen advised his brother Ira, "Evil—Evil—Evil. Remember Levi has always been faithful."²¹

And, in his way, Levi Allen remained faithful to his family, if to no political system. He reserved his greatest loyalty for Anna Allen of New Milford, Connecticut, whom he married on 29 July 1779. Anna Allen seems to have played a significant role in reuniting the Allens after the war. She possessed a wonderful sense of humor and enjoyed an especially warm relationship with Ira Allen, the two exchanging bantering letters for nearly twenty years.²² Anna Allen bore one daughter, also named Anna, born 6 December 1780. In 1793 the Allens went to Pennsylvania to enroll the younger Anna in the Bethlehem Moravian Seminary. Before

leaving, Levi wrote Ira that he felt keenly the passage of time and the death of his siblings. Where once there had been "Six Brothers . . . carrying on Business in a Brotherly and advantageous manner," now "insatiable death hath devoured four." Levi offered Ira his lands before "the Crooked Scythe makes his last Stroke," and "dropt a Tear over the expiring Family Honor." Nonetheless, Levi retained "Faith that a Phenix will arise out of the ashes" and revive the family's fortunes. But these hopes also were shattered, for on 22 May 1795 Levi's daughter Anna died at Bethlehem.²³

In 1797, as a result of the separate machinations of Ira Allen and a Rhode Island merchant named David McLane, the government in Quebec became convinced that a plot was afoot to spark a Canadian rebellion. In the sweep of the usual suspects, the British officials picked up Levi Allen. Lieutenant-Governor John Simcoe assured Ira Allen that Levi had been imprisoned only because of "some rash & outrageous Expressions of which he is abundantly capable." The government held Allen for two months in Fort St. Louis without charges—giving Levi a chance to write his memoir—and released him on 3 September 1797.²⁴

Allen seems to have drifted his last few years, conducting a few land deals, but little else. He stayed close to his home and wife, and fell deeper into debt as his complicated business arrangements unravelled. Levi Allen died on 16 December 1801 while imprisoned for debt in the Burlington jail.

The original text of his daybook is unpaginated with the autobiography beginning on the sixtieth page. There are numerous other autobiographical references in the daybook, but this memoir has been treated as a separate text with page numbers appearing in brackets. Allen switches often from the first to third person and back again. No grammatical or spelling corrections have been made.

LEVI ALLEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Levi Allen was born on the mountains of Cornwall in the rough interior part of Connecticut in New England, as reported by his parents, which facts he has no reason to dispute, finding self there very young in the reign of George the second.²⁵ He is much Indebted to nature for a good constitution and no less to his parents for nursing it.

His education was Such as the Country afforded as Small improvement in incorrect English, with vu[l]gar arithmatick. But this deficiency was abundantly supplied with a double Portion of Religious tenates. During my youth catachise and worm seed was my constant allowance, with Psalm singing, in the latter of which I Proved no adept, to the great mortification of my Parents and teachers, on Monday mornings commonly took a flagilation for the levities of Sunday. My father dying when [I was] a youth of Eleven years, six brothers hopeful brothers left to the

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cair of a too indulgent Mother, the eldest (Ethan) sometime after engaging in an Iron Manufactory at Salisbury the family removed there.²⁶ His inexperience in the Iron business recommended him to N. Hampshire Grants since called Vermont; that being a Place of refuge equal to Rome in the [2] time of Romelus the founder.²⁷ Which misfortune proved a great favor to the elder brother, and advantagious to others of the family. Previous to the elder brother (Ethan) quitting the Iron business at Salisbury aforesaid, he then acting as dictator of the younger brethren, Levi in a mif walked off, then about fifteen years of age.²⁸ After wandering a while as unacquainted with the world as they with him, he recommended himself so well as to get the berth of a school master in an interior settlement in the then Province of New York amongst honest illiterate Dutchmen who were fond of teaching their children English. here he remained some time not that the business suited his Volatile Ideas which then began to expand, and every day his consequence increased on reflection that he could live without the assistance of his good mother, and more so without that of his arbitrary brother; but his Stay was to increase his finances which were then but small. Here I must remark his catachism came in play as that was a Part of his duty, his expertness in that gave him great credit with the Dutchmen. [3] Taking a very affectionate leave of the Dutchmen and his pupils with promise of returning as Soon as business would permit. [summer 1765] He proceeded to Albany, where he made some enquiry as to landed matters as his father was a considerable land holder on Cornwall mountains and had early taught him that next to religion landed Property was the most Substantial;²⁹ and hearing Col. H. Lydius³⁰ then in Albany had a large tract of good land lying east of Saratoga only 38 miles from Albany³¹ which he would dispose of on Very favourable terms to the purchaser, and having then on hand as he then conceived a monstrous large Sum of money the most of which he had amassed by his own industry and economy, amounting to very near one hundred dollars, which disturbed his repose for fear of being robbed in so much that he changed the silver into gold and sewed it in the waistband of his small clothes. In preparing to wait on Col. Lydius he shaved himself then went to a hair-dresser for the first time to have his hair dressed but first contracted for the price which he punctually paid, (and has had many good laugh with the barber Since) Then waited of Said Lydius and made a written contract for 1000 acres [4] of land provided he liked the same on examination: And to the surprise of said Lydius, Allen wrote the agreement himself. And proceeding to reconnoiter the premises, which he found good. Previous to viewing the country or large tracts of land he purchased efusive amonitions proper for traversing the deserts into which he slew 14 deer Some bears and other animals. In the course of which

he introduced himself to a party of Indian hunters, and having a plentiful Stock of the best of Pow[d]er supplied their wants and received in return Peltry. Those Indians introduced him to several other parties of hunters all [of] which he often Supplied with every thing they wanted, bringing the same from Albany.³² And thus early commenced Indian trader. And in the winter following [1766] Surprised my Good Mother and brethren at Salisbury with my presents, and more so with the quantity of Peltries I brot which was considerably augmented by the addition of a Credit my merchant gave me in Albany on no other Recommendation but the pushing industry he observed in the course of Supplying the Indian hunters.³³ I am the more particular in [5] relating the early occurrences in life than I shall be in the more advanced parts; in order to benefit the rising youths, as much depends on a good begining Viz. advancing in the right way; a youth with a good constitution tho' ignorant of the world, but what he doth know is true being derived from nature and a moral (tho' contracted education) Is much better off to begin this world, than one with a fortune connected with hereditary disease knowledge of the world as it calls so, Viz. the debaucheries, and consequent debilities of body and mind. To the former especially if of vigorous body and enterprising mind, the world, (as the Polite Phrase is) will open fast enough, full as fast as he is prepared for it. And to be at great expence to learn it fast is (to say nothing of the risk of morals & health) would be to as little purpose, as to instruct a youth in the mohawk lingo, in order to recommend him to the mercantile business in London. Nothing appears more redicalous to men of business, than to see a young fellow who hath no dependance in life but his good behaviour, Viz. Industry economy [6] and enterprising Exertions, let him be religiously Punctual, not in order to go to heaven, but to live happily on Earth, tho' it is one of the bye Paths that leads directly into the great high road to Heaven, in which their is much more travil than Some of our good Superstitious Clergymen will admit of — God forgive their uncharitableness. — Everyone to his trade (to use a Vulgerism) I leave the Clergy and return to my peltry [fur] which at that time I did not so long neglect. — I bot a cheap strong horse not a low Prised horse, but one cheap for his goodness and Something the more for his humbleness, and Set out a Pedling and retailing my Peltry, lodging quantities in Various Parts to be Sold on Commission. what remained in the Spring was Vendued, and the whole collection made a handsome Sum. Not satisfied with this, tho' the prior [activity?] had nearly run him [Allen] mad, he proceeded early in the Spring on his way to Detroit, to explore the Indian Trade in Perfection.³⁴ Paid his *Friend* before mention[ed] in Albany every farthing, and got double in debt, which is the never failing consequences of Punctuality, Joined to honest frugal Industry. [7]

Then proceeded on for Detroit; but being unacquainted with the trade took but few goods in the Credit, and those Chosen by the advice of an Old honest Dutchman whose years and property acquired had induced him to give up the business retaining the principal part of his cash by the said Dutchmans advice as being sure of coming to a good Market. Not Setting out with the consequence of an Indian trader but as a hired Man in a Traders boat on wages, paying a Small trifle for the carriage of the light goods he put on board, giving not the least information of the Cash he had, which was [loaded?] up by himself in a Cask of goods, and went on hail fellow with his brother batteau men.

At Detroit his goods Answered Very well but his cash better the number in want of that article, which ever was and ever will be the case, and although his conscience, (to use a Scripture Phrase) was not Scared, And notwithstanding his Strict Christian education and all his catachise Suppers before mentioned, yet as his business there was to make money he did not forget the main design; he the[n] got acquainted with Mr. Peter Pond, Prior from Old Milford, Connecticut,³⁵ who Inform'd him great bargains were to be made for hard cash with the french who lived in and about Detroit, who by excleastic injunctions were not allowed to sell the Savages Spiritous liquors,³⁶ many of whom [8] were farmers, but carried on a inconsiderable trade with the Indians by supplying them with bread, &c. and being unconnected with the merchants below would sell their peltry very cheap with whom by Said Ponds assistance (who spoke good French) I finished my purchases.³⁷ Allen was the first man that went a trading voiage to that Port with Cash, and the first trader that ever wrought as a hired man in a batteau and probably the first boy that ever undertook to teach school without learning and yet gave Satisfaction.³⁸ Tho' 'tis to be observed he industriously informed himself while he taught others and purchased the School-Masters assistant.

He returned to Salisbury early in the fall [1766] and had the honour of a second triumph by this time becoming Master Pedler he employed several under him: and Prepared for the Spring trade much in the manner before mentioned. And reached Detroit early in the Season with a large addition of Cash the article of his stock in trade, which Sold Very well but not equal to the preceding year.³⁹ Some others had taken the hint and were Prepared with Cash for Jobing bargains.

Allen returned with his Peltry in good order early in the fall in high spirits tho' not so much intoxicated with success as on the two former occations [9] tho' he had gained more property but not so much in proportion to his Capital Stocks, and being then accustomed to property & Success bore with more steadiness and what was remarkable he had at that time from his birth never drunk a gallon nore even the half of

it of any kind of distilled spirits, he drank moderately of Cyder or other fermented liquors.⁴⁰

The ensuing year [1768] he purchased goods agreeably to a plan he had laid for a counterband trade finding a new Trader Stood no Chance at Detroit with the old established ones whose connections of long Standing with the Indians carried all the Trade of Detroit. Therefore he had planned to go to the Meami⁴¹ and establish a Store there and make an independant fortune in [indecipherable] which he peresvereing carried into effect contrary to the established rule of Trade, but came Very near losing his life not by the Indians whose Friendship he firmly Secured by affable humour and condensation to their Manners and customs, and by Some well timed liberalities especially to the warriors, on their return from expeditions; on which occasions he treated them to a ball dressed himself in Indian apparel and frequently danced all night with them round a large fire, and frequently concluded [10] the dance by striping naked and Ju[m]ping through the blase of the fire. His danger, which he [burned—learned of?] by the friendship of the Indians, who discovered it first: was from those in the employ of the great Traders, whither their design of murdering him was concerted by the great Traders or by their own malice is unknown.⁴² But the *Faithful Indians*, assisted and guarded him with his property clear of all danger; and it was with the greatest difficulty he could make the Indians accept of the least recompence for so great a fateague and preservation. The Indians are Poss[ess]ed of great hospitality and generour humanity, excepting Some customs in war which some evil gini ! hath unhappily introduced among them.⁴³

In fact not only the Savage customs, but all War in its every nature is Savage and a total departure from Right, and all the Politeness Christians, Mahometans, Jews &c. can never make Right that which is in diametrical opposition thereto—A defensive war is the only one that can be Justified by truth plain reason & Justice—Truth and reason are the Same with Pagans or Christians, and a defensive war are hardly admissible on the principles of the latter. The Christians have not so much to boast over the American Indians as they Vainly [11] attribute to themselves. The savage's hospitable Charity is enough to make a Christian blush. But to return to where we left Allen Parting with his *Friends* the Indians, which was on lake Erie at one of the Sanders bay Ilands,⁴⁴ In returning he passed thro' many difficult & Trying Scenes in Obtaining a Past-port certificate &c. from the Commissary of Indian affairs⁴⁵ which we pass over on Acct. of their prolixity as well as unentertaining to those unacquainted with the particular customs then prevailing, Suffice it to Say he came within a hairs bredth of losing the whole; and being prepared for keeping a Dutch school again. However he returned Safe to Salisbury again with his cargo,

and never Attempted the trade, as he make a Vow to the goddess of fortune he were to quit the Trade if She was to help him out that time.⁴⁶

He then went to Philadelphia hired a Skinner and breaches makers which he employed;⁴⁷ and at the same time Joined with his his [sic] brother Heman in mercantile business and carried on both at Salisbury many years with good success.⁴⁸

[Levi] Allen, A total Stranger to misfortune, till after a Cabinet Council was called in Hell at the [12] instigation of the Pope, with envy and Jealousy on the rising Rapid increase of the Power of Britain, particularly marking the Astonishing Augmentation in the Colonies whose extent in Arable lands exceeded all Europe put together. The Devil and the Pope & others in Co. So managed the Matter as to Set at Varience the mother Country and her then darling loving Children in the Colonies, and the Schism increased by means of fools, knaves &c. &c. to opin hostilities by means of which many an honest man lost his life, Some a limb, and others only their fortunes, Witness the many Widows, fatherless & beggars, in both Countrys, who water their couches with innocent tears, and the distressed breast heaves an involuntary Sigh unpitied, while the authors of their distress roll in Coaches unmoved and as unconcerned as the horses that draw them.

From this unhappy Period Allen dates his Damnation! "*Then he became a child of Sorrow and acquainted with grief!*"⁴⁹ He lost not live nor limb, but what was tantemount, his Peace of mind, Suffered greatly in interest, and would have lost his life had not Some previous Charitable acts Saved it, which at the time he Expected no temporary advantage, and that was the only advantage he ever recieved from charitable [13] [burned] except what the would cannot rob one of—the pleasure ariseing from the performance.

He fully expected even long after hostilities commensed that an accomodation would take Place. Thus he argued from the reasonableness and fitness of things and as he thought an absolute necessity for it; but Pride madness and folly presided over the Councils, and a war was carried on in which neither party had anything to gain and much to loos. "Wisdom &c. seemed to be hidden from the wise and prudent & revealed unto babes"⁵⁰—And now all the Devils in Hell were let loos, Viz. all the horrors of War, with the Powerful addition of all that attend those of an intestine nature, father against Son and the Son against father, brother against brother, Friend against Friend, and neighbour agt. neighbour &c. Blood, Murder roberies imprisonments tarring & feathering, ill will, false informations thro' malace or a heated Zeal &c—were Ensigns of the day, moderation alone was highly criminal, All Virtue collectively centered in Whigism and the reverse into to in [sic] the least Suspision of Toryism:

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What a few months before was laudible and praiseworthy now deserved and merited the Punishment of John Rogers in Smithfield⁵¹ [14] with additions &c. but I will draw a Vail over the disagreeable Sene, after adding a few words on the other Side; thereby means of the intestine war or rather rebellion eradicated all polite humanity from the breast of Britain, by which means the horrors of war were greatly increased. disagreeable Scenes Insued!⁵² — — — — —

He was in Halifax early in the war, and met with a very rough reception from the Old Sailor, then Governor Arburthnot,⁵³ but on further acquaintance found him, humane Sivil and polite. Afterwards with the british in New York when their best and largest army was collected under the command of Genl. How, Lord How⁵⁴ commanding the navy. Then in New London gaol,⁵⁵ then thro' the States again with the British at Camden, Charlestown, Savannah,⁵⁶ and East florida, and in the west Indies at the arrival of the news of Peace⁵⁷ — I mean the Peace of Paris ever memorable for its infamousness to the British Nation. A disgraceful war ended by a more infamous Peace. — But in the national consequences Allen forgets [15] himself, who lost by the Said Peace of Paris 1783, his whole capital,⁵⁸ and three years attentive Industrious labour under the Torred Zone; Exclusive of being drove from a Virtuous perfectly agreeable wife child friends relations, native Country &c.

And to close the diabolical black Catalogue, Allen is thrown into close gaol without examination, hearing, trial or accusation.

P.S. of a letter to Saml Yates Esquire

As ill natured a Devil as I am, I generally have the good fortune to agree with myself; Tho' in *truth* I must Say, we Sometimes fall out as the best *friends* will, but those matters are always reconsidered by laying the fault on others; the absent commonly bear the blame, and carry off the Sin, like the scape-goat in the days of the cunning Isralites.

[17] [burned] After despairing the confinement, merely as Such; Abstractly considered; and naming three Considerations truly afflicting: my better half, some engagements I was under would expose me in a cruel manner to those there was too much reason to believe would take every advantage, and unjust public odium. (Add) otherwise I am as happy as those drinking wine at the communion Table of the elect — — — let the world rage on, I am only to be damn'd! at last, (*thank God*) according to the *Holy blue skin Predestinarian Catechism*. — — —

P.S. *Hell groans! something will come forth. The gaoler is afraid of losing a Customer — — Poor man, he hath been very unfortunate of late. The D. help — —*

[18]

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Extempore

Forty Suns deign'd thro' grates to bless,⁵⁹
 A soul is roll'd in deep distress,
 Like Davids Psalms, Cal'd on the lord;
 No answer Came, no not a word.

N.B. There are lords exclusive of the *Lord Jehovah!* Yet for reasons — — the last mentioned *Lord* doth not Answer So Soon as one in accute distress might wish. All this may be Said without any irreverence, or going into the reasons of Providence, which the most learned and Pagan are equally capable of searching out. — —

To the baker whose bread contained a small reptile, and afterwards a loaf had in it a piece of wood — — Sir/ I supposed my lodging in St. Limbo upstairs, excluded me from many misfortunaes, in Particular from reptiles but a sly snake found his way up in a loaf of bread. Since which I received a billet of Wood in the same way. I thank you for the wood but desire you to send no more till the frost sets in — Sir, your humble Sev't.
 to the Master Baker that Supplies the Castle of St. Limbo.

NOTES

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¹ Eleazer D. Durfee and D. Gregory Sanford, *A Guide to the Henry Stevens, Sr. Collection at the Vermont State Archives* (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont State Archives, 1989).

² In addition to Levi's brothers Ethan, Ira, Heman, Heber, and Zimri, a number of cousins and in-laws attained prominence in the revolutionary cause: Remember Baker, Seth Warner, Ebenezer and Thomas Allen, Gideon and Israel Brownson.

³ Levi Allen's daybook, labelled Letter book, 1797, in the Levi Allen Papers, box 2, folder 4, microfilm number F1447, Henry Stevens Collection, Vermont State Archives, Montpelier, Vt.

⁴ Levi to Ira Allen, 11 November 1788, Ira Allen Papers, Stevens Collection. See also Levi to Ira Allen, 12 September 1784, 20 August 1791, Allen Family Papers, Wilbur Collection, Bailey / Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt.; Levi to Ira Allen, undated (c. Spring, 1786), 18 and 26 August 1786, 22 November, 19 December 1787, 20 September 1788, 21 February, 24 May 1789, Levi Allen Papers; Ira Allen to General Haldimand, 10 September 1784, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa [hereafter PAC], Colonial Series B, 175: 278-79.

⁵ Levi Allen, Letter book, 1797, Levi "to all the survivors of the Allen family if any," 2 August 1789, Levi to Ira and Nancy Allen, 22 July, 29 November 1790, Levi Allen Papers; Ethan to Levi Allen, 3 June 1787, Vermont Historical Society; Levi to Ira Allen, 3 May, 21 November 1789, Ira Allen Papers; Levi Allen to George Washington, 27 January 1776, Peter Force, ed., *American Archives: Consisting of a Collection of Authentick Records . . .*, 9 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Force, 1837-1853) 4-4: 485-86; Levi to Ira Allen, 28 June 1793, *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society for the Years 1917-1918* (Montpelier, Vt., 1920), 155-56.

⁶ Ira Allen, "Autobiography," in James B. Wilbur, *Ira Allen: Founder of Vermont, 1751-1814*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928) 1: 1-59.

⁷ B. F. Cockerham, "Levi Allen (1746-1801): Opportunism and the Problem of Allegiance" (M.A. thesis, University of Vermont, 1965). Cockerham is particularly good on Allen's convoluted business dealings. See also Bellesiles, "Anticipating America: Levi Allen and the Case for an Independent Vermont," in Michael Sherman, ed., *A More Perfect Union: Vermont Becomes a State, 1777-1816* (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society, 1991), 79-111.

⁸ Levi lost a great deal of land to the state of Vermont, including most of the town of Swanton, where he had first purchased land under New Hampshire title in 1773. Deeds for Swanton, Levi Allen Papers, box 2, folder 6; Mary Nye, *Sequestration, Confiscation and Sale of Estates*, vol. 6 of *State Papers of*

Vermont (Montpelier, Vt.: State of Vermont, 1941), 21-23; *Connecticut Courant*, 9 February, 30 March 1779; Abby M. Hemenway, ed., *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, 5 vols. (Burlington, Vt.: A. M. Hemenway, 1868-1891) 4: 992. But Allen did not lose everything. In 1776 he had inherited a portion of his brother Zimri's share in the Onion River Company. That land remained untouched. List of land owned by Levi Allen, April 1775, Levi Allen's land list, 1784, and Vermont lands owned by Levi Allen, 1784, Allen Family Papers; Wilbur, *Ira Allen* 2: 520.

⁹ Levi to Ira Allen, 29 December 1783 and 12 September 1784, Ira Allen Papers.

¹⁰ On Levi's efforts to free Ethan see *Connecticut Courant*, 30 March 1779; Force, *American Archives* 4-4: 485-86, 871-72, 902-3, 973-74, 5-1: 498, 1587, 5-2: 1133, 1225, 5-3: 412, 416; Levi to Nancy Allen, 28 March 1795, Allen Family Papers.

¹¹ On the profits to be made by supplying the British army during the Revolution, see Philip Ranlet, *The New York Loyalists* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), ch. 5; Jacob E. Cooke, *Tench Coxe and the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), ch. 2-3; Thomas M. Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia* (New York: Norton, 1986), ch. 5; Bernard Mason, "Entrepreneurial Activity: New York during the American Revolution," *Business History Review* 40 (1966): 190-212.

¹² Levi to Ira Allen, 16 June 1785, Allen Family Papers; Levi Allen, daybook, Allen to Simcoe, 1790, Levi Allen Papers; Simcoe to Dundas, 2 August 1791, PAC, Colonial Series Q, 278: 260-62.

¹³ Allen, daybook, Levi Allen Papers.

¹⁴ On Levi Allen's economic attitudes and his plans for trade connections between Britain and Vermont, see his daybook and the numerous letters in the Stevens Collection, Allen Family Papers, and Public Archives of Canada. To cite just a few: to Ira Allen, 19 December 1787, 24 May 1789, Ira Allen Papers; to Ira Allen, 24 May 1789, to Simcoe, May 1790, Levi Allen Memorandum Book for 1792, Levi Allen Papers; to Major Matthews, 19 March 1787, to Thomas Ainslie, 19 April 1787, Allen Family Papers; to Lord Dorchester, 22 November 1786, 2 July 1787, PAC, Series Q, 26: 7; 28: 107-08.

¹⁵ Carole W. Troxter, "Refuge, Resistance, and Reward: The Southern Loyalists' Claim on East Florida," *Journal of Southern History* 55 (1989): 563-96; Wilbur H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785*, 2 vols. (DeLand, Fla.: Florida State Historical Society, 1929).

¹⁶ Levi Allen, Loyalist claim, 28 April 1790, AO 13/99/80, Public Records Office, London [hereafter PRO]. A document in another Loyalist file indicates that Allen sold his store in East Florida in May 1783. Allen's losses were thus not as complete as he claimed in his petition, though still substantial. Levi Allen Deposition in East Florida Claims, T77, Box 19, Bundle 7, #51, PRO.

¹⁷ Robert M. Calhoun, *The Loyalists in Revolutionary America, 1760-1781* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973); Janice Potter, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), ch. 8; Ellwood Jones, "The Loyalists and Canadian History," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 20 (1985): 149-56; Mary Beth Norton, *The British-Americans: The Loyalist Exile in England, 1774-1789* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), ch. 2.

¹⁸ Allen to Clarke, 1792, PAC, Series S, 125: Barford file; Jarvis to Peters, 14 January 1795, Kenneth W. Cameron, ed., *The Papers of Loyalist Samuel Peters* (Hartford, Conn.: Transcendental Books, 1978), 180. Jarvis (1756-1817), an officer in the Queen's Rangers, served as Provincial Secretary of Upper Canada after the war. Peters (1735-1826) was an Anglican minister and the would-be archbishop of Vermont. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 12 vols. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966-1990) 5: 452-53. On Allen's efforts to bilk loyalists in Canada and his advice to Ira Allen to seize glebe and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel lands in Vermont, see his letters to Ira Allen, 17 August 1788, 24 May 1789, Ira Allen Papers; Allen Memorandum, 1792, Allen Family Papers; Land Committee Minutes, 1792-1797, 1: 89-90, 2: 117, 272, PAC; Stevenson to Simcoe, 7 February, 5 April 1792, in E. A. Cruikshank, ed., *The Correspondence of Lieut. Governor John Graves Simcoe*, 5 vols. (Toronto, 1923-1931) 1: 110, 128.

¹⁹ The Council was also troubled that the petition was dated at Arlington, Vermont, and that no place of residence was supplied for any of the 2,090 names. Seventeenth Report of the Department of Public Records and Archives of Ontario (1928) No. 45: 14; Petition of Levi Allen, 9 January 1787, Grants of Crown Lands in Upper Canada, 1787-1791 (Quebec), Land Book A, Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa.

²⁰ Allen's challenge to Major Edward Jessup, with response, 12 August 1789, Nancy to Ira Allen, 29 June 1787, Levi to Ira Allen, 3 May 1789, 22 July 1790, Levi to Nancy and Ira Allen, 3, 24 May 1789, 22 July, 29 November 1790, 15 February 1791, Levi "to all the survivors of the Allen family if any," 2 August 1789, Levi Allen Papers; Levi to Ira Allen, 1 May 1789, Ira Allen Papers; Levi to Nancy Allen, 29 April 1789, Allen Family Papers; Wilbur, *Ira Allen* 2: 311. Levi sailed for England in late 1788, and returned to America, after several aborted attempts, in 1792.

²¹ Levi to Ira Allen, 11 November 1788, Ira Allen Papers.

²² For instance, Anna Allen wrote her "dear Brother" Ira that "[I] hear you have at least one Dozen [children], Well done old rogue." 29 June, 1787, Allen Family Papers. Anna Allen was also known as Nancy—and as Mrs. Bumpers, which has led some to assume that Levi was twice married. See, for instance,

Orrin P. Allen, *The Allen Memorial* (Palmer, Mass.: the author, 1907), 53. For a better genealogical account see John L. Barr, comp., *The Genealogy of Ethan Allen and his Brothers and Sisters* (Burlington, Vt.: Ethan Allen Homestead, 1991), 35-36.

²³ *Vermont Historical Society Proceedings, 1917-1918*, 155-56.

²⁴ Simcoe (1752-1806) to Ira Allen, 9 October 1797, PAC, Series Q, 79, pt. 2: 489-91. H. W. Ryland, the Secretary of Quebec's executive council, warned Levi Allen to leave the province as quickly as possible. Allen replied that "my feelings are not a little hurt," and stayed to get arrested. Ryland to Allen, with response, 23 June 1797, Allen Family Papers. On Ira Allen and McLane, see J. Kevin Graffagnino, "Twenty Thousand Muskets!!!" Ira Allen and the Olive Branch Affair, 1797-1800," *William and Mary Quarterly* 48 (1991): 409-31; Wilbur, *Ira Allen*, ch. 25.

²⁵ Allen was born on 16 January 1746 (1745 on the old Julian calendar in use at the time), the fourth son of Joseph and Mary Baker Allen. Barr, *Genealogy of Ethan Allen*, 35. On Cornwall in the years of Allen's youth, see Theodore S. Gold, ed., *Historical Records of the Town of Cornwall, Litchfield County, Connecticut* (Hartford, Conn.: Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1904); Edward C. Starr, *A History of Cornwall, Connecticut* (New Haven, Conn.: Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor, 1926).

²⁶ Joseph Allen died 14 April 1755, when Levi Allen was nine years old. Allen confuses his age in several places. Ethan Allen purchased part-interest in an iron mine in Salisbury in 1762. Salisbury Land Records, 1: 12 and 18 January 1762, Town Clerk's Office, Salisbury, Conn.; Ira Allen to Samuel Williams, 6 June 1795, Ira Allen Papers.

²⁷ In fact, most other evidence indicates that Ethan Allen did rather well at his iron works in Salisbury, but failed miserably in a later effort in Northampton. See Bellesiles, *Revolutionary Outlaws: Ethan Allen and the Struggle for Independence on the Early American Frontier* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, forthcoming 1992), ch. 1.

²⁸ Allen is most certainly wrong on his age here, having turned fifteen in 1761. Ethan Allen sold his interest in the Salisbury iron works in 1765. Salisbury Land Records, 1: 31 October 1765. In his loyalist claim of 1790, Levi identifies the year he left home as 1764, when he was eighteen. There are several other reasons for assuming 1764 to be the correct date. Most of the activities Levi describes could not have been conducted in relative safety until after the end of the French and Indian War in 1763 and of Pontiac's uprising in 1764, and the trade he describes with Detroit did not begin until 1765. Other internal evidence, such as his involvement with John Lydius, who, for legal reasons, avoided Albany before 1764 and left for London in 1766, as well as some references in the Van Schaick Papers, support this later date. Levi Allen, Loyalist claim, 28 April 1790, AO 13/98/80, PRO; Charles R. Canedy, "An Entrepreneurial History of the New York Frontier, 1739-1776" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1967), 207-381; Howard H. Peckham, *Pontiac and the Indian Uprising* (Princeton, 1947), ch. 5, 10, 16; Paul C. Phillips, *The Fur Trade*, 2 vols. (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961) 1: ch. 25-27; Van Schaick Papers, New York State Library, Albany.

²⁹ As one of the original proprietors of Cornwall, Connecticut, Levi's father held title to 511 acres, all but twenty acres of which were as yet uncleared. Inventory of Joseph Allen, Litchfield Probate Records, 1: 162, Probate Court, Litchfield, Conn.

³⁰ John Henry Lydius was a scoundrel of remarkable proportions. For forty years he worked to steal land from the Indians, French, and English. New York's Governor George Clinton declared Lydius "either Mad or a Knave," while an Oneida chief called him a "snake . . . [and] a Devil" to his face. Lydius's machinations provoked decades-long controversy in the courts and conflict among the British colonies. His grant to the town of Durham, based on a phony Indian deed, proved particularly disruptive. Thomas E. Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), 190-91; E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany, N.Y.: Weed, Parsons, 1853-1887) 6: 982-87; Herbert W. Denio, "Massachusetts Land Grants in Vermont," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 24 (1923): 52-59; Julius Goebel and T. Raymond Naughton, *Law Enforcement in Colonial New York: A Study in Criminal Procedure, 1664-1776* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1944), 209-18, 729-30.

³¹ This land lay on the Batten Kill, just west of the modern Vermont border. This was the first of many purchases by Allen in the area. Though not originally a partner in the family's Onion River Company, Levi was advertising the sale of land in the region by 1774. Allen wrote that "a number of good honest farmers [had] already purchased of me and some already settled on said land," and referred potential buyers to Ira Allen or Thomas Chittenden "on the premises" at the Onion River. *Connecticut Courant* 21 November 1774. See also list of land owned by Levi Allen, April 1775, Allen Family Papers.

³² These were almost certainly Mahican Indians. On the nature of Indian trade in these years see Norton, *Fur Trade in Colonial New York*, ch. 5-7; Phillips, *Fur Trade*, ch. 20, 27-30; Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600-1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), ch. 7; Calloway, ed., *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991), 193-211.

³³ Cockerham quotes, but does not cite, another account by Allen of his childhood that matches the details of this passage. Cockerham, "Levi Allen," 2-3.

³⁴ Probably the spring of 1766. The New York fur trade had peaked the previous year, and Albany merchants sought some alternative source, hoping to compete with traders operating out of Montreal. Norton, *Fur Trade in Colonial New York*, ch. 11; Phillips, *Fur Trade*, ch. 28.

³⁵ Peter Pond (1740-1807), at the time a young merchant, later became a prominent explorer and maker of wildly inaccurate maps of the Canadian Northwest. Harold A. Innis, *Peter Pond, Fur Trader and Adventurer* (Toronto: Irwin and Gordon, 1930); H. R. Wagner, *Peter Pond, Fur Trader and Explorer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1955). On Pond's activities in these years see his narrative in Charles M. Gates, ed., *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest* (St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), 9-59.

³⁶ The French had been forbidden from selling liquor to the Indians, an injunction the British lifted from their own merchants in 1765. W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760* (Hinsdale, Ill.: Dryden Press, 1969), 111-14, 145-47; Arthur Pound, *Johnson of the Mohawks* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), 294-308; Norton, *Fur Trade in Colonial New York*, 207-14.

³⁷ On Indian trade and French settlements around Detroit in 1760s see Pond, "Narrative," in Gates, *Five Fur Traders*, 9-59; Phillips, *Fur Trade*, ch. 28; Fernand Ouellet, *Histoire Économique et Sociale du Québec, 1760-1850: Structures et Conjoncture* (Montréal: Fides, 1966), ch. 3.

³⁸ An improbable boast. On the first British merchants in this area see Clarence W. Alvord and Clarence E. Carter, eds., *The Critical Period, 1763-1765*, vol. 11 of *The Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1915), ch. 11. It is accurate to claim, though, that Allen was part of a sudden shift in the nature of the British-American trade with the west. British-American merchants had long relied on the Native Americans coming to them, unlike the French who went directly to their sources. Starting in 1765 the British-American trade with the western Indians became dominated by independent small traders such as Allen, who took his goods directly to the Indians in return for furs. In essence, Levi Allen was among the first British-American voyageurs, the notorious and indispensable Quebecois travelers who crisscrossed the northwest with their goods. Eccles, *Canadian Frontier*, ch. 6, 7, 9; Harold A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1930), ch. 4; Norton, *Fur Trade in Colonial New York*, ch. 11.

³⁹ The year 1767 saw the beginning of the decline of the Albany/Detroit trade. Norton, *Fur Trade of Colonial New York*, 205-06; Phillips, *Fur Trade* 1: 609-10.

⁴⁰ This claimed temperance would certainly vanish by the 1780s, when he seemed plagued by alcoholism. He was even moved to promise his wife Nancy to "Omit Distilled Liquor Swearing & Staying Out late at nights," if she would "Omit Crying finding fault & provising Evil . . . (a fair Bargain)." Nancy wrote ten years later that "Venus is jealous of a preference in Bachusses favor." Levi to Ira Allen, 11 Nov. 1788, Nancy to Levi Allen, 9 October 1798, Allen Family Papers.

⁴¹ In the pre-Revolutionary years the Miami valley was occupied by the Miami Indians — there were no Anglo-American settlements in the region — indicating a certain boldness on Allen's part. See John C. Hover, et al., eds., *Memoirs of the Miami Valley*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Robert Law, 1919) 1: 25-27; Innis, *Fur Trade in Canada*, 111-13.

⁴² Allen had reason to believe these warnings. The traders who took advantage of the opening of the west after the defeat of the French were far more violent than either their French or English predecessors. Sir William Johnson feared that these "very dregs of the people" would destroy his carefully arranged peace with the Indians. Levi Allen's sometime partner, Peter Pond, shot and killed a competitor sometime around 1767. Murder, theft, assaults, and outrageous efforts to cheat the Indians convinced the British government to attempt a greater control of trade in the region, and to stem the flow of Anglo-Americans west. They did not succeed in either effort. Pond, "Narrative," in Gates, *Five Fur Traders*, 27-28; Phillips, *Fur Trade*, ch. 27, 29; Jack M. Sosin, *Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1961); Alvord and Carter, *Critical Period*, ch. 1, 7; idem., *The New Regime, 1765-1767*, vol. 11 of *The Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (Springfield, Ill.: Illinois State Historical Library, 1916), ch. 7, 10; idem., *Trade and Politics, 1767-1769*, vol. 16 of *ibid.* (1921), ch. 1, 2, 6, 7.

⁴³ The savagery of European-American traders in comparison to the conduct of the Native Americans disturbed many contemporary observers. See, for instance, Benjamin Franklin, "The Futility of Educating the Indians" (1753) in *The Annals of America*, 20 vols. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1976), 1: 497-98; "Red Jacket and the Missionary" (1809) in Wilcomb Washburn, ed., *The Indian and the White Man* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964), 209-14; Zadock Steele, *A Narrative of the Captivity of Zadock Steele* (Springfield, Mass.: H. R. Hunting, 1908), 161-64; John Heckewelder (1819), *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations* (New York: Arno Press, 1971), ch. 6 and 23.

⁴⁴ Most likely Sandusky Bay, where an abandoned trading post reopened in 1763 for trade up the Maumee to the Miami Country. Phillips, *Fur Trade* 1: 591.

⁴⁵ Sir William Johnson, Indian Superintendent for the Northern District, appointed Commissaries for Indian Affairs at every post in his district to regulate trade. Merchants had to give security deposits equal to one-half their cargos to the commissary. Not surprisingly, merchants regularly accused the

commissaries of corruption. Alvord and Carter, *Critical Period*, 273-79, 329-33; idem., *New Regime*, 151, 194, 456, 534-35; idem., *Trade and Politics*, ch. 3-5, 7.

⁴⁶This promise must have been a geographical one, as Levi Allen continued active in the Indian trade for the next twenty years.

⁴⁷As Allen advertised in the *Connecticut Courant*, 18 December 1770.

⁴⁸According to Ira Allen, Levi entered into partnership with his brother Heman in 1768, turning specifically to leather in 1771. Ira Allen, "Autobiography," Wilbur, *Ira Allen* 1: 1, 8-9. There is an account book for 1772 that gives an indication of the extent and nature of Allen's business dealings in these years and supports Ira Allen's dating. Box 2, folder 5, Levi Allen Papers. The brothers dissolved this specific partnership in 1772. *Connecticut Courant*, 17 March 1772.

⁴⁹"He is 'despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . .'" Isaiah 53: 3.

⁵⁰"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Matthew 11: 25, and again, Luke 10: 21.

⁵¹John Rogers (c. 1500-1555) was the first of the "Marian Martyrs" burned at the stake as a heretic in London. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 22 vols. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968) 17: 126-29.

⁵²Allen's opinions on the nature of the Revolution are similar to those of another accidental loyalist whose property was expropriated, St. John de Crèvecoeur (1775-1813). Crèvecoeur, a friend of Ethan Allen's, also returned to the United States after the war, finding the new America an uncomfortable place. *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1925), 8-11, 236-49.

⁵³Admiral Marriot Arbuthnot (1711-1794) was Commissioner of the Navy at Halifax, 1775-1778. Stephen and Lee, *Dictionary of National Biography* 1: 537-38.

⁵⁴General William Howe (1729-1814), Britain's commanding general in America, 1775-1778; Admiral Richard Howe (1726-1799), British commander-in-chief of North America, 1775-1778. See Ira D. Gruber, *The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1972). This largest army would have been the one of 1776. In his loyalist claim, Levi states that, while in New York in 1776, he received a commission to "raise a company of Loyalists for His Majesty's Service, in the execution of which he was taken Prisoner by the Rebels, and Confined Six Months." The latter statement at least is inaccurate, as is his claim to have escaped from jail.

⁵⁵Allen was jailed at New London, Conn., for six months, for passing counterfeit money and trading with the British. He always denied the charge of counterfeiting. *Ethan and Ira Allen vs. Levi Allen*, 1779, Rutland County Court Records, 98, and Vermont Superior Court Records, 1: 4; *Connecticut Courant*, 16 June 1777, 24 November, 15 December 1778, 9 February, 2 and 30 March, 3 August 1779; Levi Allen to Nathaniel Taylor, 2 August 1797, Allen Family Papers.

⁵⁶All three British victories, 1779-80. Allen could not have been at Savannah when it fell to the British in January 1779, but may have been present when a combined American-French force failed to retake the town in September 1779. Ironically, the British commander at Savannah was Col. Archibald Campbell, the very man for whom the Americans had exchanged Ethan Allen. The naval forces at Charlestown were led by Admiral Arbuthnot, whom Levi Allen knew. An undated fragment by Levi in the Levi Allen Papers indicates that he was at Camden with Lord Rawdon, but there is no record of Allen on any of the surviving British muster sheets. Allen traveled with the British as a merchant, not as a soldier.

⁵⁷Allen built a store on the St. John River in East Florida in 1781, which he sold in May 1783. According to his loyalist claim, Allen left East Florida for Antigua shortly thereafter—though he only got as far as New Providence, Nassau, as his boat sprang a leak. He was back in Vermont in late 1783. Levi to Ira Allen, 29 December 1783, Allen Family Papers.

⁵⁸Allen is exaggerating here. As noted earlier, he lost a great deal, but not everything. In another, undated letter in the Allen Family Papers he wrote that he had "a good property left, tho' much deranged & cruelly Scattered." He also received £100 from Lord Grenville thanks to the effort of Lt. Governor John Simcoe. Simcoe to Dundas, 2 August 1791, PAC, Series Q, 278: 260-62.

⁵⁹Written on Allen's fortieth day in jail, 7 August 1797.