

A Pennsylvanian Loyalist's Interview with George III

EXTRACT FROM THE MS. DIARY OF SAMUEL SHOEMAKER, reprinted, by permission, from volume ii. (1878) of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*.

[Samuel Shoemaker was a resident of Philadelphia, belonging to the well-known family of that name which emigrated from Gresheim in Germany in 1686, and settled at Germantown. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and prominent as a merchant in Philadelphia. From 1755 to 1766, he was a member of the Common Council, and in the latter year was elected a member of the Board of Aldermen, which office he held until the fall of the Charter Government in 1776. In 1761 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and held the office for many years. He was one of the signers of the "Non-Importation Agreement" of 1765. In 1769 he was chosen Mayor of the city, and for two terms, in 1767 and 1774, was its Treasurer. He sat as a member from the city in the Provincial Assembly from 1771 to 1773.

Mr. Shoemaker remained in Philadelphia upon the entry of the British Army, in September, 1777. It is said that during its occupation he again fulfilled the duties of mayor, but this is not fully substantiated by the records. The Colonial Charter Government in the city came to an end in 1776, and it remained without one until 1789, during which period there was no such corporate office.

Upon the evacuation of the city in June, 1778, Mr. Shoemaker accompanied the army, and went to New York, where he remained until November, 1783, when he sailed for England, accompanied by his son Edward, a few days before the evacuation of that city.

Mr. Shoemaker was a pronounced Loyalist and was distinguished for his zeal on the side of the crown, in consequence of which he was attainted of treason and his estate confiscated. While in New York he exerted himself for the relief of the Whig prisoners, and by his

intercessions with the British authorities, numbers of them were liberated and allowed to return to their homes. While in London, he was, as his Diary shows, frequently consulted by the Commissioners appointed by the English Government to pass upon the claims of the Loyalists for losses. He returned to Philadelphia in 1789, and died in 1800.

This diary was kept for the entertainment of Mrs. Shoemaker,¹ who did not accompany her husband abroad. At the time to which the following extract refers, he was spending a few days at Windsor with his friend Benjamin West, the artist. The interview here described is probably the one referred to by Mr. Sabine in his "Loyalists of the American Revolution."]

First Day, Octo'r 10th 1784.

This morning at 8 'clock thy son accompanied B. West's wife to the King's Chappel where he had the opportunity of seeing the King and several of the Princesses. They returned before 9, when we were entertained with breakfast, at which we had the Company of Mr. Pogy the Italian Gent'n, Mr. Trumble,² Mr. Farrington,³ and West's two sons. About 10 thy son accompanied Farrington, Trumble, and West's eldest son in a Ride through Windsor Forrest, having first been with West and I to his Room in the Castle to see a picture of the Lord's Supper which he had just finish'd for the King's Chappel. After part of our Company were gone to take their Ride, West informed me that the King had ordere'd him to attend at his Painting Room in the Castle at one 'Clock, when the King and Queen and some of the Princesses, on their return from Chappel, intended

¹ Samuel Shoemaker m. first 8th 12 mo. 1746, Hannah, dau. of Samuel Carpenter, by his wife, Hannah Preston, a granddaughter of Governor Thomas Lloyd, and secondly, 10th 11 mo. 1767, Rebecca, widow of Francis Rawle, and dau. of Edward Warner (see *Penna Mag.*, Vol. I., p. 459), by his wife, Anna, dau. of William Coleman.

² Colonel John Trumbull, a well-known officer of the Revolutionary Army, son of Governor Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut. He was at this time studying painting under West, and afterwards became a distinguished artist.

³ George Farrington, a noted English landscape and historical painter. He studied under West, removed to India, and died there at the early age of 34 years.

to call to see the Painting of the Lord's Supper, which he had just finished, and West told me it would be a very proper time and Opportunity for me to see the King, Queen and the rest of the family, as they came from the Chappel, and therefore requested me to accompany him and his Wife and the Italian Gent'n, and walk at the Castle near the Chappel, till service was over, when he must repair to his room to attend the King, and would leave me with his Wife in a proper Station to have a full view of the King and family.

Accordingly, a little before one O'clock, West and his Wife, the Italian Gent'n, and I, walk'd up to the Castle and there contin'd walking until the Clock struck One, when we observ'd one of the Pages coming from the Chappel. West then said he must leave us; presently after this two Coaches pass'd and went round towards the Door of the Castle leading to West's Room. In these two coaches were the Queen and Princesses; presently after the King appear'd, attended by his Equery only, and walk'd in great haste, *almost ran* to meet the Coaches at the door of the Castle above mentioned, which he reach'd just as the Coaches got there, as did West's wife, the Italian Gent'n and I, when we saw the King go to the door of the Coach in which the Queen was, and heard him say, "*I have got here in time,*" and then handed the Queen out and up the Steps, into the Castle—the Princess Royal, Princess Elizabeth, Princess Mary, and Princess Sophia, with Col. Goldsworthy, the King's Equery, the Hanoverian Resident, and Miss Goldsworthy, sub Governess to the two young Princesses, followed. They all went into the Castle, when I hear'd the King say, "tell him to come in," *but little did I think I was the Person meant*, and West's Wife, the Italian Gent'n, and I were about going off, when West came out of the Castle and told me the King had order'd him to come out and bring me and Mrs. West in. I was quite unprepared for this; however, it was now too late to avoid it. The Italian Gent'n now left us and went to walk the Terras, and West and his wife and I went into the Castle and were ushered up to the Room where the King and Royal family were, and there introduc'd. *Flattered and embarrassed thou may suppose*, on my entering the Room,

the King came up close to me, and very graciously said, "Mr. S., you are well known here, every body knows you," &c. (complimentary w'ch I can't mention). He then turned to the Queen, the Princesses, &c., who stood close by, and repeated, "Mr. S." I then made my bow to the Queen, then to the Princess Royal, to the Princess Eliza., Princesses Mary and Sophia. The Queen and each of the Princesses were pleased to drop a Curtsey, and then the Queen was pleased to ask me one or two Questions. The King and Queen and the four Princesses, the Hanoverian Resident, Col. Goldsworthy, Miss Goldsworthy, West and his wife, and I were all that were in the Room. The King condescended to ask me many questions, and repeated my answers to them to the Queen and to the Hanoverian Resident, and when to the latter, I observed he spoke it in German, which I understood. Among other Questions, the King was pleased to ask me the reason why the Province of Pennsylvania was so much further advanc'd in improvement than the neighbouring ones, some of which had been settled so many years earlier. I told his majesty (thinking it w'd be a kind of Compliment to the Queen's Country-men) that I thought it might be attributed to the Germans, great numbers of whom had gone over in the early part of the settlement of that Province, as well as since. The King smiled and said, "It may be so, Mr. S., it may in some measure be owing to that, *but I will tell you the true cause*,—the great improvement and flourishing State of Pennsylvania is principally owing to the Quakers" (this was a full return for my compliments to the Queen's Countrymen) for whom I observe the King has a great regard. Finding the King so repeatedly mention'd what I said to the Hanov'n Resident and to the Queen, *in German*, on the King's asking me a particular question, I took the liberty to answer in German, at which the King seemed pleased, and *with a smile*, turned to the Queen and said, "Mr. S. speaks German," and also mentioned it to the Hanoverian Resident, after which the King was pleased to speak to me several times in German. Then the Queen condescended to ask me several questions, one of the last, *whether I had a family*. On my telling her that I was once bless'd with a numerous family, but that it

had pleased Providence to remove them all from me, *except a wife and two Sons*, this *visibly* touched the Queen's delicate feelings, so much that she shed some Tears, at which I was *greatly* affected. She is a charming woman, and if not a Beauty, her manners and disposition are so pleasing that no Person who has the Opportunity that I have had can avoid being charm'd with the sweetness of her disposition. The Princess Royal is pretty, has a charming countenance indeed; the Princess Elizabeth very agreeable, but rather too fat or bulky for her height. Mary and Sophia are pretty, but being so young their looks will alter.

After being graciously indulged with the opportunity of conversing with the King and Queen, and being in the Room with them three-quarters of an hour, they all departed and went to the Queen's House.

I cannot say, but I wished some of my violent Countrymen could have such an opportunity as I have had. I think they would be convinced that George the third has not one grain of Tyranny in his Composition, and that he *is* not, he *cannot* be that bloody minded man they have so repeatedly and so illiberally called him. It is impossible; a man of his fine feelings, so good a husband, so kind a Father, *cannot be a Tyrant*.

After the Royal family were gone, West and his wife and I return'd to West's house where we were soon join'd by the Italian Gent'n, and those who had been out Riding, and at three O'clock were entertained at a genteel Dinner and spent the afternoon and evening together very pleasantly till 11 'Clock when we retir'd to Bed. This happens to be B. West's birthday; he has now enter'd his forty-seventh year.

PROHIBITION IN AMERICA.—“ I heard a man say the other night—he was addressing a large company of men who seemed to be a little discouraged because of the bibulous denials of the day in which they were living—he said: ‘ If any of you gentlemen go home late to-night and your wife, when you come within the threshold, gives you an ecstatic kiss; you may *now* know that it is a manifestation of affection and not an attempt at investigation.’ ”

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