

# *The Public Reaction to John Dickinson's Farmer's Letters*

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NEWS of the Townshend Acts and the suspension of the New York Assembly reached Philadelphia in September 1767. In the face of these new threats John Dickinson took up his pen to defend American liberty. In twelve letters signed 'A Farmer' he carefully reshaped the colonial position, arguing that the Townshend Acts were illegal because they were explicitly intended for revenue, which only the colonial assemblies could levy. The new duties were unnecessary for the regulation of trade, he said, because Parliament retained and the colonies willingly conceded other powers by which the colonial market for English goods could be assured. Maintaining that the regulation of trade was the only justification for Parliamentary duties on the colonies, Dickinson made a bold step in clarifying and strengthening the colonists' claims: all duties not necessary for regulation were by definition taxes, and all taxation by Parliament was unconstitutional.

The frequent reprinting and sustained praise of the *Farmer's Letters* demonstrated a popularity surpassing that of any previous political tract in America. Although Dickinson's distinction between revenue and regulation was the salient contribution of the *Letters* to the colonists' evolving constitutional theory, it does not sufficiently explain the nature or the extent of the praise; nor have comments about Dickinson's stylistic superiority been specific enough to explain the *Letters'* popularity. The object of the following study is to compare the con-

tent of the *Letters* with the myriad statements praising them and then to examine the publication history of both the *Letters* and the response. This two-part description implies two categories of reasons for the *Letters*' popularity: inherent and promotional. The inherent appeal of the *Farmer's Letters* consisted in a political analysis and plan of action that were favored by large numbers of Americans in 1768 on the basis of their political experience and their perception of the immediate predicament; in short, their agreement on matters of substance. The promotional factors in the *Letters*' popularity have to do with control of the media, support for the *Farmer's Letters* to the exclusion of opposing views, and the distortion of public opinion. At first glance these categories seem to deal with different stages in the publicity process, the first with the formulation and expression of ideas, the second with their actual dissemination. To the question—were the *Letters* popular because they were promoted or promoted because they were popular?—we may answer that the two phenomena were complementary and mutually reinforcing.

These categories, however, are to some extent arbitrary. Every writer faces promotional questions in the act of composition. Apart from matters of substance, persuasion depends also upon the form of the composition and the author's rhetorical techniques; while these elements shape the document itself and are thus 'inherent,' they are also obviously relevant to its promotional success. This is particularly true of the *Farmer's Letters*, for Dickinson made deliberate choices in tone and format that enlarged his potential audience.

The question of the relative importance of the inherent, ideological substance of political writing, as contrasted with promotional, manipulative techniques, is central to any discussion of political literature in pre-Revolutionary America. During the late 1930s a group of American historians emphasized the role of promotional factors in creating public opinion in the 1760s and 70s—control of the press and the

rhetorical qualities of propaganda.<sup>1</sup> As the following description will show, these non-ideological factors were clearly relevant to the success of the *Farmer's Letters*. The danger of analysis in terms of propaganda is not that such techniques were not tenaciously employed, but that such an orientation tends to subsume matters of ideological substance. The fact that Dickinson reinforced the colonists' strong apprehension of conspiracy, for example, may be seen both as the characteristic manipulation of the propagandist and as the expression of a deeply rooted political culture. An effective ideological foundation was prerequisite to successful promotion.

The *Farmer's Letters* appeared in nineteen of the twenty-three English-language newspapers published in the colonies in early 1768.<sup>2</sup> Published first in Philadelphia beginning December 2, 1767, the series spread throughout the colonies, appearing finally in the *Georgia Gazette* beginning January 27, 1768. An installment of average length occupied about one full page, depending on the type face and page size of the various papers. In most of the newspapers this constituted from one-fourth to one-third of the space for news and correspondence. For three months the *Farmer's Letters* occupied a major place in newspapers from Boston to Savannah. The combined circulation of these newspapers is impossible to determine with accuracy, but an estimate of 15,000 is probably conservative, and several people may have read each newspaper.<sup>3</sup> The *Letters* also appeared subsequently in seven American pamphlet editions, at least two of which went through more than one printing. William Goddard, editor of the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*,

<sup>1</sup> Philip Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783* (Chapel Hill, 1941); John C. Miller, *Sam Adams: Pioneer in Propaganda* (Stanford, 1936); Arthur M. Schlesinger, 'Politics, Propaganda, and the Philadelphia Press,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LX (1936), 309-322; and Schlesinger, 'Propaganda and the Boston Press,' *Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Publications*, XXXII (1937), 396-416. Bernard Bailyn comments on this approach in his *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 157-159.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A below, which includes the abbreviations used for all the newspapers cited below.

<sup>3</sup> The basis for this speculation is given in Appendix B below.

suggested that a pamphlet edition in Philadelphia would sell 'several hundred' copies.<sup>4</sup> Pamphlet advertisements in newspapers outside the four towns of publication suggest that pamphlet circulation as well as newspaper coverage was widespread.<sup>5</sup> It seems clear that the *Farmer's Letters* reached more people than any previous American political writing and remained unequalled in popular fame until Paine's *Common Sense*.<sup>6</sup>

The response to the *Farmer's Letters* was even more remarkable than the extent of the initial circulation. Immediately after the publication of the first letter, editors, politicians, and irate governors recognized a special significance in the pieces by the 'Pennsylvania Farmer.' He became a constant authority for writers exhorting their countrymen to action, warning of new dangers, and expounding more supporting arguments. While the last of the *Letters* appeared in March

<sup>4</sup>The American pamphlet editions were as follows (dates of publication determined from newspaper announcements): Hall and Sellers, Philadelphia, March 13, 1768; Mein and Fleeming, Boston, March 21, 1768; Edes and Gill, Boston, mid-April, 1768; Holt, New York, April, 1768; Hall and Sellers, second edition, June 17, 1768; Bradford, Philadelphia, sometime in 1769; and Rind, Williamsburg, June, 1769. The multiple printings are inferred in the case of Bradford's Philadelphia edition by extant copies that differ in ornament. Copies of the Mein and Fleeming edition also show minor differences. See Thomas R. Adams, *American Independence, the Growth of an Idea; a Bibliographical Study of the American Political Pamphlets Printed Between 1764 and 1776* (Providence, 1965), pp. 38, 39. Goddard's estimate occurs in William Goddard, *The Partnership* (Philadelphia, 1770), p. 19; see also Appendix B.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, *Newport Merc.*, May 9, 1768; *New London Gaz.*, July 15, 1768. A demand for pamphlets in Providence is stated by Sarah Goddard to William Goddard, n.d., in Goddard, *Partnership*, p. 19. An anonymous subscriber to the *New London Gaz.* regretted the *Letters'* limited circulation there, complaining that 'the unrival'd Labour of his Pen has no other Publication among us (excepting a few Copies imported from a neighboring Government) than what a common News-Paper affords.' He suggested a 're-printing of them in a neat Pocket Volume, as a constant Vade Mecum for every British American.' Thomas Green, the editor, replied that he would lose money if he sold fewer than 300. He apparently failed to get the prerequisite subscriptions. *New London Gaz.*, August 5, 1768. Many pamphlets probably reached the smaller towns by mail, from friends in the principal towns. Correspondence of the period abounds in examples of such continuing arrangements. For an example that includes the *Farmer's Letters*, see Edward Burd to E. Shippen in Lancaster, July 7, 1768, in Lewis B. Walker, ed. *Burd Papers* (n. p., 1899), III, 22.

<sup>6</sup>Daniel Dulany's influential *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies* enjoyed five American pamphlet editions but did not appear in newspapers. Otis' pamphlets were each published in a single American edition. Adams, *American Independence*, p. xii.

and April, official tributes were voted, printed and reprinted, with unprecedented intercolonial enthusiasm. The town of Boston, at the suggestion of Samuel Adams, produced a column-long paean to the 'FRIEND of AMERICANS, and the common benefactor of Mankind.' This example was followed in the period from April to September by official tributes from the merchants of Norwich, the freemen of Lebanon, the Society of Fort St. David's in Philadelphia, the freemen of Mansfield, Connecticut, the grand jury of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, the freemen of Providence, and the grand jury of Cecil County, Maryland.<sup>7</sup> Poems were written to the Farmer as 'AMERICA'S PATRON,' and he joined the ranks of Pitt, Wilkes, and Paoli as the single American in the litany of patriotic toasts. His rank with them was sealed by the same quasi-religious oblations tendered to the others. Rumors of a Virginian who willed the Farmer a fortune were paralleled by similar patriotic awards to John Wilkes. While the Society of Fort St. David's presented the Farmer with an inscribed oak box, the joiners of London presented Wilkes with the key to that city 'in a box of the heart of true English oak, like his own.' Both Wilkes and Dickinson were honored by portraits in American almanacs. While the Bostonians were christening a ship the *Glorious 92*, a ship named the *Farmer*, of Philadelphia, appeared in the commercial lists. In Newport the Farmer was toasted as 'the AMERICAN PITT.'<sup>8</sup> Just as this public-

<sup>7</sup>*Bos. Gaz.*, March 28, 1768; dates of publication in newspapers and reprinting history of each tribute are given in Appendix D. The Society of Fort St. David's was a fraternity of Philadelphia fishermen allied with the Sons of Liberty.

<sup>8</sup>The poem is in *Pa. Journ.*, January 7, 1768 and elsewhere. Toasts to the Pennsylvania Farmer were reported as follows, all in 1768: *Bos. Gaz.*, March 21, April 4, August 22, and October 3; *Mass. Gaz.*, March 24 and 31, August 25, and September 29; *Ga. Gaz.*, April 4; *New London Gaz.*, July 29; *Pa. Gaz.*, September 1; *Bos. Eve. Post*, August 22 and September 26, and similarly in the other papers. The ninety-two 'anti-rescindors' of Massachusetts were a popular toast at the time, but the Farmer was the only individual American hero. Otis was occasionally toasted in Massachusetts and in London Whig circles, but his leadership was diminishing. For the Farmer's fortune see note 10 below; for various awards to Wilkes, see *Prov. Gaz.*, May 21 and 28, 1768. For Dickinson's oak box, *Pa. Gaz.*, May 12, 1768; for Wilkes', *Prov. Gaz.*, May 28, 1768. Oak was a standard element in the frequent Sons of Liberty ceremonies, due to their celebration of Liberty Trees and the old song, 'Heart of Oak,' the tune of which

ty began to ebb, reaction from friends in England reached America. Private letters and the Whig prints from July arrived in the September mail, providing new praise of the Farmer. From December 2, 1767, until October 28, 1768, not a single week passed without the Farmer's name appearing in some American newspaper.

The intercolonial nature of this publicity is indicated by the extent to which editors shared a common group of articles. In the fifteen papers in nine towns surveyed for this study, there were 92 separate articles mentioning the Farmer. These ranged from incidental allusions and toasts to lengthy discussions and tributes.<sup>9</sup> Of these ninety-two articles fifteen comprised a satirical campaign against the Farmer in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, an attack managed by Dickinson's old enemy, Joseph Galloway. Of the remaining seventy-seven articles, thirty-nine appeared in more than one town (twenty-six in two or three towns, thirteen in four or more). Readers in Savannah as well as Boston were informed of the gentleman in Virginia who had gratefully willed a fortune to the Farmer. Readers in Hartford learned of a toast to the Farmer made in Roxbury, and readers in Virginia read extracts from a laudatory letter about the Farmer by a gentleman in the west of England to his friend in Boston.<sup>10</sup>

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served for Dickinson's immensely popular 'Liberty Song,' composed in the spring of 1768. The text may be found in *Pa. Gaz.*, July 7, 1768; for almanac portraits, see advertisement for Abraham Weatherwise's *New England Town and Country Almanac* in *Prov. Gaz.*, September 10, 1768, and Nathaniel Ames, *Almanac for 1772* (Boston, 1771); the ship 92 is in *Bos. Eve. Post*, July 11, 1768, and the *Farmer* in *N. Y. Merc.*, September 5, 1768; the Newport toast is in *Pa. Gaz.*, April 7, 1768.

<sup>9</sup>This figure excludes the original twelve *Farmer's Letters* and the advertisements for pamphlet editions, some of which carried a paragraph of high-blown praise. See *Bos. Chron.*, March 21 and 28, 1768, *Newport Merc.*, May 9, 1768, *Bos. Eve. Post*, April 11, 1768, and *Pa. Gaz.*, July 14, 1768.

<sup>10</sup>*Ga. Gaz.*, October 19, 1768; *Bos. Eve. Post*, September 12, 1768. The same rumor, embellished by Benjamin Rush, was included in the French edition of the *Farmer's Letters* in 1769. This edition was arranged by Franklin and translated by his friend Jacques Dubourg. See Introduction, *Lettres d'un Fermier de Pensylvanie*, in Paul L. Ford, ed. *The Writings of John Dickinson (Memoirs of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania)*, XIV, Philadelphia, 1895), 304. There is no evidence that Dickinson actually received such a fortune, but it was an extremely popular myth, reprinted in six of the nine towns surveyed for the present study. The other references are from *Conn. Courant*, September 5, 1768; and *Va. Gaz.* (Rind), October 6, 1768.

Reprinting articles was standard newspaper practice in this period; newspapers from one town served as reporters for single-handed editors in other towns. The publicity of the *Farmer's Letters* is unique, however, in its breadth and persistence. Unlike the news coverage of John Wilkes, whose every step was followed at this time, or Paoli, who was busy fighting a war, the reputation of the Pennsylvania Farmer was quite dissociated from any subsequent activities of John Dickinson. It rested entirely on the impact of the *Letters* themselves. What caused this unusual intercolonial enthusiasm?

First among the inherent assets of the *Farmer's Letters* was Dickinson's central distinction between duties for regulation and taxes for revenue. The distinction, while not entirely new, was more prominent and more comprehensive in Dickinson's presentation than in previous writers', and it generally displaced the earlier distinction the colonists had made between internal and external taxation.<sup>11</sup> Samuel Adams and James Otis read the *Farmer's Letters* before writing the Massachusetts Assembly's Circular Letter of February, 1768, which set the tone and vocabulary of the many official protests against the Townshend Acts. Dickinson's argument opened new theoretical questions and provided controversialists with some much needed ammunition which they promptly hurled at London. Even before the Circular Letter was written, a Bostonian wrote to Philadelphia that his town's instructions to its representatives 'pursue the Principles laid down by your worthy Farmer concerning the late Act of Parliament . . . being unconstitutional.'<sup>12</sup> In petitions and instructions the colonists

<sup>11</sup>Dulany had discussed the revenue distinction as a subordinate point in 1765. Daniel Dulany, *Considerations*, in Bernard Bailyn, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776* (Cambridge, 1965), I, 637.

<sup>12</sup>*Pa. Gaz.*, January 28, 1768. The first Boston instructions emphasizing the revenue intent are dated December 20, and conform closely to the *Farmer's Letters*. *Bos. Eve. Post*, December 28, 1768. If they are derived from the *Letters'* central argument, it could only be by the influence of the manuscript copy that Dickinson sent to Otis. See note 43 below. Letter II, which proposes the criterion of revenue, was first printed in Boston on December 21 in the *Bos. Gaz.* It may well be, of course, that the Boston leaders arrived at the same arguments independently and that the *Letters* were only the best statement of arguments that were common property by December 1767. This does not detract from their importance in popularizing the arguments.

unanimously rejected duties 'for the sole and express purpose of raising a revenue.'<sup>13</sup> The Rev. John Devotion wrote to Ezra Stiles, 'I wish every colony would instruct their Agents to petition his Majesty and Parliament for a repeal of the Acts of Duties, using the Farmers Materials.' By November 1768, Gov. William Franklin had to admit that there was 'scarce an assembly in America but what either believes that the Parliament has not a right to impose Taxes for the purposes of a Revenue in America, or thinks that it is contrary to Justice, Equity, and sound Policy, to exercise that Right under the present circumstances of the colonies.' The same month another writer credited Dickinson as the authority on taxation: 'That taxes are in violation of our right has been clearly and fully made to appear by the Farmer's letters.'<sup>14</sup>

But the fame of the Pennsylvania Farmer did not rest simply on this distinction. Writers like Dulany and Otis had presented comparable arguments at earlier stages in the controversy and had received much less acclaim. Further, the position set forth in the *Farmer's Letters*, which Jefferson later called 'the half-

<sup>13</sup> Examples of protests relying on the distinction in 1768 are: Massachusetts Assembly to Lord Hillsborough, in *The American Gazette: Being a Collection of Authentic Addresses* (London, 1768), I, 89; Portsmouth, New Hampshire instructions to representatives, August 2, 1768, in *ibid.*, II, 95-96; New Jersey House of Representatives to the King, May 7, 1768, in *Pa. Chron.*, July 25, 1768; and Philadelphia County instructions to representatives, July 30, 1768, in *ibid.*, August 8, 1768. In some statements the internal-external distinction is still mixed with the revenue-regulation distinction. See, for example, the Virginia House of Burgesses to the Massachusetts Assembly, reprinted in *Pa. Chron.*, July 11, 1768. Others directly equated the two sets of terms, maintaining that the Farmer had clarified the distinction between external and internal taxes. 'Letter from a Gentleman in Newport,' *Pa. Gaz.*, April 7, 1768. This is just the converse of Dickinson's attempt to turn Pitt's external-internal distinction into support for his revised argument. See [John Dickinson] *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer* (Boston, Edes and Gill, 1768), p. 22n. In subsequent notes this edition is indicated as *Letters*, and the page citations in parentheses refer to the more convenient Ford, *Writings of John Dickinson*; thus, in this case: (Ford, 332n.).

<sup>14</sup> John Devotion to Ezra Stiles, February 8, 1768, in Franklin B. Dexter, ed. *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles* (New Haven, 1916), p. 471; William Franklin to Lord Hillsborough, November 23, 1768, MS Sparks 43, British Papers, Harvard College Library, II, 19. The latter quotation, from November 1768, is by 'L.' in *Bos. Gaz.*, November 28, 1768. For further discussion on the revenue-regulation distinction, see Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, I, 128-129, and William W. Crosskey, *Politics and the Constitution in the History of the United States* (Chicago, 1954), pp. 123-136.



way house of John Dickinson,' was fraught with long-range theoretical difficulties and failed to provide a practical criterion for determining the intent of a Parliamentary act. Benjamin Franklin recognized that, 'it being difficult to draw lines between duties for regulation and those for revenue . . . no middle doctrine can well be maintained.'<sup>16</sup> Finally, the public reputation of the *Letters* far outlasted the usefulness of the revenue-regulation distinction. As helpful as the argument seemed in the spring of 1768, the colonists' prolonged praise indicates a much broader significance for the *Farmer's Letters*, and we shall have to look beyond the specific constitutional argument to find a satisfactory explanation for the acclaim.

The ideological importance of the *Farmer's Letters* involves more than the revenue-regulation distinction. In its general political theory the series made effective use of many familiar Whig conceptions. In a composition of twelve short movements Dickinson sounded all the themes of Whig opposition politics: the fundamental threat to liberty posed by executive power over the convening of assemblies (Letter I), the danger of losing the power of voluntary taxation (primarily Letters VII, VIII, and IX), with the consequent horrors of corruption, the proliferation of offices, and standing armies (Letter X), and, most important, the inevitability of worse tax measures to come if the colonists allowed a precedent to be set (Letters II, IV, X, XI, and XII). Ministerial injustices were denounced, as they had been in England in the 1730s, as the result of a conspiracy of artful, selfish men (Letters V, VII, VIII, and XII). Dickinson appealed to theories firmly embedded in American political thought, and he supported his arguments with examples from ancient Greece to contemporary Ireland and with authorities from Tacitus to Pitt. The *Farmer's Letters* argue not only the technical illegality of the Townshend

<sup>16</sup>Thomas Jefferson, memoir, July 1774, cited in Kate M. Rowland, *Life and Correspondence of George Mason, 1725-1792* (New York, 1892), I, 173-174; Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, March 13, 1768, in Albert H. Smyth, ed. *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York, 1905-07), V, 113.

Acts but their injustice, and, on the authority of Davenant and Postlethwayt, their ultimately damaging effects on Britain's own economic interest.<sup>16</sup>

Dickinson struck many resonances in his audience, and their praise echoes each of these sub-themes, suggesting that these arguments were collectively as important to the *Letters'* popularity as the revenue-regulation distinction. 'At a Time when public Liberty is in Danger, from Measures not so obviously fatal to common discernment,' said a Bostonian, the *Farmer's Letters* 'shew the Tendency of such Measures.' A man in Newport wrote: 'The Farmer hath proved that the flourishing state of Great-Britain, is owing to the trade she carries on with these colonies.' The activist eastern section of Connecticut was particularly prominent in its admiration for the Farmer. 'Philo-Patriae,' in the *New London Gazette*, repeats the themes of Letters IX and X: 'The FARMER has demonstrated that the duties as imposed can by no means be sufficient to answer these purposes [frontier maintenance, creation of offices, etc.], therefore, farther taxes and duties must needs be laid upon us, for the purposes above-said, and maintaining a standing army to secure our obedience.'<sup>17</sup>

Dickinson's arguments gained authority and his predictions an air of inevitability by being placed in the context of this general Whig theory. His talent here lay in the timely application of an existing rubric and vocabulary. The period from June 1766, to September 1767, had been in general a time of

<sup>16</sup>The importance of the Whig opposition tradition in American political thought of this period is described in Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, pp. 34-54, 94-117, and, by the same author, 'The Origins of American Politics,' *Perspectives in American History*, I (1967), pp. 31-45. On the details of the English background, see Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, 1959).

<sup>17</sup>'A. B.' [Samuel Adams?], reprinted in *Pa. Gaz.*, March 31, 1768; 'Letter from a gentleman in Newport,' *Pa. Gaz.*, April 7, 1768; 'Philo-Patriae,' in *New London Gaz.*, April 8, 1768. Among the many other examples of praise for the Farmer which enumerate these sub-themes, see: the popular poem by 'American Mariner' [John MacPherson, Sr.], in *Pa. Gaz.*, April 24, 1768, on 'crafty Grenville'; a speech to the Philadelphia merchants, *Bos. Eve. Post*, May 23, 1768, on taxes leading to an independent executive; and Anon., in the *British Chronicle*, June 20, 1768, on the 'impending ruin' of England by corruption, reprinted in *N. Y. Merc.*, September 19, 1768.

quieted animosities and relative prosperity, but news of the laws passed by Parliament in June 1767, added persuasion to the fear that the Stamp Act resistance had been only a skirmish, not a settlement, and to the suspicion of a sustained 'design' against English liberties in America. It is clear from the public response that the *Farmer's Letters* voiced not one but a variety of the Americans' fears. So Franklin, despite his qualms, presented the *Letters* to the English public as 'the general sentiments' of Americans. They were described in America as 'the completest pieces ever wrote on the subject,' containing 'the great Axioms of Liberty' and an 'American System of Politicks.'<sup>18</sup> The comprehensiveness of the *Letters*—the persuasiveness with which Dickinson related the recent acts to general British policy and focussed so many historical parallels and authorities on the crisis at hand—made his message keenly relevant to Americans in all the colonies.

Yet the specific arguments of the *Letters*, even when seen as a comprehensive pattern, do not fully explain their popularity. A third factor, which might be called the author's 'persona,' played a significant role.

The *Letters* were published anonymously, which was not unusual in itself; almost all newspaper essayists used pseudonyms. Some curiosity about the authorship was expressed, but more significant is the fact that before Dickinson's identity was universally known (May 1768), the 'Farmer' as such gained an independent reputation which continued thereafter undiminished.<sup>19</sup> The 'Pennsylvania Farmer' was more famous

<sup>18</sup>Benjamin Franklin, preface to the English edition, May 8, 1768, in Ford, *Writings*, p. 288; Sarah Goddard to William Goddard, n. d., in Goddard, *Partnership*, p. 19; *New London Gaz.*, May 13, 1768; Bernard to Pownall, January 9, 1768, MS Sparks 4, Bernard Papers, Harvard College Library, VI, 59–60.

<sup>19</sup>Francis Bernard expended great energy trying to deduce the authorship, finally settling upon New York as the necessary source. Bernard to Pownall, January 9 and 16, 1768, MS Sparks 4, Bernard Papers, Harvard College Library, VI, 59–60, 62–63, and Bernard to Lord Barrington, January 28, 1768, in E. Channing and A. Coolidge, eds. *The Barrington-Bernard Correspondence 1760–1770* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 135. Franklin, from the possibilities suggested by his son, thought perhaps 'Mr. Delancey' wrote them. Hillsborough, in turn, may have suspected Franklin. Benjamin Franklin

than John Dickinson, and Dickinson himself was referred to simply as 'the Farmer' in letters and even diaries for years after.<sup>20</sup>

The Farmer pseudonym was well chosen and well developed. Most newspaper pseudonyms were trivial: mere initials, a Latin concoction, or just a place of origin, like 'a gentleman from Virginia.' The idea of a farmer, on the other hand, appealed to an almost universal American conviction about the good life of the soil. What better atmosphere for clear-headed political theorizing than the uncorrupted, unhurried farm estate? Capitalizing on this prejudice, Dickinson began the *Letters* with this characterization:

I am a *Farmer*, settled, after a variety of fortunes, near the banks of the river *Delaware*. . . . I received a liberal education, and have been engaged in the busy scenes of life; but am now convinced, that a man may be as happy without bustle, as with it. My farm is small; my servants are few, and good; I have a little money at interest; I wish for no more. . . . Being generally master of my time, I spend a good deal of it in a library, which I think the most valuable part of my small estate . . . two or three gentlemen of ability and learning . . . honour me with their friendship. . . .<sup>21</sup>

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to William Franklin, March 13, 1768, in Smyth, *Writings* V, 113-117. In February Mein and Fleeming offered for sale the 'Considerations on the Propriety of imposing TAXES on the British Colonies . . . By the author of the Farmer's Letters,' showing that they thought Dulany was the author. *Bos. Chron.*, February 1, 1768. John MacPherson, Jr., the law apprentice who made copies of the *Farmer's Letters* for Dickinson, kept the secret from a close friend as of March 11, suggesting a New Englander, Dickinson, or Galloway as possibilities. John MacPherson to William Patterson, February 24 (postscript dated March 11), 1768, and April 9, 1769, W. H. Harnor Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. The tribute presented by the Society of Fort St. David's was the first publicly to name Dickinson as the author. *Pa. Chron.*, May 19, 1768. By mid-May Dickinson's authorship was known throughout the colonies, and the news reached England by late June. See, for example, letter from England in *Bos. Eve. Post*, September 26, 1768, and *Monthly Review*, LIX (London, July, 1768), p. 18.

<sup>20</sup>See for example, John Adams' diary entry for August 14, 1769, in L. H. Butterfield, et al., eds., *The Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (Cambridge, 1961), I, 341; William Palfrey to John Wilkes, October 21, 1769, in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, XLVII (1913-14), 212; Josiah Quincy, journal entry for April 3, 1775, in *ibid.*, XLIX (1915-16), 472; Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, January, 1777, in Butterfield, ed., *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, 1963), II, 151; Hugh Gaine, journal entry for February 18, 1777, in P. L. Ford, ed., *The Journals of Hugh Gaine, Printer* (New York, 1902), II, 17.

<sup>21</sup>*Letters*, p. 3 (Ford, p. 307).

This persona proved to be not just a mask, but a full character, and it was reinforced in later letters. As with his political theory, Dickinson chose materials firmly embedded in the culture of the day. Praises of the noble farmer reach far back into the classics, but Dickinson's persona is drawn from a specific strain of the bucolic mode which developed in England after the Restoration and became particularly strong after 1720.<sup>22</sup> The most direct exemplar is *The Choice* (1700), by John Pomfret, which by 1750 Southey considered the most popular poem in the language, somewhat to his dismay.<sup>23</sup> There were four American editions of this poem between 1751 and 1792, and two direct imitations by American poets before Dickinson's Farmer appeared. William Livingston's *Philosophic Solitude, or the Choice of a Rural Life* (1747), extols retirement, nature, moderate pleasures, the rejection of fame and wealth, the reading of classical authors, and discussions with friends.<sup>24</sup> The outline could hardly have been closer to the attributes of the Pennsylvania Farmer. Pomfret's poetic dream, a reaction against ambition and corruption, had a new poignancy when transposed to America because of the conviction, rooted in Puritan historiography, of America's virtue and special destiny. In 1757 Benjamin Church added to the genre with *The Choice: A Poem, After the Manner of Mr. Pomfret*. 'Remote from Grandeur, I'd be humbly wise,' says the author.<sup>25</sup> Dickinson's Farmer embodied this conviction. Wilderness America had grievances against a corrupt London, and the virtuous

<sup>22</sup>See Paul H. Johnstone, 'Turnips and Romanticism,' *Agricultural History*, XII (July, 1938), 226 ff., and, by the same author, 'In Praise of Husbandry,' *ibid.*, XI (April, 1937), pp. 82-91. See also Richard Bridgman, 'Jefferson's Farmer before Jefferson,' *American Quarterly*, XIV (winter 1962), 567-577.

<sup>23</sup>Thomas Seccombe, 'Lesser Verse Writers, I,' in A. W. Ward and A. W. Waller, eds. *Cambridge History of English Literature* (Cambridge, 1907-16), IX, 170.

<sup>24</sup>[William Livingston], *Philosophic Solitude, or the Choice of a Rural Life, A Poem, By a Gentleman educated at Yale College* (New York, 1747), 'Argument,' and *passim*. Reprinted in Boston, 1762.

<sup>25</sup>[Benjamin Church], *The Choice: A Poem, After the Manner of Mr. Pomfret* (Boston, 1757), p. 3. Church's poem is compared to Pomfret's in Edwin T. Bowden, 'Benjamin Church's *Choice* and American Colonial Poetry,' *New England Quarterly*, XXXII (June, 1959), pp. 170-184.

Farmer was the American most suited symbolically to proclaim them. Yet if God resided in this tame wilderness, so did Sallust and Tacitus, Newton and Locke. The heroes were knowledgeable as well as detached. They imagined an eminently cultured haven, the best of two worlds, a curious mélange of Romantic innocence and Enlightenment sophistication.

Americans were already familiar with the model of Dickinson's persona. He merely evoked the tradition by suggesting the essential qualities: detachment, scholarship, virtuous leisure, moderate wealth, and humility. The appeal of this persona is reflected in the tributes to the *Letters*, in which the Farmer-scholar's virtues are reiterated in almost ritual fashion. William Hicks, a fellow Philadelphia lawyer, paid his respects to the Farmer image thus: 'Removed as you are from the busy scene of action, surely nothing but a natural love of liberty . . . could have urged you to such deep researches.' The Lebanon freemen asked the Farmer's permission to 'penetrate the veil of your modest retirement and congratulate you.' The Mansfield tribute praised the Farmer for 'modestly avoiding the Applauses' he so justly deserved.<sup>26</sup> Dickinson's replies to the official tributes, all written in the role of Farmer, are studied exercises in humility, especially after the Galloway faction started a local smear campaign against his vanity. Significantly, Dickinson was so well concealed behind the Farmer persona that Philadelphia scribblers had to attack him on that basis. 'No farmers in the assembly,' they cried; but for most Americans the anti-Livingston slogan in New York—'No lawyers in the assembly'—was a more likely sentiment.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup>'Citizen' [William Hicks], in *Pa. Gaz.*, December 17, 1767; *Bos. Eve. Post*, April 25, 1768; *New London Gaz.*, May 13, 1768.

<sup>27</sup>The anti-Farmer campaign ran in the *Pa. Chron.*, July 25 through August 29, 1768. For a point by point parody of Dickinson's persona, see 'Country Farmer' in *Pa. Chron.*, August 22, 1768. The 'no Farmers' slogan is reported in Goddard, *Partnership*, p. 19. Dickinson's own attitude toward all the commotion over his vanity, although the 'Farmer' would never have admitted it, may be gleaned from a quotation he copied into his commonplace book: 'To despise Fame is to despise the Virtues by which it is acquir'd—Tacitus.' Commonplace book, Dickinson Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, p. 69.

Dickinson was the first professed farmer among American political writers. He was surely not the last. In response to the *Farmer's Letters* appeared 'Another Farmer,' 'Country Farmer,' and Joseph Galloway as 'Chester County Farmer.' Samuel Seabury later wrote as the 'Westchester Farmer,' and as 'Farmer A. W.' In the constitutional debate of the 1780s R. H. Lee wrote as the 'Federal Farmer.'<sup>28</sup> Franklin, wearing his emblematic fur cap at the French court, and Crèvecoeur, writing as 'An American Farmer' that 'some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth,' were among the more prominent to testify to American moral virtues.<sup>29</sup> Most Americans either subscribed or gave lip-service to this image. It is interesting that both Livingston and Dickinson were lawyers, for farming and the law were symbolic opposites. In 1789 'A Farmer' in a Carolina newspaper accused his opponent of being a lawyer, concluding that 'if learning has a tendency to make the man so devilishly proud, discontented and quarrelsome, I thank God that I am not cursed with more than I have the common sense to manage.' In contrast with the 'proud, discontented' lawyer, a farmer's learning was kept pure by his close communion with God and nature. 'Consider a judicious Farmer,' said a newspaper moralist in 1768, 'all his conduct is upright, all his Aims are directed to the Purpose of Humanity.'<sup>30</sup> The myth was as alive before the Revolution as after, and

<sup>28</sup>'Another Farmer' in *Pa. Chron.*, December 28, 1767; 'Country Farmer,' in *Pa. Chron.*, August 22, 1768; 'Chester County Farmer' in *Pa. Gaz.*, June 16, 1768, identified as Galloway in Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence*, p. 123; on Samuel Seabury, see Bailyn, *Pamphlets*, p. 11; the New York Sons of Liberty burned 'Farmer A. W.'s View of the Controversy' in 1775, according to *Rivington's Gazette*, in H. L. Calkin, 'Pamphlets and Public Opinion during the American Revolution,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXIV (1940), p. 30; Evarts B. Greene connects Seabury with 'Farmer A. W.' in his *Revolutionary Generation, 1763-1790* (New York, 1943), p. 203; [R. H. Lee] *Observations . . . In a Number of Letters From the Federal Farmer to the Republican* (New York, 1787).

<sup>29</sup>On Franklin's cap, see Charles C. Sellers, *Benjamin Franklin in Portraiture* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 70, 99, 227-231; Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* ([1782] New York, Signet edition, 1963), p. 61.

<sup>30</sup>*State Gazette of North Carolina*, June 11, 1789, in Christopher Crittenden, *North Carolina Newspapers before 1790* (Chapel Hill, 1928), p. 27; Anon., 'In Praise of Husbandry,' *Conn. Courant*, April 25, 1768. See also 'Corydon,' on 'RETIREMENT,' *Conn. Courant*, April 25, 1768.

Dickinson was perceptive enough to supplement his argument with it. In a period of American literature which has been characterized as self-consciously and rigorously imitative of English models, Dickinson's adaptation of John Pomfret's hero is not surprising.<sup>31</sup> But the celebrity of the Farmer, unique among newspaper pseudonyms, shows that Dickinson knew how to turn a common convention into an ideological asset.

In so many ways—in its central constitutional argument, its elaborate Whig ideology, and the imagery of its author's persona—the *Letters* were a remarkably well-contrived work. But Dickinson's talent extended beyond these ideological and literary elements into the techniques that affected promotion. His first stroke of ingenuity as a publicist came in choosing the form of his essay, a series of letters to the newspapers. He was not the first to do so, of course, but he was the first to adapt a highly serious intercolonial message to the medium of the local polemicist with such skill. In doing so he gained an audience more numerous and less sophisticated than that of the pamphleteers. That this was no accidental decision is suggested by a comment made in 1768 by a fellow newspaper essayist that 'those I wished to be most particularly affected by my hints, were such as, I fear, seldom read any thing else but News-Papers.' In the *Letters* Dickinson appealed openly to these ordinary citizens. Letter VII begins: 'This letter is intended more particularly for such of you, whose employments in life may have prevented your attending to the consideration of some points of state that are of great and public importance. For many such persons there must be even in these colonies, where the inhabitants are more intelligent than any other people whatever.'<sup>32</sup>

The flattery, if not subtle, was effective. The Farmer-scholar was praised for his 'painful study' and 'deep Researches.' The

<sup>31</sup>Samuel M. Tucker, 'The Beginnings of Verse, 1610-1808,' in W. P. Trent, *et al.*, eds. *Cambridge History of American Literature* (New York, 1917), I, 166.

<sup>32</sup>'Atticus' [John Smith], in *Pa. Chron.*, June 27, 1768. See Frederick B. Tolles, 'A Literary Quaker: John Smith of Burlington and Philadelphia,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXV (1941), 305.



'plainness' of his argument was emphasized, and he was thanked for having 'poured the clearest light on the most important points, hitherto involved in darkness bewildering even the learned.' Governor William Franklin begrudgingly admitted the broad audience of the *Letters*: 'They, indeed, are in many Parts extremely absurd and contradictory, but being wrote in a smooth, easy flowing stile they pass off very well with great Numbers of the common people in America, and with some others.'<sup>33</sup>

The series format was a deliberate publicity decision, not a natural course of letters, for Dickinson wrote the whole series as a unit. At the outset he gave manuscript copies of the whole of the *Letters* to both William Goddard and James Otis.<sup>34</sup> The series format, like the pseudonym, was a common convention, but again Dickinson turned a convention to unique advantage. Writers of other series often got bogged down by responding to critics, making their articles obscure to anyone unfamiliar with the attacks and counter-attacks. Dickinson did not have to face this problem because he wrote the whole series before any were published, and, unlike contributors to the Chandler-Chauncy controversy in 1768, or John Adams in his later 'Novanglus' series, the Farmer spoke to everyone by responding to no one. His control is illustrated by his fabrication of objections which he wished to answer. Letter III begins: 'I rejoice to find that my two former letters to you, have been

<sup>33</sup>'New Yorker,' in *Prov. Gaz.*, April 30, 1768; 'Citizen,' in *Pa. Gaz.*, December 17, 1767, and Cumberland grand jury to the Farmer, *Pa. Chron.*, June 20, 1768; Norwich merchants to the Farmer, *Prov. Gaz.*, April 30, 1768; Society of Fort St. David's to the Farmer, *Pa. Chron.*, May 19, 1768; William Franklin to Benjamin Franklin, May 10, 1768, in Smyth, *Writings*, V, 78n.

<sup>34</sup>Dickinson to Otis, December 5, 1767, in W. C. Ford, ed. *Warren-Adams Letters* (Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, LXXII-LXXIII, 1917-25), I, 3. On at least one occasion a Letter appeared in the Boston papers before the corresponding Philadelphia papers had arrived there (not, however, before the Philadelphia papers printed them, as Schlesinger states in *Prelude to Independence*, p. 91n.). Francis Bernard to John Pownall, January 16, 1768, MS Sparks 4, Bernard Papers, Harvard College Library, VI, 63-4. Goddard also must have received the whole set, for he did not follow the revisions Dickinson made in progress for the version appearing in Hall and Sellers' *Pennsylvania Gazette*. See Dickinson to Otis, January 25, 1768, in *Warren-Adams Letters*, I, 4-5, and p. 347 below.

generally received with so much favour. . . . Sorry I am to learn that there are some few persons, who shake their heads with solemn motion, and pretend to wonder, what can be the meaning of these letters.'

The objections follow, in direct quotes, and the Farmer turns to a refutation. Similarly, Letter IV opens: 'An objection, I hear, has been made against my second letter, which I would willingly clear up before I proceed.' Again, the objection to his revenue-regulation argument is quoted, and a clarification follows.<sup>35</sup> This device gave the *Letters* a simulated spontaneity while allowing Dickinson to control the argument completely. Like a good field commander, Dickinson chose the ground on which he wanted to fight.

The series format also allowed him to use repetition more effectively than in a pamphlet. Each installment was easily digestible and was separated from the next by an intermission of a week, a fact perhaps forgotten by the modern student who reads through the whole series at one sitting. The *Letters* are punctuated by final Latin epigrams, translated for the reader, which sometimes introduce and sometimes repeat familiar ideas found elsewhere in the text. The parental metaphor, 'Let us behave like dutiful children,' in Letter III, is repeated at the end of Letter V: 'Mens ubi materna est?—Where is maternal affection?'<sup>36</sup> The precedent theme, repeated throughout, takes this colorful form at the close of Letter IV: 'We [England] have a statute, laid up for future use, like a sword in the scabbard.' Having warned his countrymen of the dangers of innovation in Letter IX, Dickinson leaves them with this time-honoured metaphor from Persius: 'Oppose a disease at its beginning.' Duty to ancestors and posterity, intoned at the end of Letter X, is applied to the present crisis in Letter XII. This sub-theme has the force of placing the dispute in a broad historical con-

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, pp. 15, 19 (Ford, pp. 322, 328).

<sup>36</sup> *Letters*, pp. 19, 32 (Ford, pp. 327, 344). The Latin epigrams are discussed in Richard M. Gummere, *The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 109.

text, as does the general Whig theory. The public praises for the Farmer frequently echoed this idea of responsibility to other generations.<sup>37</sup>

Other forms of repetition in the *Letters* are more direct. Dickinson's central argument is first outlined in Letter II and cannot be mistaken. The phrase, 'FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE,' or an equivalent, is repeated there eleven times, eight in capitals and three in italics. A long passage from Pitt's speech on the Stamp Act, with which the colonists were already familiar, is quoted in the footnotes of Letter IV and again in Letter VII, that is, three weeks later. In some places Dickinson repeats himself at length; a passage on the danger of allowing a precedent, appearing first in Letter VII, is paraphrased in Letter X.<sup>38</sup> One further technique for repetition rounds out Dickinson's repertoire. Like a careful lecturer, he stops to recall explicitly what he has set forth in previous letters and outlines what he is about to do. 'I shall now apply these observations to the late act of Parliament,' he remarks in Letter VII. Letter IX opens, 'I have made some observations on the PURPOSES for which money is to be levied. . . I shall now offer to your consideration some further reflections on that subject.'<sup>39</sup> This pedagogical image of the Farmer is indicated in the various tributes. His principles 'will fully instruct Ages yet unborn.' 'Future infancy' will be 'taught' by the Farmer.<sup>40</sup> Like all good publicists, Dickinson knew that repetition wins as many minds as enumeration or profundity, and he chose to repeat many ideas with which his audience was already familiar and to which, he knew, they were receptive. For him the consequences of in-

<sup>37</sup> *Letters*, p. 24 (Ford, p. 335); *Letters*, pp. 54, 64, 75 (Ford, pp. 374, 386, 402).

<sup>38</sup> *Letters*, pp. 9-14 (Ford, pp. 314-322); *Letters*, pp. 22-23, 42 (Ford, pp. 332-333, 357); compare the passage beginning, 'Some persons may think this act of no consequence,' p. 41 (Ford, p. 355), with the passage beginning, 'Some persons may imagine the sums to be raised by it, are but small,' p. 61 (Ford, p. 382).

<sup>39</sup> *Letters*, pp. 40, 47 (Ford, pp. 355, 364); note also the structure of Letter IX where Dickinson's point by point outline is explicit.

<sup>40</sup> *Pa. Gaz.*, May 19, 1768; *Prov. Gaz.*, April 30, 1768.

action were clear and could only be repeated in variations on a theme. The central revenue argument lends unity throughout the series by simple repetition: 'Regarding the act on this single principle, I must repeat, and I think it my duty to repeat, that to me it appears to be unconstitutional.' His proposed solution followed the same strategy: 'let us, continually, keep up our claim, and incessantly repeat our complaints.'<sup>41</sup>

Yet though Dickinson's skill as a publicist was important in the popular success of the *Letters*, it is not these techniques that account for the speed of the dissemination and the persistence of the newspaper coverage. One must look behind the scenes at the promotion of the *Letters* by the Whig press.

From the beginning Dickinson seemed aware of the mechanics of maximum coverage. Passing over the two solid Whig newspapers in Philadelphia, Bradford's *Journal* and Hall and Sellers' *Gazette*, he gave the first copy of the *Farmer's Letters* to the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*. Dickinson was not even acquainted with the editor, William Goddard, who, despite his basically Whig sentiments, was under the financial thumb of Joseph Galloway. Because of the conflict between Goddard's views and the owners', however, the *Chronicle* intermittently reflected a wider range of opinion than the others and seems to have had a larger circulation. Had Dickinson given one of the others the first copy, Goddard might not have reprinted the *Farmer's Letters*, but having secured Goddard, he could be sure the others would. No evidence of Dickinson's conscious motives survives, but it was a clever choice. It was precisely the large group of uncommitted Philadelphians among the *Chronicle* readership that he wanted to reach.<sup>42</sup>

In the meantime, on December 5, 1767, Dickinson mailed a manuscript copy to James Otis, with a flattering letter and the

<sup>41</sup>*Letters* p. 43 (Ford, p. 359) and p. 19 (Ford, p. 328).

<sup>42</sup>See Goddard, *Partnership*, pp. 11-19. Goddard's biographer claims that his circulation increased during the *Farmer's Letters* series, and that by 1770 the *Chronicle* was the largest of the three Philadelphia papers, with a circulation of 2,500. Ward L. Miner, *William Goddard, Newspaperman* (Durham, 1962), pp. 83, 85.

comment: '[I] commit to your hands the inclos'd Letters, to be dispos'd of as you think proper.'<sup>43</sup> Otis proceeded to promote the *Farmer's Letters* through the *Boston Gazette*, the organ of the Boston Sons of Liberty. Having led the reluctant colonies in radical views and strong reaction, the Boston leadership was anxious for outside support, especially from such a quarter as 'the lethargic city of Philadelphia.'<sup>44</sup> With Otis as Dickinson's Boston contact, a Philadelphia-Boston axis was established for the promotion of the *Letters*.

Considerable pressure was brought to bear on the other Boston newspapers to include the series. Green and Russell, whose *Boston Post-Boy* omitted the series on the specific instructions of the Commissioners of Customs, later described the propaganda war:

. . . on the appearance of the Letters your Memorialists as they printed a public paper apply'd (as was their Duty) to your Honors for direction concerning the same, as numbers of people here were extremely pressing and even threatening them, if they did not publish them in their Newspaper; your Honors . . . were pleased to advise us as private Gentlemen by no means to print the same—we did not and soon lost the largest part of the Subscribers. . . .<sup>45</sup>

Richard Draper, printer to the governor and council, omitted the initial series from his *Massachusetts Gazette* and then tried to sit on the fence during the public reaction period. He carried three or four minor articles on the *Letters'* popularity in March, and in the fall of 1768 ran both negative and positive comment from England.<sup>46</sup> The difficulty of maintaining this middle position is seen in his comment of August 11:

The Pennsylvania Chronicle, of August 1, which came Yesterday . . . contains several speculative Pieces, but being lengthy (and

<sup>43</sup>Dickinson to Otis, December 5, 1767, in *Warren-Adams Letters*, I, 4-5.

<sup>44</sup>'A Son of Liberty,' in *Bos. Eve. Post*, September 5, 1768.

<sup>45</sup>Green and Russell, Memorial to the Commissioners of Customs, April 21, 1772, in O. M. Dickerson, 'British Control of American Newspapers on the Eve of the Revolution,' *New England Quarterly*, XXIV (1951), pp. 455.

<sup>46</sup>See Appendixes C and D below.

some of them very unpopular, endeavouring to represent the Author of the Farmer's Letters as a Deceiver of the People) cannot be reprinted at This Time. A Letter is in the same Paper, said to be from a Son of Liberty in Boston, to the immortal Farmer; but, keeping in Mind the Prohibition of the Sons of Liberty, we chuse not to venture to publish it without a special order. . . .<sup>47</sup>

Boston was not the only town to pressure printers who failed to cooperate. A writer in Philadelphia sarcastically commented that Goddard and one of his contributors would be brought to the bar of Liberty 'for writing a libel against the sovereignty of the Farmer, and for blasphemously supposing Governor Bernard will ever go to heaven.' Pressured by Galloway into running articles against the *Farmer's Letters*, Goddard was urged by his mother not to. From Providence she wrote, 'Do not, I beseech you, sully all the honour you have acquired by writing with the enemies of your country against the best men in it.' Although the evidence is thin, there may well have been other watchdogging within the ranks of the Whig printers. That their communication went beyond merely swapping articles is suggested by Ann Green's comment that the *Farmer's Letters* were included in her *Maryland Gazette* 'at the Request of the Printer of the PENNSYLVANIA CHRONICLE.' These printers formed a close intercolonial network; many were related, some had apprenticed with others, and most moved several times in their careers.<sup>48</sup>

On the other hand, being a Tory printer, whether by conviction or the lure of government contracts, became a highly individual game as the pressures and risks increased. Not only was the Galloway campaign confined to the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, but negative articles from England received none of the extensive reprinting that positive comments enjoyed. 'Z.',

<sup>47</sup> *Mass. Gaz.*, August 11, 1768.

<sup>48</sup> *Pa. Chron.*, September 19, 1768; Sarah Goddard to William Goddard, n.d., in Goddard, *Partnership*, p. 19; *Md. Gaz.*, December 17, 1767; on connections between the colonial printers, see Michael Kraus, *Inter-Colonial Aspects of American Culture on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York, 1928), Chapter IV.

rebutting the *Farmer's Letters* on the basis of virtual representation, was reprinted only in Goddard's *Chronicle* and J. and T. Fleet's *Boston Evening Post*, among the fifteen newspapers surveyed for the present study. Two other long philippics were reprinted only in the *Boston Post-Boy*: 'Scrutator,' from the *Craftsman* of August 8, who refused to argue with the seditious Farmer, pointing out that 'Dean Swift has declared that he never would attempt to argue with a band of dragoons that were come to plunder his house,' and the Tory *Critical Review*, which accused the Farmer of inciting the colonies to independence and wished that he had 'never learned to read or write.' A more serious ten-part denunciation based on the indivisibility of sovereignty, an issue which Dickinson had challenged implicitly but skirted theoretically, appeared in the *Boston Evening Post*. It received the same hands-off treatment by other editors.<sup>49</sup> No other negative articles appeared in the newspapers in the year following the *Letters'* publication. The quasi-official response, William Knox's *The Controversy Between Great Britain and her Colonies Reviewed*, made a serious effort to refute Dickinson's revenue-regulation distinction and exploit the apparent contradiction in his statement that the colonies were 'as much dependent on Great Britain as a perfectly free people can be on another,' but it was restricted to the pamphlet audience and had only one American edition.<sup>50</sup>

These opposition pieces represented substantial English opinion, but in general they did not reach the American public. The extent to which opinion in England was distorted in the American press is exemplified by the report, reprinted in

<sup>49</sup>*Pa. Chron.*, September 12, 1768, and *Bos. Eve. Post*, September 26, 1768; *Bos. Post-Boy*, October 24 and November 7, 1768; 'N. P.', in *Bos. Eve. Post*, February 6 through June 5, 1769.

<sup>50</sup>[William Knox], *The Controversy Between Great Britain and her Colonies Reviewed* (Boston, 1769), p. 25 and *passim*. W. C. Ford states that Knox 'was aided by materials supplied by the Board of Trade and by the cooperation of Grenville, who wrote pp. 67-86 inclusive.' Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, XLIV (1910-11), 169n. Dickinson's assertion about a 'free people' is found in Letter II, *Letters*, p. 7 (Ford, p. 312).

seven of the fifteen papers, that 'the pieces signed a Farmer . . . have had great effect with every thinking person here, and Mr. DeB[erdt] tells me that the Board of Trade feels the weight of them more than any thing that has been wrote on that subject, & he says, they have staggered them very much.' To make sure that their readers got the point, Hall and Sellers editorialized on another report in the same issue: 'By this Extract . . . you may observe that the Measures of G. B. towards her Colonies are merely Ministerial, and that the People of G. B. in general condemn the present Measures as much as we do.' One English sympathizer claimed that 'nine persons in ten, even in this country, are friends to the Americans' and another heard 'a thousand fine Encomiums' passed upon the *Farmer's Letters*. The impression that the *Letters* were 'unanswerable,' a label that recurs often in the praise, was fostered by the Whigs' control of what reached the public. The Commissioners of Customs complained when no governors tried to suppress the *Letters*, but suppression was too dangerous for those entrenched officials. When a motion was introduced in the Massachusetts Assembly to send for and question the printer of 'dangerous and alarming' doctrines from a far-away colony, presumably the *Farmer's Letters*, 'Mr. G[err?]y' declared it out of order and the Assembly tabled it for six months.<sup>51</sup>

While the Whig editors did their promotional work, Dickinson continued to shepherd his *Letters* through the press, making minor revisions in progress, corresponding with Otis, and, when the series was over, writing to the various papers on behalf of the Farmer to acknowledge official tributes. He was a meticulous writer, and the revisions all concerned inconsequential additions or deletions; but they resulted in a

<sup>51</sup>*Pa. Gaz.*, September 22, 1768; *N. Y. Merc.*, November 7, 1768; *Pa. Gaz.*, April 6, 1769; the *Letters* are called 'unanswerable' by Arthur Lee in Monitor No. I, *Va. Gaz.* (Rind), February 25, 1768, and by the author of 'Divide et Impere,' *Bos. Eve. Post*, April 4, 1768; Commissioners of Customs to Lords of the Treasury, March 28, 1768, in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, LV (1921-22), 269; *Pa. Gaz.*, March 17, 1768.



dispute over the Boston pamphlet editions from which we can infer Otis' involvement. Otis, following a request from Dickinson, must have tipped off Benjamin Edes that the revisions in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* were the author's final word. The Edes and Gill version, advertised as 'correct,' was published from this source rather than the manuscript copy of Otis. Mein and Fleeming, who apparently were not on the inside track, proclaimed that their edition was 'printed exactly from the Philadelphia papers, in which these Letters were first published,' that is, from Goddard's unrevised manuscript version which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Chronicle*.<sup>52</sup>

Otis was not the only friend who helped. Dickinson was one of the best known colonial leaders in 1768, with acquaintances that dated back to his days in England and many more from his leadership in the Stamp Act Congress. Several of these (James Otis in Boston, R. H. Lee in Williamsburg, and Christopher Gadsden in Charleston) had close connections with the Whig press. Richard Henry Lee, Dickinson's contemporary at the Inns of Court, wrote a preface to the Williamsburg edition published by Rind in 1769, and Arthur Lee wrote his 'Monitor' series specifically in support of the Farmer. Franklin ignored past animosities, including Dickinson's attack on him as agent, and arranged the European editions. William Hicks of Philadelphia, whose children were later Dickinson's wards, wrote a series which supported and amplified the *Farmer's Letters*, trying to wrestle further with the definition of Parliamentary authority.<sup>53</sup> For printing Knox's reply to the

<sup>52</sup>The opposing pamphlet advertisements are in *Bos. Eve. Post*, May 30, 1768, and *Bos. Chron.*, April 25, 1768; Dickinson requests that Otis tell New England printers to use the revised *Pa. Gaz.* version in Dickinson to Otis, January 25, 1768, in *Warren-Adams Letters*, I, 4-5.

<sup>53</sup>The *Monitor's Letters* first appeared in *Va. Gaz.* (Rind), February 25 through April 28, 1768, and were reprinted with the *Farmer's Letters* in the Williamsburg edition of 1769; 'A Citizen' [William Hicks], *The Nature and Extent of Parliamentary Power Considered; in Some Remarks upon Mr. Pitt's Speech* (Philadelphia, 1768). The pamphlet began as a newspaper series of five parts in the *Pa. Journ.*, January 28 through February 25, 1768, reprinted in the *Bos. Gaz.* beginning February 15, 1768. On Dickinson as guardian of Hicks' children, see Logan MSS, Vol. 40, Estate of William Hicks, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

*Farmer's Letters* and other publications injurious to the Whigs, John Hancock bought up John Mein's debts and had him sent to prison, according to Charles Evans. Benjamin Rush was accused of writing some letters from 'a gentleman in London' which described John Wilkes praising the *Farmer's Letters* as 'superior to any Thing of the Kind . . . in any Age or Country.'<sup>54</sup> Never before had so many people tried so hard and succeeded so well in promoting a set of political ideas in America.

Effective control of the press enabled a small core of Whigs to emphasize the positive reaction to the *Farmer's Letters*. To some extent they manufactured it. But more important they sparked and fanned approval that was widely felt. Although there is no way to completely separate 'Whig' from citizen-at-large, there is evidence that the reception was extensive and genuine. The public tributes were approved in open meetings, whatever the machinations of the leaders. Statements about the *Letters'* popularity occurred not only in the newspapers, but in private letters; they were made not only by Whigs, but by Tories and officials. Partisans reported confidently that the Farmer was 'almost adored' in Providence, 'admired' in Virginia, and that in Charleston 'the many deserved Compliments the Farmer receives . . . seem really to flow from gratitude and sentiment.'<sup>55</sup> To these reports must be added the sour but more significant comments of opponents. Governors Bernard of Massachusetts, Moore of New York, Franklin of New Jersey, Sharpe of Maryland, and Wright of Georgia, as well as the Commissioners of Customs and Massa-

<sup>54</sup>Charles Evans, comp., *American Bibliography* (Chicago, 1903-34), IV, 182; the letters attributed to Rush appeared in *Pa. Chron.*, April 3, 1769, and also in Bradford's *Journal*. John MacPherson, Jr., who was still indentured to Dickinson at this time, wrote to his friend, 'You must doubtless have seen some letters in the late Papers (Bradford's) wherein Mr Wilkes expresses his great esteem for Mr Dickinson — These letters were written by Mr B. Rush.' John MacPherson to William Patterson, April 9, 1769, W. M. Harnor Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

<sup>55</sup>*Pa. Journ.*, March 31, 1768; *Bos. Gaz.*, May 9, 1768; Christopher Gadsden to Dickinson, June 4, 1768, Dickinson Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia.

chusetts' Lt. Gov. Thomas Hutchinson, all confirmed the importance of the *Farmer's Letters*. Wright wrote Hillsborough: 'Mr. Farmer I conceive has most plentifully sown his seeds of faction and Sedition to say no worse, and I am sorry my Lord I have so much reason to say they are scattered in a very fertile soil, and the well known author is adored in America.'<sup>56</sup>

In reaching this 'fertile soil' the *Farmer's Letters* succeeded in a much more profound way than pieces like Samuel Adams' 'Journal of Occurrences,' which display the literary characteristics often associated with propaganda. But propaganda can mean many things. It is not necessarily a matter of exaggeration or falsification, or of saturating the public with ideas they would otherwise not have had. It is also a matter of reaching large numbers of people with ideas they will accept, of weaving programs and polemics into the web of ideas they have already accepted. As Bernard Bailyn has pointed out, the group of historians of the Revolutionary period referred to at the beginning of this paper associated the notion of propaganda with cynicism and ulterior motives.<sup>57</sup> Dickinson, however, was utterly sincere in the *Farmer's Letters*, and his career, unlike Samuel Adams', reveals no personal motives for attacking British officialdom. His tactics allow little role for invective and none for violence. Raised as a gentleman, he was an acquaintance and long-time supporter of the Penns. As a student in London he was disturbed by the ruder side of English society and politics, but at the same time he read deeply in English

<sup>56</sup>On the reaction of William Franklin, Francis Bernard, and the Commissioners of Customs, see materials cited in notes 33, 19, and 51 above. Sir Henry Moore to Lord Hillsborough, May 12, 1768, MS Sparks 43, British Papers, Harvard College Library, I, 254; Horatio Sharpe to his brother, February, 1768, in Matilda Edgar, *A Colonial Governor in Maryland: Horatio Sharpe and his Times, 1753-1773* (New York, 1912), p. 241; Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony (and Province) of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, 1795-1828), III, 124n; James Wright to Lord Hillsborough, May 23, 1768, MS Sparks 43, British Papers, Harvard College Library, II, 271.

<sup>57</sup>See note 1 above and specifically Miller, *Sam Adams*, p. 276. Rossiter also says that the use of exaggeration and fear made Samuel Adams the 'master propagandist,' in Clinton Rossiter, *Seedtime of the Republic* (New York, 1953), pp. 343-4.

history, law, and politics.<sup>58</sup> These experiences produced in Dickinson an anxiety for England's political future and also a deep faith in the corrective power of Englishmen and their constitution. These anxieties and this faith were not his alone. It is clear from the response to the *Farmer's Letters* that Dickinson's convictions were matched by the convictions of his readers. Highlighted as they were by a cogent and timely constitutional argument, the *Letters'* ideological appeal was reinforced by Dickinson's appeal to the predispositions, the familiar truths, and the existing sense of identity of his audience. Control of the press by sympathetic allies could build only upon such foundations. The coincidence of all these conditions brought to fruition Dickinson's own prophetic hope for the Farmer, that 'perhaps he "may touch some wheel," that will have an effect greater than he could reasonably expect.'<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup>On Dickinson's education and the sources of his political outlook, see three articles by H. Trevor Colbourn: 'A Pennsylvania Farmer at the Court of King George . . .', *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXXVI (1962), 241-286, 417-453; 'John Dickinson, Historical Revolutionary,' *ibid.*, LXXXIII (1959), 271-292; and 'The Historical Perspective of John Dickinson,' *Early Dickinsoniana* (The Boyd Lee Spahr Lectures in Americana, Carlisle, 1961), pp. 3-40. On Dickinson and the classics, see Richard M. Gummere, 'John Dickinson, the Classical Penman of the Revolution,' *Classical Journal*, LII (1956-57), pp. 81-88. See also David L. Jacobsen, *John Dickinson and the Revolution in Pennsylvania, 1767-1776* (Berkeley, 1965).

<sup>59</sup>*Letters*, p. 4 (Ford, p. 308).

## APPENDIX A

### *Reprinting of the Farmer's Letters in newspapers*

Various estimates have been offered in the secondary literature. P. L. Ford said the *Letters* were printed in every paper but four, which seems to be correct.<sup>1</sup> Schlesinger followed Ford but incorrectly asserted that the *Letters* appeared in Richard Draper's *Massachusetts Gazette*. Curiously enough, government printers Green and Russell, pleading their loyalty to the Commissioners of Customs in 1772, also accused Draper of having carried the *Farmer's Letters*, but the series never appeared in his paper.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ford, *Writings*, p. 283.

<sup>2</sup>Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence*, p. 88; Green and Russell to Commissioners of Customs, in Dickerson, 'British Control,' pp. 453-468.

Davidson stated that the *Letters* appeared in 21 of 25 newspapers.<sup>3</sup>

For the present study, all newspapers were checked directly except two, Crouch's *South Carolina Gazette* and Robert Wells' paper of the same name, which were not available. Crouch was an avid Whig and Wells a cautious government printer; it has been assumed that Crouch printed the *Letters* and Wells probably did not. The survey, otherwise direct, shows that nineteen of 23 newspapers printed the *Farmer's Letters*, as given below (with abbreviations used in the notes). The fifteen papers marked with an asterisk were examined closely for the year from December 2, 1767 to December 2, 1768, and consulted selectively for the years following. They represent a cross-section of geography and political orientation and provided the materials for Appendixes C and D below.

1. Newspapers carrying the *Farmer's Letters*:

- \* *Boston Chronicle* (*Bos. Chron.*) Mein and Fleeming, Boston.
- \* *Boston Gazette* (*Bos. Gaz.*) Edes and Gill, Boston.
- \* *Boston Evening Post* (*Bos. Eve. Post*) J. and T. Fleet, Boston.  
(printed only Letters I, II, III, and VIII)
- \* *Providence Gazette* (*Prov. Gaz.*) Sarah Goddard, Providence.
- \* *Newport Mercury* (*Newport Merc.*) Samuel Hall until March, 1768, then Solomon Southwick, Newport.
- \* *New London Gazette* (*New London Gaz.*) Timothy Green, New London.
- \* *Connecticut Courant* (*Conn. Courant*) Ebenezer Watson, Hartford.
- \* *New York Mercury*, becomes *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* in February, 1768 (*N. Y. Merc.*), Hugh Gainé, New York.  
*New York Gazette and Weekly Post-Boy* (*N. Y. Gaz.*) James Parker, New York.  
*New York Journal* (*N. Y. Journ.*) John Holt, New York.  
*Maryland Gazette* (*Md. Gaz.*) Anne Green, Annapolis.
- \* *Pennsylvania Chronicle* (*Pa. Chron.*) William Goddard, Philadelphia.  
*Pennsylvania Journal* (*Pa. Journ.*) William Bradford, Philadelphia.
- \* *Pennsylvania Gazette* (*Pa. Gaz.*) Hall and Sellers, Philadelphia.
- \* *Virginia Gazette* (*Va. Gaz.*-Rind) William Rind, Williamsburg.
- \* *Virginia Gazette* (*Va. Gaz.*-P-D) Purdie and Dixon, Williamsburg.  
*South Carolina Gazette* (*S. Car. Gaz.*-C) Charles Crouch, Charleston.  
*South Carolina Gazette* (*S. Car. Gaz.*-T) Peter Timothy, Charleston.
- \* *Georgia Gazette* (*Ga. Gaz.*) William Johnstone, Savannah.

2. Newspapers not carrying the *Farmer's Letters*:

- \* *Boston Post-Boy and Advertiser* (*Bos. Post-Boy*) Green and Russell, Boston.
- \* *Massachusetts Gazette and Boston Newsletter* (*Mass. Gaz.*) Richard Draper, Boston.  
*Connecticut Journal and New Haven Post-Boy* (*Conn. Journ.*) T. and S. Green, New Haven.
- South Carolina Gazette* (*S. Car. Gaz.*-W) Robert Wells, Charleston.

3. Newspapers sometimes included in bibliographies for 1768 but which were either suspended or had not yet begun in the period from January to May:

- Essex Gazette*, Samuel Hall, Salem.
- Cape Fear Mercury*, Boyd, Wilmington.
- New Hampshire Gazette*, D. and R. Fowle, Portsmouth.
- North Carolina Gazette*, James Davis, Newbern.

<sup>3</sup>Davidson, *Propaganda and the American Revolution*, p. 243.

## APPENDIX B

*Circulation of the Farmer's Letters*

Estimates of the circulation of colonial newspapers are crude, being based on an insufficient number of contemporary statements. Most of this information is found conveniently in Arthur Schlesinger's *Prelude to Independence*.<sup>1</sup> The relevant figures for our purposes are, for the smaller towns: *Providence Gazette*, 800 in 1766, *Essex Gazette*, 700 in 1770, and James Parker's estimate that a circulation of 500 to 600 was normal in 1766; for the principal towns (Boston, New York and Philadelphia): *New York Journal*, 1500 in 1765, *Boston Chronicle*, 1500 in 1768, *Pennsylvania Chronicle*, 2500 in 1770, and *New York Gazette or Weekly Postboy*, 1000 in 1771. Isaiah Thomas claimed that 600 subscribers were required for a paper to stay in business during this period. Schlesinger suggests an average of 1475 for the large towns at this time, but Mott estimated only an 800 average for New York and Philadelphia in 1765.<sup>2</sup>

From the above figures, an estimate of 600 for the smaller towns and 1,000 for the principal towns would seem conservative for 1768. On this basis the circulation of the *Farmer's Letters* in the nineteen newspapers that carried them would be as follows:

9 big-town newspapers x 1,000 subscribers average	= 9,000
10 small-town newspapers x 600 subscribers average	= 6,000
19 newspapers carrying the <i>Farmer's Letters</i> with	15,000
estimated circulation.	

Southerland claims that ten to as many as twenty people read each newspaper in England in the period 1700 to 1730<sup>3</sup> Allowing for a shaky inference we might guess that as many as five people read each copy of colonial newspapers in 1768. Thus:

15,000 estimated circulation	
x5 readers per copy	
75,000 possible readers of the newspaper editions.	

There were seven American pamphlet editions, two of which had two or more printings (p. 326, n. 4 above). The estimates of William Goddard (p. 326, n. 4 above) and Timothy Green (p. 326, n. 5 above) suggest that 300 copies per printing may be a reasonable estimate. Using these figures for pamphlets:

300 copies per printing	
x9 pamphlet printings	
2,700 estimated total pamphlet copies.	

Let us guess that the pamphlets were passed around as well, perhaps offsetting the fact that some purchasers had already read the newspaper version. If we assume that each pamphlet reached at least one new reader, the total circulation of the *Farmer's Letters* would be:

<sup>1</sup>Schlesinger, *Prelude to Independence*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York, rev. ed. 1950), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>James R. Southerland, 'The Circulation of Newspapers and Literary Periodicals, 1700-1730,' *Library*, XV (1935), 124; see also G. A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper, 1700-1760* (Oxford, 1962), p. 177.

75,000 newspaper readers  
+2,700 new pamphlet readers  

---

77,700 estimated total readers.

Population estimates are also tenuous. Potter, relying on Rossiter, gives a total figure for the colonies of 1,610,000 for 1760 and 2,205,000 for 1770. Total population in 1768 may be extrapolated at about 2,000,000. Of these, probably 20% were slaves, since 12.5% of the decennial increase was from slave importation alone, and in 1790, 19% of the total population was slaves.<sup>4</sup> The white population in 1768, then, may be estimated at 1,600,000. About one-fourth of these were males over the age of sixteen, the potential political reading public. Of that number, 400,000, it is impossible to determine how many were truly literate; estimates based on the ability to sign a document have little or no relationship to the reading ability required by such pieces as the *Farmer's Letters*. It would be quite remarkable if 50% of the adult males had the requisite ability, making a potential audience of 200,000 readers.

All this guessing tends to disqualify the summary calculations, but they are the best available. When better means of estimation are devised, we may discover very different results. In the meantime, it may be suggested with caution that John Dickinson's *Farmer's Letters* probably reached nearly 80,000 of the 200,000 Americans comprising the literate political audience. These calculations, whatever their flaws, provide an impression of the *Letters'* extensive circulation.

<sup>4</sup>J. Potter, 'The Growth of Population in America, 1700-1860,' in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley, eds. *Population in History* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 638, 641, 642.

APPENDIX C. *Itemized publication history of the Farmer's Letters*

Dates with arabic numeral 12 indicate December, 1767. All other months refer to 1768.  
 x indicates issue is missing.

The Farmer's Letters:

	Pa.	Chron.
Letter I . . . . .	12/2	
Letter II . . . . .	12/7	
Letter III . . . . .	12/14	
Letter IV . . . . .	12/21	
Letter V . . . . .	12/28	
Letter VI . . . . .	1/4	
Letter VII . . . . .	1/11	
Letter VIII . . . . .	1/18	
Letter IX . . . . .	1/25	
Letter X . . . . .	2/1	
Letter XI . . . . .	2/8	
Letter XII . . . . .	2/15	

The official tributes and the Farmer's replies:

1. Boston. (a) 'A. B.' proposes Boston thank the Farmer. . . . .		
(b) Town appoints committee to draft resolution. . . . .		
(c) Text of tribute. . . . .		
(d) Farmer's reply. . . . .		5/19
2. Norwich merchants to the Farmer. . . . .		
The Farmer's reply. . . . .		
3. Lebanon freemen to the Farmer. . . . .		
The Farmer's reply. . . . .		8/15
4. Society of Fort St. David's to the Farmer. . . . .		5/19
The Farmer's reply. . . . .		5/19
5. Mansfield freemen to the Farmer (went unnoticed, no reply). . . . .		
6. Cumberland grand jury to the Farmer. . . . .		6/20
The Farmer's reply. . . . .		6/20
7. Providence (a) Town appoints committee to draft resolution. . . . .		
(b) Text of tribute. . . . .		7/4
(c) The Farmer's reply. . . . .		7/11
8. Cecil County, Maryland, grand jury to the Farmer. . . . .		9/5
The Farmer's reply. . . . .		9/5

Articles praising the Farmer printed in three or more towns:

1. 'Citizen' [William Hicks], lengthy praise. . . . .		
2. 'Freeborn American' [Charles Thomson], tirade against complacency. . . . .		
3. Speech to Philadelphia merchants, cites Farmer at beginning. . . . .		
4. 'A New Yorker,' ashamed of complacent countrymen in light of Farmer. . . . .		4/25
5. 'American Mariner' [John MacPherson, Sr.], poem on Farmer's Letters. . . . .		
6. Letter from Virginia, Farmer admired, Phila. merchants should heed. . . . .		
7. 'Son of Liberty' in Boston, Farmer should come to Boston, fight . . . . .		8/1
8. 'Machiavel,' satire against Farmer as calculating demagogue. . . . .		8/15
9. Boston and Roxbury patriots toast the Farmer, among others. . . . .		
10. Virginia gentleman bequeaths fortune to the Farmer. . . . .		
11. Letter from an M. P., Farmer's Letters excellent. . . . .		
12. Letter from the west of England, most agree with the Farmer. . . . .		
13. Letter from London, Board of Trade 'staggered' by Farmer's Letters. . . . .		



Pa. Gaz.	Boston				Prov. Gaz.	Newp. Merc.	Hart. Conn. Cour.	New		Wmsburg		Sav. Ga. Gaz.
	Gaz.	Chron.	Eve. Post	Mass. Gaz.				Post- boy	Lon. Gaz.	N.Y. Merc.	Gaz. (P.D.)	
12/3	12/14	12/21	12/21		12/19	12/14	12/21	12/25	12/7	1/7	x	1/27
12/10	12/21	12/28	12/28		12/26	12/28	12/28	1/8	12/14	1/7	x	2/3
12/17	12/28	1/4	1/11		1/9	1/4	1/11	1/15	12/21	1/14	x	2/10
12/24	1/11	1/4			1/16	1/18	1/18	1/22	12/28	1/21		2/17
12/31	1/11	1/18			1/23	1/25	2/1	1/29	1/11	1/28		3/16
1/7	1/18	2/1			1/30	1/25	2/15	2/5	1/18	2/18	2/18	3/23
1/14	1/25	2/1			2/6	2/1	2/22	2/12	1/25	2/25		3/30
1/21	2/8	2/8	2/8		2/13	2/1	2/29	2/19	1/25	3/3	3/3	3/30
1/28	2/15	2/15			2/13	2/15	3/14	2/26	2/8	3/10	3/10	4/6
2/3	2/22	2/22			2/27	2/22	3/21	3/4	2/15	3/17	3/17	4/13
2/10	2/29	3/7			3/5	3/7	4/4	3/11	2/29	3/24	3/24	4/20
2/17	2/29	3/7			3/12	3/14	4/18	3/25	3/7	3/31	3/31	4/27
3/31	3/14											
3/31	3/21	3/21	3/21	3/17				3/25				
4/7	3/28	3/28	3/28	3/24	3/28	4/2			4/11		4/28	6/22
5/5	4/25	5/2	5/2	4/28	5/2	4/30		5/6				7/6
5/19		4/25				4/30	4/25	4/15				7/13
7/7						7/16		7/15				
5/19		4/25				4/30		5/9	4/29	6/2		7/13
6/16								7/25	6/24			
5/12	5/23	5/30	5/23	5/26	5/30	5/28	5/30	5/27	5/23	5/26		7/13
5/19		5/30				6/4	5/30	5/27		6/2		7/13
								5/13				
6/9						6/25		6/17				
6/9						6/25		6/17				
6/23							6/20					
7/7						6/25						9/14
7/14	8/15					7/23						
9/1												
9/1												
12/17						2/20	1/18		3/21			
2/18	3/7									3/17		3/30
			4/11				5/16	4/15	4/14			
	4/21					4/30						
4/28			5/9			5/14		5/30		5/19		
	5/9	5/9	5/9							5/19		
			9/5				8/15					
			9/12					9/2				
9/1	8/22		8/22	8/25	8/22	8/27		9/5				
9/1			9/12	9/15	9/12	9/10			9/9	9/5		10/19
9/15		9/26	9/26	9/29			9/26		9/23	9/29	9/29	
9/22							10/10					10/6
9/22			9/26	9/29		10/1	10/10					10/6

APPENDIX D: *Summary of weekly coverage of the Pennsylvania Farmer in fifteen newspapers, December 2, 1767 to December 2, 1768*

Symbols: F = one of the twelve Farmer's Letters.  
P = a favorable article about the Farmer.  
p = a favorable but incidental reference (excludes pamphlet ads)  
N = a negative article.  
n = a negative incidental reference.  
x = issue is missing

Week ending	Philadelphia				Boston			
	Pa. Chron.	Pa. Gaz.	Bos. Gaz.	Bos. Chron.	Eve. Post	Mass. Gaz.	Post-boy	
Dec. 4	F	F						
11	F	F						
18	FN	FP	F					
25	FP	F	F	F	F			
Jan. 1	Fp	F	F	F	F			
8	F	F		FF				
15	F	F	FF		F			
22	F	F	F	F				
29	F	Fp	F					
Feb. 5	F	F		FF				
12	F	F	F	F	F			
19	F	FP	Fp	Fp				
26			F	F				
Mar. 4			FF					
11			P	FF				
18			p			p		
25			pp		p	pP		
April 1		ppp	P	P	P	p	P	
8		PP	pp		p			
15		p			p			
22		P	PP					
29		P			PP	P		
May 6		P		P	P		p	
13		Pp	p	p	Pp			
20	PPP	PPP						
27			P		Pp	P		
June 3	p			PP			P	
10		PP						
17		nP						
24	PP	p						

Providence Gaz.	Newport Merc.	Hartford Conn. Courant	New London Gaz.	New York Merc.	Williamsburg Va. Gaz. (P. & D.)	Williamsburg Va. Gaz. (Rind)	Savannah Ga. Gaz.
				F		x	
	F			F		x	
F		F	F	F		x	
F	F	F		F		x	
	F		F		FF	x	
F		F	F	F	F	x	
F	FP	F	F	F	Fp	x	
F	FF		F	FF	F	x	F
F	FF	F	F				F
F			F	F			F
FF	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
P	F	F	F		F		
F		F	F	F	F	F	
F	F		F		F	F	
		F	F		FP	F	F
			F	P	F	F	F
			P		F	F	FF
P		F	P	p			F
			Ppp	P			F
		F			p		F
	Pp		Pp			P	Fp
PPPP			P				
		P	P				
P			PP	P	Pp		
					P		
P	PP	P			PP		
P							
			PP				
	p		P				P

(Continued)

APPENDIX D: (Continued)

Week ending	Philadelphia			Boston			
	Pa. Chron.	Pa. Gaz.	Bos. Gaz.	Bos. Chron.	Eve. Post	Mass. Gaz.	Post-boy
Friday:							
July 1							
8	pP	PP					
15	P	P					
22		p					
29	N						
Aug. 5	PNNpp						
12	pNNN						
19	NNNNP		Pp				
26	NNNP		p		p	p	p
Sept. 2	Np	PPpp					
9	PP		p		p		
16	NNp	p			Np	p	p
23	pn	pp					
30	pp			p	Nppp	ppp	
Oct. 7			p				
14	p						
21							
28							N
Nov. 4							
11			PP		P		N
18							
25							
Dec. 2			p				

Providence Gaz.	Newport Merc.	Hartford Conn. Courant	New London Gaz.	New York Merc.	Williamsburg Va. Gaz. (P. & D.)	Williamsburg Va. Gaz. (Rind)	Savannah Ga. Gaz.
PPP			P				P PPPP
P P		P	p P				
	P		p N				
P PP		p	Pp p	p P			PP
	P				p	p PP	
	P						p
			P				

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