CHAPTER SIX

Loyalist Women

A Sister’s Lament (1770)

Introduction
In a letter written from Castle William near Boston on July 25, 1770, Anne Hulton describes the violence her brother faced when “ruffians” attacked his home at midnight. Henry Hulton had arrived in Boston in 1767 as one of the commissioners of Customs in Boston, responsible for collecting the Townshend duties. Anne Hulton describes the attack as a contrived plot by designing men. She hopes the British government will intervene to protect Boston.

It is about Seven weeks ago that I did myself the pleasure of writing to Dear Mrs. Lightbody. Since that, you will have heard my Brother has been driven from his own Habitation and afterwards retired with his Family to this place [Castle William] for safety. I have often thought of what you said, that surely we did not live in a lone House. It’s true we have long been in a dangerous situation, from the State of Government. The want of protection, the perversion of the Laws, and the spirit of the People inflamed by designing men. Yet our house in the Country has been a place of retreat for many from the disturbances of the Town, and though they were become very alarming, yet we did not apprehend an immediate attack on our House, or that a Mob out of Boston should come so far, before we had notice of it, and were fully persuaded there are Persons more obnoxious than my Brother, that he had no personal Enemy, and confident of the good will of our Neighbours (in the Township we live in) towards him, so that we had no suspicion of what happened the night of June the 19th—we have reason to believe it was not the sudden outrage of a frantic
Mob, but a plot gallantly contrived to decoy My Brother into the hands of assassins. At Midnight when the Family was asleep, had not a merciful Providence prevented their designs, we had been a distress Family indeed.

Between 12 and 1 o’Clock he was wakened by a knocking at the Door. He got up, enquired the person’s name and business, who said he had a letter to deliver to him, which came Express from New York. My Brother puts on his Cloaths, takes his drawn Sword in one hand, and opened the Parlor window with the other. The Man asked for a Lodging—said he, I’ll not open my door, but give me the letter. The man then put his hand, attempting to push up the window, upon which my Brother hastily clipped it down. Instantly with a bludgeon several violent blows were struck which broke the Sash, Glass and Frame to pieces. The first blow aimed at my Brother’s Head, he Providentially escaped, by its resting on the middle frame, being double, at same time (though before then, no noise or appearance of more Persons than one) the lower windows, all round the House (excepting two) were broke in like manner. My Brother stood in amazement for a Minute or 2, and having no doubt that a number of Men had broke in on several sides of the House, he retired upstairs.

You will believe the whole Family was soon alarmed, but the horrible Noises from without, and the terrible shrieks within the House from Mrs. H. and Servants, which struck my Ears on awaking, I can’t describe, and shall never forget.

I could imagine nothing less than that the House was beating down, after many violent blows on the Walls and windows, most hideous Shouting, dreadful imprecations, and threats ensued. Struck with terror and astonishment, what to do I knew not, but got on some Cloaths, and went to Mrs. H.’s room, where I found the Family collected, a Stone thrown in at her window narrowly missed her head. When the Ruffians were retreating with loud threats and one cryl he will fire—no says another, he don’t fire, we will come again says a third—Mr. and Mrs. H. left their House immediately and have not lodged a night since in it ...

But there is no security from the violence of Lying Tongues. Can you believe it, that a person shall suffer abuse, an attack upon his House, and attempt on his Life, and afterwards the reproach of having done it himself. This is really the case, the persons who are so vile as to be at the bottom of the Mischief, have in order to remove the odium from themselves, and the Town, industriously spread this report, that Mr. H. hired people to break his own Windows, for an excuse of his removal to the Castle, and to ruin this Country.

However ridiculous this Aspersion, yet it is believed or seemingly believed by one half of the people, as we are told. But the more sensible and moderate are ashamed of the absurdity, and freely say, that this outrage against Mr. H. will hurt their Country more than anything which has been done yet. And for the honour of the Township we lived in, I must say, the principal People, have of their own accord taken up the affair very warmly, exerting their endeavors to find out the Authors, or perpetrators of the Villainy. They have produced above twenty witnesses. Men in the Neighborhood who were out a Fish¬ing that night, that prove they met upon the Road from Boston towards my Brother’s House, Parties of Men that appeared disguised, their faces blacked, with white Night caps and white Stockens on, one of ‘em with Ruffles on and all, with great clubs in their hands. They did not know any of ‘em, but one Fisherman spoke to ‘em, to be satisfied whether they were Negroes or no, and found by their Speech they were not, and they answered him very insolently. Another person who met them declares, that one of ‘em asked him the way to Mr. H.’s house, and another of ‘em said he knew the way very well. After all, you may judge how much any further discovery is likely to be made, or justice to be obtained in this Country, when I tell you that the persons who were thus active to bring the dark deed to light, were immediately stop’d and silenced, being given to understand (as I’m well informed) that if they made any further stir about the matter, they might expect to be treated in the same manner as Mr. H. was. However, so much is proved as to clear Mr. H. from the charge of doing himself the mischief, one would think.

... What Government intends doing to remedy these, We are yet stran¬gers, or whether anything effectual will be done ... If Great Britain leaves Boston to itself, though its own honour will not be maintained thereby, it will certainly be the greatest punishment that can be inflicted on the place and people, but a cruelty to some individuals, who have shewn themselves friends to Government. The Town now is in the greatest confusion, the People quarreling violently about Importation, and Exportation. . . .

Living with the British (1777)

Introduction
Born into a prestigious Philadelphia family, Elizabath Drinker married a partner of a prominent shipping and importing firm, Henry Drinker. Both she and her husband were members of the Society of Friends. She lived in Philadelphia when the British governed the city between September 1777 and June 1778. Her two journal excerpts provide a glimpse of the relations between elite wives and British officers during the occupation, and also the rebel vengeance against two of the king’s friends after the British army evacuated Philadelphia.

Ott. 11. ... S. Enden sent us word that he and ye other Friends, viz: Nicholas Waln, James Thornton, Wm Brown, Joshua Morris, and Warner Mifflin were returned from a visit to G. Washington. I apprehend they have no good news, or I think I should have heard it.