

EXCERPT: From *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume Three, 1757-1775*, pp. 337-340

For complete essay see *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume Three, 1757-1775*, pp. 337-351

EDWARD BIDDLE

(Beddell/Beedle/Bidle)

ASSEMBLY: Berks Co. 1767, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1778
Speaker: 1774

b. c. 1738, city of Phila.¹ **d.** 2 Sept. 1779. **Father:** William Biddle (d. 1756). **Mother:** Mary Scull (Biddle) (c. 1709-1789).² **m.** 1761 Elizabeth Ross; **children:** Abigail, Catherine. **Brother:** Charles Biddle.* **Brothers-in-law:** George Ross* (1730-1779), John Ross,* William Thompson,* Mark Bird.* **Nephews:** George Ross* (1752-1832), Nicholas Biddle,* Marks John Biddle,* William S. Biddle.* **Great Uncle:** Clement Plumsted.* **Grandnephew:** Craig Biddle.* **Offices:** U.S.: delegate, 1st Continental Congress, 1774; delegate, 2nd Continental Congress, 1775, 1778 (resigned); Pa.: ensign, Pa. forces, 1754; ensign, 2nd Battalion, Pa. forces, 1757-59; quartermaster, Pa. forces, 1759; lieut., Pa. forces, 1st Battalion, 1759-60; capt., Pa. forces, 2nd Battalion, 1760; delegate, 1774 Provincial Convention; delegate, 1775 Provincial Convention; member, Committee of Safety, 1775-76; Berks Co.: member, Committee of Correspondence, 1774-75; member, Committee of Observation and Inspection, 1774-76.³

Edward Biddle, a successful Philadelphia-born Anglican lawyer who settled in Reading, Berks County, served ten terms in the Assembly. In 1774 and 1775 Biddle was a Whig leader, especially notable for his role as speaker of the 1774 Assembly, but a tragic incident curtailed his public career, although he reemerged in 1778 as a leader of the nascent Republican party.

Biddle was born in the city of Philadelphia, most likely in the fall of 1738,⁴ to William Biddle and his second wife, Mary Scull Biddle, both members of prominent families. Consequently, Edward Biddle was raised in a household which had the appearance, if not the reality, of wealth and social prestige. His great-grandfather William Biddle, a Quaker shoemaker of Bishopsgate, London, England, who inherited a large fortune through his wife Sarah Smith Kemp Biddle, settled in Burlington County, West New Jersey, by 1681 and became one of that colony's leading citizens as a member of the governor's council, the assembly, and the council of proprietors.⁵ Biddle's mother, Mary Scull Biddle, was the daughter of Nicholas Scull, a cartographer, surveyor general of Pennsylvania from 1748 until his death in 1761, and an original member of Benjamin Franklin's* "Junto" who, observed Franklin, "lov'd Books, and sometimes made a few Verses." By 1721 Biddle's father had left the family manor of Mount Hope in Burlington County, New Jersey, and settled in Philadelphia where Biddle's grandfather, a gentleman and farmer with a "very large fortune," had arranged for him to be apprenticed as a merchant.⁶ Although he qualified for the title of gentleman, Biddle's father subsequently attempted to make his own mark as a vintner, merchant, and shopkeeper.⁷ He also probably was the William Biddle who served as the city jailor for almost two decades and who lost two elections for sheriff.⁸

Biddle's brother Charles* recalled that their father "was unfortunate from his first entering into business." Shortly after his April 1730 marriage⁹ to Mary Scull at Christ Church, William Biddle was encumbered with a large debt after he posted bail for an imprisoned debtor named Turner. After he learned that Turner planned to abscond, Biddle's father, "a man of uncommon strength," broke down Turner's door and tried to apprehend him, but "the villain wounded him with a cutlass in the right arm in such a manner that it was almost useless the remainder of his life." After the death of Biddle's paternal grandfather about 1743, the family's fortunes appear to have been recouped by the receipt of a large inheritance, but several years

later William Biddle told his stunned wife that he had “ruined” her and their nine children, apparently as a result of gambling. After selling the family estate in New Jersey for £2,000, however, Biddle’s father settled his debts and then entered into a mercantile partnership with a fellow named Jacobs, who allegedly possessed “a great fortune,” but who went bankrupt one year later, whereby Biddle’s hapless father was forced to pay his partner’s £1,400 in debts. “We had very little left,” recounted Biddle’s mother. Charles Biddle observed that his father’s temper “became soured by his misfortunes, which at last he sank under.” By 1754 William Biddle was bankrupt.¹⁰

Prior to his father’s bankruptcy, Biddle was among the earliest students of the College, Academy, and Charitable Schools located in Philadelphia, having been entered by his father in 1751. He clearly did well, for on 15 November 1752, in response to a request from the English master, David James Dove, for “two of the most capable Boys in his School to assist him in teaching the Younger Scholars,” Biddle was named by the trustees as one of the two boys, for which he received a stipend of \$20. During the year of his father’s bankruptcy, the 16-year-old Biddle enlisted as an ensign in the Pennsylvania forces; his brothers Charles and Nicholas, at about the age of 14 years, went to sea. Undoubtedly Biddle wanted to escape a troubled family situation, but probably, like his brothers, he also left in pursuit of adventure. Faced with adversity, Biddle’s mother displayed much the same versatility and love of learning as her father. She supported herself and her family as keeper of the Fountain Tavern, as a caterer, and, together with Matthew Clarkson, as an editor and seller of fine prints of her father’s maps of Philadelphia and vicinity and of Pennsylvania. Apparently for her own satisfaction, she wrote poetry, which remained unpublished.¹¹

Little has been found on Biddle’s initial military service during the French and Indian War, except that he served as an ensign in the Pennsylvania forces under Lieutenant Colonel Conrad Weiser. On 17 November 1755 his father provided Governor Robert Hunter Morris and the Provincial Council with a letter from the younger Biddle, then at Reading, in Berks County, warning of a potential Indian attack. “I’m in so much horror and Confusion,” he wrote, “I scarce know what I am writing. The Drum is beating to Arms and Bells ringing & all the people under Arms. . . . This night we expect an attack, truly alarming is our situation. The people,” he continued, “exclaim against the Quakers & some are scarce restrained from burning the Houses of those few who are in This Town. Oh my Country, my bleeding Country. I recommend myself,” he concluded, “to the divine God of Armies.”¹²

Biddle presumably remained active during military campaigns in 1755 and 1756 and probably stayed at Reading between them. By June 1757 he was serving as an ensign in the Second Battalion of Pennsylvania forces at Fort Augusta. On 1 July he received permission from Major James Burd to travel to Reading to bring his own baggage and that of another officer to the fort. However, at Reading he was ordered by Weiser, who happened to be there, to accompany him to the treaty at Easton, at the end of which he was posted to the Fort on the North Kill, in Berks County. From at least the late fall of 1757 until mid-February 1758 he was stationed east of the Susquehanna River at Fort Henry.¹³ By August 1758 Biddle was posted to the encampment at Rea’s Town¹⁴ (Bedford) where his duties included collecting the flour bags for mending.¹⁵

On 1 February 1759 Biddle was commissioned lieutenant of the First battalion of the Pennsylvania forces under Colonel Commandant John Armstrong*; he was also serving as quartermaster by 5 August 1759, on which date he wrote from Fort Ligonier thanking Colonel Commandant James Burd for having procured that position for him, but reporting also that he was unable to locate Burd’s tent and baggage, except for “a Tea Kettle,” and that the baggage of two other officers had been either “destroy’d” or “entirely lost.” While unable to assign fault, Biddle lamented “the Destruction made of the Gentlemens Baggage.”¹⁶

About July 1759 Biddle had quarreled with a British colonel, Adam Stephens, who claimed that Biddle had “wantonly Confind” James Given, the commissary at Fort Ligonier, seemingly without cause. At Stephen’s request several British officers informed Biddle “of his mistake”; he, in turn, “with a great deal of Stubbornness, confind him [Given] the second time & threatened” to put him in irons. After Given subsequently refused to act as commissary until Biddle was punished to his satisfaction, Stephen placed Biddle under arrest, insisting that he was better off without Biddle than he would be without so “Usefull a publick Officer as the Commissary.”¹⁷ Presumably tempers eased, for nothing further has been found of the incident.

On 24 April 1760 Biddle, then about 21 years old, was commissioned captain of a company in the Second Battalion under Colonel Commandant Hugh Mercer. On 17 July 1760 Biddle and his company were among the 150 Pennsylvanians who arrived with Mercer at the fort at Presque Isle to join the Virginia forces and

four companies of Royal Americans under the British commander, Colonel Henry Bouquet. On 21 July Biddle with a small party under his command explored the peninsula by whaleboat, reporting on his return the next day that he had found the peninsula “very Swampy,” with “bad Timber, tolerable grass” and “an old Canoe but no Enemies.” At Bouquet’s request Biddle sent seven men to bring the canoe to the fort. Only two of the men returned, their comrades having apparently been killed or captured after having been “fired upon by a Party of 20 Indians.”¹⁸ On 14 October 1760 Biddle reported from Presque Isle that allegedly a “small Party of the Enemy” had been in the vicinity intending to capture or scalp soldiers, but Biddle was unruffled. “[T]hey’ll find it difficult to accomplish their Ends,” he boasted. Most likely, Biddle was present at the capture of Fort Niagara.¹⁹

In 1763 Charles Biddle met several British officers who “expressed a great esteem” for his brother, having served with him during the French and Indian War. How often Edward Biddle participated in battles and skirmishes with enemy Indians during the war has not been found. Yet his provincial wartime service was not wholly military in nature, involving also diplomatic efforts to restore peace with the Indians. As noted, Biddle had accompanied his commanding officer, Conrad Weiser, to the treaty at Easton in late July 1757. On 27 July Biddle and Daniel Brodhead certified that they had witnessed William Marshall blame the proprietors for cheating the Indians “out of their Lands, and that He would prove it.” After the mid-February 1759 meetings held in Philadelphia between five Indian messengers from the Ohio Valley and Governor William Denny and the Provincial Council, Biddle was ordered to conduct the Indians safely to Fort Pitt. He left on his journey with two of the Indians, the other three having decided to remain in town in order to meet with General Jeffery Amherst when he arrived. In his autobiography Charles Biddle recalled that his brother, “who had been a considerable time among the Indians, had a very good opinion of them. When they promise you their protection,” he continued, “they will suffer any death to prevent your being injured.” Of course the death may be that of the person to be protected. During the French and Indian War Edward Biddle, “dressed and painted as an Indian,” was dispatched on a spying mission with “an Indian warrior,” and at one point was in danger of being captured. “The chief told him,” Charles Biddle recounted, “with every token of regard, ‘not to be the least uneasy about being tortured, for the moment you are taken, I will tomahawk you.’” Edward Biddle apparently shared his brother’s conviction that atrocities committed by the Indians were generally in retribution for an equivalent atrocity “committed by the whites.”²⁰

On 26 June 1761 Biddle married Elizabeth Ross, daughter of George Ross (d. 1753), formerly the rector of Emmanuel Church in New Castle, Delaware. His marriage provided links to a number of influential Pennsylvanians, some of whom must have assisted Biddle in establishing himself in law and politics. His brothers-in-law included the successful lawyers John Ross* and George Ross* (1730-1779), of the city of Philadelphia and Lancaster County, respectively; the military officer, trader, and surveyor William Thompson,* of Cumberland County; and the ironmaster of Hopewell Furnace, Mark Bird.* On his mother’s side Biddle was already related to notable officeholders such as his uncle Jasper Scull in Northampton and Berks counties, and (most significantly) his grandfather Nicholas Scull.²¹

By 1761 Biddle had begun his career as a Reading lawyer, although not until 11 April 1765 was he admitted to practice before the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. As an attorney Biddle was pursuing one of the paths open to an ambitious young man like himself, who had talent and some valuable connections but no substantial inheritance; his brothers-in-law John Ross and George Ross appear to have been in the same situation.²² More than likely, Biddle received his legal training, or at least vital support and encouragement, from James Read,* a prominent Berks County lawyer who had known him since infancy and would many years later write a glowing obituary notice on Biddle’s death, in which he would praise him as “that great Lawyer.” Read was Berks County’s chief officeholder, as prothonotary, clerk of the quarter sessions, recorder of deeds, and register of wills, and his probable support for Biddle doubtless helped the latter thrive as a Berks County lawyer. Read certainly counted Biddle among his friends.²³ Moreover, Biddle was probably encouraged by his older brother James, a lawyer who moved from Reading to Philadelphia about 1760 after being appointed deputy prothonotary. As a lawyer Biddle frequently represented plaintiffs in debt cases and property disputes. By 1774 his law practice was lucrative, according to his brother Charles. Biddle’s professional success was reflected in the tax rolls. In the provincial tax assessments for the town of Reading in 1768 and 1773, Biddle rose from receiving the eighth-highest assessment, placing him in the 97th percentile among the taxpayers for the town, to the second-highest assessment, placing him in the 99th percentile, in which assessment he was rated for his occupation, his house and lot, and his ownership of a Black slave and

four head of livestock.²⁴

Biddle may have rented his residence in Reading prior to his acquisition from the proprietary in 1765 of a lot (subject to an £8 sterling groundrent) on the southeast corner of Penn and Callowhill streets in the town, which property became his new residence. By 1771 Biddle stood very much in need of the assistance of an experienced gardener, according to James Read, as he not only had a garden behind his residence but also “a small House, Garden, Orchard and Meadow near the Town.”²⁵ In 1777 Biddle sold his house and lot in Reading for £1,800; the following year he purchased a stone house and lot on the north side of Penn Street for £1,350, to which property he moved.²⁶

Biddle also became the owner of a substantial amount of frontier land. As a result of the Proclamation of 1763, lands in the Ohio Valley and what became Kentucky, although claimed by Virginia, were promised to colonists who had fought with the British Army during the French and Indian War and its aftermath. Officers were rewarded with a proportionate share of land according to their rank; having mustered out as a captain, Biddle reportedly received between 2,000 and 3,000 acres, which he sold in the fall of 1773; the following February he was rumored to have purchased a share or two of the land of other officers. The extent of Biddle’s ownership of those remote lands has not been found. In 1772 Biddle and two Reading businessmen invested in frontier lands closer to home, acquiring 2,939½ acres in Berks County, 1,991½ acres along Little Fishing Creek in Northampton County, and a 5,136½-acre tract (already surveyed into 17 properties), which lay along Little Fishing Creek in both Berks and Northampton counties. After the creation in 1772 of Northumberland County, 800 acres of the partnership’s holdings were determined to lay within the new county’s limits.²⁷ By 1777 Biddle had also acquired a 150-acre plantation in Lower Smithfield Township, Northampton County, and 450 acres in Northumberland County, including a 300-acre property that he held jointly with his brother James.²⁸

Biddle attended St. Mary’s Anglican Church in Reading. On 12 June 1765, joining with a fellow churchwarden and three vestrymen, Biddle informed the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel of their congregation’s progress, including having raised £200 by subscription and having successfully petitioned the legislature for inclusion in an act establishing a lottery intended to aid several Anglican churches, the proceeds from which would enable St. Mary’s congregation to build a new church in Reading. They also asked the society for a £50 sterling annual salary for their minister Alexander Murray. In 1772 Murray observed that the congregation continued “orderly and quiet, amidst the clamor & noise . . . of the German colonists.” Biddle remained one of the lay leaders of the politically influential, predominantly English congregation.²⁹

In 1764 Biddle had joined with a great many other inhabitants of Reading in petitioning Governor John Penn for a charter of incorporation, permitting the town to hold public markets weekly and fairs semiannually, in order to increase the “Number of Inhabitants, bring More Wealth, and render the Town of Reading more happy.” Penn granted the request, strengthening the proprietary interest in Reading and ironically helping (according to Penn) to defeat Biddle’s brother-in-law John Ross in the election to the 1765 Assembly. A resident of Philadelphia but also a significant landowner in Berks County, Ross warmly supported the Quaker party’s campaign for royal government during his terms as Berks County’s representative in the Assembly from 1762 to 1764. That campaign proved to be unpopular in Berks County; thus Ross was defeated by Adam Witman,* of Reading, a prosperous Lutheran merchant opposed to royal government. In October 1767 Biddle himself was elected to the first of his nine consecutive terms in the Assembly, replacing Witman, who reportedly chose not to run for reelection. In all likelihood, Biddle (like Ross previously) had the support of Reading’s small but influential Anglican community, but did not carry the stigma of being closely identified with the Quaker party, making him more broadly acceptable than his brother-in-law. Perhaps of some assistance to Biddle, his brother James had been an active supporter of the proprietary party in Philadelphia.³⁰

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1. PENPAC, 9 Sept. 1779 (which identifies Biddle as being in his 41st year, thus 40 years old); Biddle, *Autobiography*, 3

(where his mother claimed that Edward Biddle was 16 years old when he enlisted in the Pa. forces in 1754); PA, 2nd ser., 2:516-17. More than likely, if the above sources are correct, Biddle was born between 3 Sept. 1738 and the end of that year.

2. Biddle, *Autobiography*, 240, where he notes that his mother died in her 81st year, that is, aged 80 years. In her obituary, she is described as being in her 80th year, that is, 79 years old (PAG, 20 May 1789; PENPAC, 16 May 1789). Unfortunately, contemporaries sometimes used the phrase “in her/his [blank] year” both as a precise statement of age in years or as a statement of years lived (thus counting the first year of life as one year). The editors have assumed she was 80 years old when she died.

3. PENPAC, 9 Sept. 1779; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 3, 225, 241-42, 330-31, 340-47; Read, *Rossiana*, 163; BECEF, Edward Biddle, 1779; PGM, 9:48, 192-93; JLCHS, 1:390-91; Brunhouse, 19, 90; Montgomery, *Revolution*, 212-14; DAB, “Nicholas Biddle” (1786-1844); GBFP; Ousterhout, *Opposition*, 70-72; Ryerson, *Revolution*, 57-62; PA, 1st ser., 3:337, 353, 2nd ser., 2:516-17, 543, 558-59, 562, 605-7, 3:548, 675, 677, 682, 5th ser., 1:313-14; SHP, 4:107; PAG, 6, 27 July, 14 Dec. 1774, 11 Jan. 1775, 7 Feb. 1776; MPC, 8:269-71; PMHB, 1:101, 21:145n, 50:94-95; *Minutes*, 3:17; PENPAC, 24 Nov. 1778; Brunhouse, 56, 247n; *Votes*, 6:519-21, 555, 602, 644, 739-40; LDC, 1:xxx, 2:xx, 4:xix; JCC, 2:12, 17; Biddle, “Notes,” 366, 368, 370-71.

4. For more on Biddle’s birthdate, see n. 1, above.

5. Biddle’s great-grandfather was one of the signers in 1676 of the Concessions and Agreements, the innovative political document for dividing the land and establishing the colony of West New Jersey. He was also a prominent Quaker; from 1686 to 1692 Burlington Quarterly Meeting regularly met at his home, and on 15 occasions he was sent as a representative of the quarterly meeting to Phila. Yearly Meeting between 1688 and 1707 (BUMM, 15 Sept. 1681-1 Aug. 1692 passim; PHYM, 5 Sept. 1688-23 Sept. 1707 passim; PMHB, 7:263-64, 357-58, 367).

6. The baptism on 17 Aug. 1721 of William Biddle’s son Michael by his first wife Anne was recorded by Christ Church. In a 1722 deed Biddle’s father is identified as a merchant of Phila. Anne Biddle died in 1729. The merchant to whom William Biddle was apprenticed may have been Thomas Griffiths, a prominent Phila. politician and merchant (Biddle, *Autobiography*, 1, who identifies him simply as “Mr. Griffiths, at that time one of the first merchants in America”).

7. Biddle’s father is occasionally referred to as William Biddle, “Gentleman,” in the records.

8. PENPAC, 9 Sept. 1779; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 1-4, 242-44; PA, 2nd ser., 2:516-17; PWP, 1:387-88, 407, 2:392n, 3:138, 141n, 4:273; PGM, 19:73-90, 127-29; Biddle, “Notes,” 362-65, 378-89; PAG, 24 Dec. 1761; PHWF, 1762, #224; PMHB, 14:380, 73:16-25, 82-83, 18:496-97; Franklin, *Autobiography*, 117, 297; PHDBk. H, 9:458; CRWNJ, D, 36, 76, DD, 158, 172, 311, EF, 463, S:217; LP, 18:24; MPPC, 1:89; SOCC, Richard Sewell, 2 Oct. 1749; RCC; *Votes*, 3:189, 304, 311-12, 314, 4:21, 46; *Hannah Logan’s Courtship*, 297. In light of the close connection between the Biddle and Scull families, and Nicholas Scull’s service as sheriff (1744-46), the William Biddle who was the jailkeeper and candidate for sheriff likely was Biddle’s father.

9. His first wife, Anne, had died in Nov. 1729 (RCC).

10. RCC; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 1-3; PGM, 19:83; Biddle, “Notes,” 365-67; CRWNJ, Q, 283; PAG, 8 Aug. 1754. Mary Scull Biddle’s letter to her granddaughter Catherine Biddle Lux, reprinted in Charles Biddle’s *Autobiography*, clearly infers that her husband acquired large debts by falling “prey to gamblers.” In warning her daughter against allowing her husband George Lux to use her resources to pay his gambling debts, she then related her husband’s difficulties about 1749 as a parallel experience.

11. Montgomery, *University*, 143; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 3, 5-6, 108; PAG, 6 March 1753, 20 May, 11 Nov. 1762, 10 March 1763, 1 Aug. 1765; PMHB, 9:358, 10:476, 82:386n, 101:85; PA, 1st ser., 3:559; Biddle, “Notes,” 385-86. The Fountain Tavern was conveniently located on Market St. near the London Coffee House. During his lifetime Nicholas Scull sold his maps as well as George Heap’s map of Phila. (see PAG, 4 June, 16 July, 28 Sept. 1752, 21 Nov. 1754, 18 March 1755, 14 April 1757; PMHB, 73:16-25, 82-83). In her later years, Biddle’s mother received generous financial help from her sons (see Biddle, *Autobiography*, 3, 240-41). For her obituary, see PAG, 20 May 1789.

12. PA, 2nd ser., 2:516-17; MPC, 6:702-5.

13. On 3 Dec. 1757 Biddle was recommissioned as an ensign.

14. Also known as Raystown.

15. SHP, Biddle to Burd, 12 Sept. 1757; BUSP, Clayton return from Ft. Augusta, 1 Sept. 1757; PHB, 2:669; DCOBR, Biddle to Weiser, 22 Nov. 1757; PA, 1st ser., 3:340, 353, 2nd ser., 2:543.

16. SHP, 4:107; PA, 2nd ser., 2:558.

17. PHB, 3:427-28.

18. Two of the men were killed and scalped, two were believed captured, and the sergeant was “wounded with Seven Buck Shots but Without danger for his life.”

19. PA, 1st ser., 5:313-14, 2nd ser., 2:605-7, 5th ser., 1:313-14; PHB, 4:669-70; PAG, 24 July 1760; DCOBR, Biddle to Burd, 14 Oct. 1760; PMHB, 1:101.

20. Biddle, *Autobiography*, 9-10, 144n, 145n; SHP, Biddle to Burd, 12 Sept. 1757; MPC, 7:649-94, 8:270-71; PA, 1st ser., 3:244.

21. Read, *Rossiana*, 159-65; PGM, 9:192-93; PMHB, 50:94-95; JLCHS, 1:390-91; Montgomery, *Revolution*, 212-14; Biddle, “Notes,” 378-86, 389; DAB, “John Scull.” See the essays on George Ross* (1730-1779), John Ross,* and William Thompson* in this volume.

22. See the essays on George Ross and John Ross in this volume.

23. On 16 Nov. 1774, evidently to celebrate the appointment of Edward Burd as clerk of the Berks Co. courts, Read invited Biddle and Burd to join him at his house in “the Pleasure of dusting a Bottle of excellent Madeira” (SHP, 7:105).
24. *MBòB*, 248; *LP*, 14:59, 61, 72; *PMHB*, 1:71, 26:340; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 74, 126-27, 236n, 241; *PENPAC*, 9 Sept. 1779; Franklin, *Autobiography*, 295-96; *SHP*, 7:53, 55, 103, 105, 115; Guenther, “Berks County,” 70-72; *JRP*, Biddle to Read, 27 March 1764; *STAC*, 7:525; *HCC*, Edward Biddle, 1763 legal docs.; *BECOC*, 8 Sept. 1766, 25 March 1769; *ETPMC*, 11:13; *PAG*, 1 May 1766; *GROC*, Biddle to Duncan and Morris, 17 May, 10 July 1766; *GRPC*, Biddle to Duncan and Morris, 10 July 1766; *BECTEL*, Reading, 1767, 1768; *BECTL*, Reading, 1773.
25. The deed has not been found for his country retreat.
26. *BECDBk. A*, 8:444, 11:543, 12:370; *SHP*, 7:53, 55; *BECEF*, Edward Biddle, 1779. He purchased his new residence, which was subject to a 7-shilling proprietary quitrent, from his friend Dr. Jonathan Potts.*
27. On a few occasions Biddle also bought properties in Berks Co. which he sold within a few years for a modest profit (see *BECDBk. A*, 8:43, *B*, 1:118, 121, 220-21, 411, 2:373-74).
28. *PA*, 1st ser., 4:335-36; *SHP*, 7:79; *BECDBk. B*, 1:165, 172, 174, 178, 180, 182, 184; *NORCDBk. A*, 385, *F*, 1:679; *NDBk. C*, 354, *E*, 391. See also the essay on William Thompson in this volume.
29. Keim, “Church”; Perry, *Pennsylvania*, 384-86; Guenther, “Berks County,” 70-72. Other lay leaders included James Read,* Berks Co.’s chief officeholder, and Mark Bird,* Biddle’s brother-in-law. Various church documents, according to Keim, were found among Biddle’s papers, suggesting his central place in the congregation.
30. *PPAP*, 70; *Franklin and Galloway*, 121; *Electors*; Biddle, *Autobiography*, 3, 5, 236n. See also the essays on Adam Witman* and John Ross in this volume.