

EXCERPT: From *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume Three, 1757-1775*, pp. 662-667

For complete essay see *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume Three, 1757-1775*, pp. 662-681

MICHAEL HILLEGAS

(Helligas/Hellingas/Hillengas)

ASSEMBLY: Philadelphia Co., 1765, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1774, 1775

b. possibly 22 May 1729, Phila., Pa.¹ **d.** 29 Sept. 1804.² **Father:** Georg Michael Hillegas (1696-1749). **Mother:** Margarette/Margaret Schiebenstock (Hillegas) (1705-1770). **m.** 1753 Henrietta Boude (1732-1792); **children:** Samuel, m. Mary Milnor, granddaughter of Joseph Kirkbride* (1662-1738); Michael; William; Margaret; Deborah (d. 1770); Henrietta; Susanna; Henry; Deborah (b. 1772); Mary Ann. **Offices:** U.S.: superintendent of the press, 1775-76; treasurer, 1775-89³; Pa.: statehouse trustee, 1767; Province Island commissioner, 1767-80; Skippack Bridge commissioner, 1765-71; river commissioner, 1771; provincial commissioner, 1771-74; treasurer, Committee of Safety, 1775-76⁴; member, Committee of Safety, 1776; provincial treasurer, 1776; state treasurer, 1776-77; superintendent, reprinting of Revolutionary War documents, 1781-82; commissioner for the sale of the Northern Liberties barracks, 1784-91; road lottery manager, 1784-85; superintendent, canal lottery drawing, 1795; Phila. Co.: tax assessor, 1759-61; commissioner, 1761-64; member, Committee of Correspondence, 1774; city of Phila.: member, Committee of Correspondence, 1774; alderman and associate justice of the mayor's court, 1792-1804⁵; justice, aldermen's court, 1792, 1794, 1796, 1799, 1801.⁶

Michael Hillegas, an accomplished musician and a musical instrument retailer, land speculator, and public-spirited Quaker party politician, served 11 consecutive, active Assembly terms. However, he is best known for his lengthy tenure as first treasurer of the United States.

Hillegas was born probably in April or May 1729 in Philadelphia, the first of at least five children of Georg Michael Hillegas and Margaret Schiebenstock Hillegas.⁷ Hillegas' father had been born in 1696 in or near Sinsheim in the Palatinate⁸ and may have immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1722 with his brother Jörg Peter Hillegas, who had signed that year a transportation contract for 40 passengers, probably including both of them, to travel to Pennsylvania on the ship *Greyhound*. In any case by 1728 both brothers were members of a German Reformed congregation in Philadelphia County.⁹ Georg Michael Hillegas married Margaretta, or Margaret, Schiebenstock soon after that date and established himself in the city of Philadelphia, first as a potter and later as an innholder and shopkeeper. He acquired substantial property in the city, the Northern Liberties, Germantown, and Bucks County. Having taken the oath of allegiance in April 1749, the elder Hillegas died intestate in October 1749, survived by his widow, son Michael, and two daughters.¹⁰

Michael Hillegas was 20 years old at the time of his father's death. In February 1750 he and his sisters, all minors, petitioned the Philadelphia County Orphans Court for guardians; William Clymer* was appointed for Hillegas and his sister Susanna, and Thomas Boude for Mary. Hillegas' mother, in May 1750, agreed to accept a £100 annuity and use of the family home for life in exchange for being "eased of the Burden" of administering her late husband's estate. Two months later, Hillegas and his sisters petitioned the orphans court for the partition of their father's estate. The five men appointed by the court, including Joseph Fox* and Abel James,* finalized the division of real property on 1 November 1750, although the partition was not presented to the court until May 1752, when it was confirmed. The real property, which was considerable, was divided into four equal parts, of which Hillegas received half.¹¹ Such a substantial inheritance facilitated his future prosperity.

On 10 May 1753 at Christ Church, the foremost Anglican church in Pennsylvania, Hillegas married

Henrietta Boude, daughter of Deborah Coxe Boude Connolly Elwes and the long-deceased Samuel Boude. Hillegas' parents must have left the German Reformed church for the Anglican church by 1742, in which year their son Frederick was buried in the Christ Church cemetery. In 1749 Hillegas' father had also been buried there and Hillegas was associated with the Anglican church all of his adult life.¹² In 1764 he was one of eight men named as trustees for a lot in the Northern Liberties acquired for the erection of an Anglican church. He remained a trustee of the property until 1800 when he and the remaining two trustees transferred the property to the rector, wardens, and vestrymen of Christ Church and St. Peter's. Hillegas also served as a vestryman for Christ Church in 1772 and 1773, occasionally assisting the congregation in financial matters. In 1773 he sold tickets to a lottery designed to raise funds for the provision of "places of worship" for Anglicans living in the northern part of the city of Philadelphia and in the Northern Liberties. During the Revolution, Christ Church invested a £500 bequest with Hillegas; he returned the principal in 1779 with interest and a "gratuity" of £100.¹³

After his father's death Hillegas had quickly assumed control of his father's mercantile affairs, advertising for sale in February 1750 "a choice parcel of copper stills, rifles, and sundry sorts of goods." At the end of that year he offered for rent one of the properties he had inherited from his father, a house with stables, formerly an inn, on Second Street between Sassafras and Mulberry streets. In 1754 Hillegas became a part-owner of the ship *Henrietta*, presumably named for his wife, and in the following year of the sloop *Susanna*, possibly named for his sister. In both cases one of the other three owners was Henry Elwes, either his stepfather-in-law or stepbrother-in-law.¹⁴ Hillegas advertised for freight or passage in both the coasting and transatlantic trade in 1754; the *Henrietta* returned from Europe in October 1754 carrying German immigrants. In 1756 he also owned part of a brigantine, the *Hawk*.¹⁵ Whether Hillegas continued as a ship-owner after 1756 is not known.¹⁶ He also owned a wharf near the public landings in the Northern Liberties on which he rented out space in 1754 and 1774; whether that was the wharf he partly owned in 1798 is unknown.¹⁷

Hillegas soon established himself in one of the Second Street properties¹⁸ that he had inherited from his father, advertising for sale in 1753 both copper stills and "an excellent good chamber organ, suitable for a gentleman in his house, or a country church."¹⁹ By the end of 1759 Hillegas, a violinist himself,²⁰ had expanded his business to offer for sale violins, a violoncello, a harpsichord, and German flutes, as well as instruction books, violin strings, and a "large Assortment of Music of the best Masters" for various instruments. He owned the first business devoted to musical instruments and printed music in Philadelphia and is credited with having had the first such store anywhere in the American colonies. Whether he indeed owned the first store or not, he was definitely a leader in the developing musical life of colonial Philadelphia. Soon after his initial advertisements of music and instruments, musical benefits were held to raise funds to purchase organs for both the "College Hall" in Philadelphia and St. Peter's Anglican Church; a subscription was offered to print a new book of psalm tunes and anthems, described as "the first Attempt of the Kind to spread the Art of Psalmody, in its Perfection," throughout the "American Colonies"²¹; and, beginning in 1760, commencements at the college in Philadelphia regularly featured music performed by "the Charity Boys" or others, with the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) following suit. Schools to teach music also began to appear in Philadelphia, providing additional customers for Hillegas' musical wares. His monopoly on the music market did not last long, however, as at least one bookseller, James Rivington, in 1761 began selling printed music as well as guitars, violins, and flutes. Hillegas may have been one of the "Gentlemen" of Philadelphia who performed in musical benefits in the 1760s as he was known to have performed in public during the 1770s. By 1764 he had significantly expanded his instrumental and musical offerings, which were imported from England.²² In addition to an astonishing selection of printed music, he sold "a very large variety of Violins . . . Spinetts, Violoncellos, . . . Kitts, Violin d'Amours, Psalters, Guittars, . . . German Flutes, Common Flutes, Hautboys, Clarinets," and even a "Welch Harp," as well as the necessary paraphernalia required by musicians (mutes, reeds, strings, bows, and ruled paper). He continued to advertise musical merchandise for sale through 1776.²³

At his Second Street location Hillegas also sold stoves, linseed oil, shingles, some dry goods, spices, and paper.²⁴ In 1769 he served as Philadelphia sales agent for Henry Stiegel, the ironmaster of Elizabeth Furnace in Lancaster County. Hillegas took custom orders in Philadelphia and forwarded them to the Lancaster furnace "with dispatch."²⁵ His connection with Stiegel may have interested Hillegas in iron manufacture, as he became a part-owner of the Martic Furnace and Forge, in Lancaster County,²⁶ in 1774 when he purchased a one-eighth share for £625.²⁷ He acquired an additional one-quarter share for £375 in 1777, taking advantage of

war-time inflation, and later made two other purchases, all three in equal shares with Matthias Slough* and George Ege*; together they owned 63 percent (15/24ths) of the forge. Hillegas and his partners also took advantage of another benefit of the war—free labor. In 1780 they used German prisoners of war at the forge; a worried Hillegas warned Slough that the escape of any of those Germans would “give great uneasiness with the Board of War.”²⁸ Hillegas had reason to worry as he had given an extremely high bond guaranteeing the return of the prisoners. When Slough became bankrupt in 1787, his undivided share was released by Hillegas to Slough’s assignees; Hillegas sold his own remaining interests in the enterprise in 1793 to ironmasters Robert Coleman* and Ege for £1,400.²⁹ The net gain or loss Hillegas experienced through his investment in the Martic property cannot be determined because his total investment is not known.

Hillegas’ economic standing, initially favorable, rose over his lifetime. In 1756 his tax assessment placed him in the 98th percentile of Mulberry Ward’s 500 taxables. In 1767 he was assessed on his house, his plantation at Point-No-Point, 10 acres of land in Germantown, and a vacant lot, as well as the income from two groundrents, and rents from properties in Mulberry Ward and the Northern Liberties.³⁰ In 1769 he was assessed at £140 and in 1774 at £161, both figures well above the average assessment for those Philadelphia County taxpayers who were to become supporters of the Revolution, whose average assessment in those two tax lists was £56. Only future Tories, whose average assessment was £147 in 1769 and £178 in 1774, approached or exceeded Hillegas’ assessment level in those years.³¹

Hillegas husbanded the real estate he had inherited from his father, selling some of it over the course of his life and leaving the rest to his heirs. His share of his father’s estate had consisted in Philadelphia of three lots on Second Street, a Delaware River water lot, and a lot on Queen Street; in Germantown of 10 acres; in the Northern Liberties of two tracts totaling 86 acres; elsewhere in Philadelphia County of 100 acres; in Bucks County of 68 acres; and in Lancaster Borough of one lot. He also inherited an annuity of £3 3s. In 1751 Hillegas sold the 100-acre tract in Philadelphia County, and soon thereafter sold a smaller lot taken out of one of the large Second Street lots. In 1760 for £117 10s he sold the Lancaster Borough lot that his father had bought for £70 in 1749, although whether the property had been improved is unclear.³² Over time Hillegas also sold the small tracts he had inherited totaling almost 18 acres in the Northern Liberties and 10 acres in Germantown for a total of £700. The 68½-acre plantation on the Delaware River that he inherited was probably the same plantation at Point-No-Point that he owned in 1764. He retained one of his inherited Second Street lots until 1782 when he sold it for £1,200.³³

Hillegas engaged in a significant amount of land speculation beginning in 1754 when he acquired a lot in the city of Philadelphia between Front and Second streets, adjacent to a lot he already owned.³⁴ Following his father’s lead in investing in Northern Liberties property,³⁵ he purchased 11 lots and 2 houses on Front, Second, and Third streets in that area from 1767 to 1779 for a total cost of £1,080 and 84 pieces of eight. While some of those lots were subsequently sold during his life, he still owned some Northern Liberties property at his death. In addition to investing in real estate there, Hillegas entered into two contracts with other Northern Liberties landowners designed to aid the development of their district by creating new streets to improve access to the lots, thereby increasing their value.³⁶

In the 1760s Hillegas and his wife’s stepfather, Henry Elwes, advertised small tracts of land in Passyunk Township for sale or lease. Those tracts that remained unsold were seized by the sheriff in the mid-1770s and sold to cover Elwes’ debts. For £2,093 Hillegas purchased six of those tracts totaling 87 acres. He sold two parts of one of the tracts for a total of £1,170 a few years later. The disposition of the remainder is unknown, although they might have included the Passyunk Township property still in his estate at his death. In 1784 he purchased lot 42 and in 1789 lots 18, 24, and 36 of the 82 lots he and Tench Francis had offered at public sale in 1784, on behalf of the Commonwealth, of the former barracks ground in the Northern Liberties.³⁷ He sold one of those lots in 1791, another in 1801, and a third in 1802; the disposition of the fourth lot has not been found. His last known real estate investment occurred in 1798 when he acquired, for 800 silver dollars, a large lot on the 500 block of Pine Street, which he then divided into eight smaller lots that he sold in 1804 for a total of \$4,776.³⁸

On occasion Hillegas also speculated in real property with partners, as for example the 600-acre tract he purchased with fellow merchant Jacob Winey in 1764 in Chester County for a total price of £2,400. The two partners sold 454 acres of that tract in 1764 and 1768 for a total of £2,225; the disposition of the remaining 146 acres is unknown. In 1776, with merchant Matthew Clarkson and carpenter Edward Bonsall, Hillegas made two purchases of Northern Liberties property, including the Glass House lot on Front Street³⁹ and eight

groundrents; they sold the groundrents for £1,387 in 1779. In the 1780s for £561 Hillegas and Clarkson acquired the other one-third share of the Glass House lot. In 1797 Hillegas and Clarkson purchased a large water lot in the Northern Liberties for \$800 and a groundrent of \$80. As late as 1828 Hillegas' executors sold 22 lots and groundrents held as tenants in common with Clarkson, indicating that at least some of their lands had been split into smaller lots for sale. Hillegas also owned land with the Reverend William Smith, the controversial Anglican minister. In 1787 a tract they owned, "on the waters of Cowanshanock," had to be resurveyed because of allegations that some or all of the warrants had been executed on lands not described in the warrants.⁴⁰

Hillegas also speculated on real estate in the frontier counties. In the fall of 1776, for £293, he patented 21 tracts in Bedford (now Somerset) County totaling 5,247 acres, having purchased the rights from the original warrant holders in January 1775. Those tracts remained in his estate at his death; thus his executors sold 5,117½ acres in Somerset County from 1806 through 1834 for £713 and \$12,938. In 1775 and 1776 Hillegas also purchased the rights to seven other warrants for another 1,600 acres to be surveyed in Bedford County. Somerset County was established out of the western portion of Bedford County in 1795 and to ensure his right to the warrants Hillegas had the purchases recorded in Somerset County in 1800, but the ultimate disposition of those tracts is unknown. He also purchased another warrant for 300 acres on Middle Creek in 1779, the disposition of which is unknown, and a tract of 310 acres in Somerset Township in 1783, which his executors sold in 1809 for \$950.⁴¹

In 1779 and 1780 Hillegas purchased fourteen tracts in Bedford County containing 3,999 acres and nine tracts in Northumberland County containing 2,770 acres for a total inflated cost of £16,075. He was extremely careful in those transactions, forcing the sellers "to enter into a Bond for a large sum of money to procure proper conveyances for the whole of the Lands." The degree of care exercised by Hillegas in purchasing the tracts probably related to the fact that the sellers had obtained the lands from William Trent* (1715-1784), then engaged in wide-scale frontier land speculation despite shaky personal finances.⁴² Hillegas sold all 6,769 acres in 1780 to another prominent land speculator, Robert Morris,* for £25,388. That same year, Hillegas bought four tracts containing 650 acres of land on Dunning's Creek in Bedford County, paying £1,200 for three of the tracts. Within months Hillegas had sold all four tracts to a French merchant for £2,112, a quick and hefty profit. Despite his apparent success in Bedford County, Hillegas made only one other purchase in the county, a 362-acre tract he acquired in 1788.⁴³ The disposition of that tract is unknown.

Hillegas also speculated in land in the less-settled parts of Pennsylvania, for which complete land records have not been located. He received warrants for Northampton County land consisting of a 140-acre tract in 1753, three tracts totaling 130 acres in 1773, and a 400-acre tract in 1792. In 1784, along with Reuben Haines and Richard Wells, Hillegas advertised 9,000 acres for sale on the Lackawaxen River, 10 miles from the Delaware River, in what was then Northampton County, now Pike County, suggesting the existence of another large-scale land speculation venture. Hillegas also owed taxes in Northumberland County for unspecified lands in 1783,⁴⁴ possibly the 300 acres near the northeast branch of the Susquehanna River which he had purchased from the proprietors in late 1772. He also warranted 400 acres in Westmoreland County in 1794.⁴⁵

Hillegas speculated as well in real estate outside of Pennsylvania. In the 1760s, in company with William Moore,* Anthony Wayne,* and other Pennsylvanians, Hillegas had been involved in an investment in 100,000 acres in Nova Scotia, a scheme Benjamin Franklin* aided with a timely "Letter to the Nova Scotia Adventurers." The venture was ultimately unsuccessful. Not surprisingly, Hillegas also purchased land in other states. In January 1779 he wrote to an acquaintance in Virginia asking for assistance in obtaining "a grant of *good Lands*" there in order to help him provide for his family's future.⁴⁶ By September 1779 he owned 609 acres in Frederick County, Virginia, near Hites Mine. He and Matthew Clarkson sought additional tracts there if "Surveyors of Integrity" could ensure proper title. At his death Hillegas still owned land in Virginia. In 1779 he also inquired into the possibilities of purchasing land "some where between the River Ohio & Lake Erie," implying that he would be able to obtain settlers for the area. At some point Hillegas obtained one share in the Ohio Company, another land speculation enterprise, which share he held at his death.⁴⁷

In a different sort of investment, Hillegas apparently helped to form the Lehigh Coal Mine Company early in 1792 to exploit an anthracite coal discovery on Summit Hill on the Lehigh River, northwest of Bethlehem; among his fellow shareholders were Robert Morris, John Nicholson, and William Henry.* Hillegas apparently served as the company's secretary treasurer at some point, although in 1793 that position

was held by Henry Kuhl, Hillegas' nephew and future son-in-law. The unchartered company floundered, however. The cost of extracting and transporting the coal to potential customers proved prohibitive in an age of relatively ample timber supplies and tricky river navigation. Limited demand was clearly a problem; Pennsylvania ironmakers did not use anthracite coal in blast furnaces until well into the nineteenth century because anthracite could not reach the required temperature to melt iron in the cold-blast furnaces used at that time.⁴⁸ Yet that investment probably influenced Hillegas to become one of the initial subscribers to the Lehigh Navigation Company, incorporated by the governor on 29 December 1798.⁴⁹

In 1797 Hillegas joined another ultimately unsuccessful investment scheme, the Pennsylvania Land Company, organized by John Nicholson. Comprising 40,000 shares, the company was overseen by a stockholder-elected board of three directors that sought to sell its impressive, although heavily encumbered, real estate holdings.⁵⁰ Hillegas and his son-in-law William Nichols, as trustees, held title to land worth more than \$4,000,000, spread over 18 counties and the city of Philadelphia, to be conveyed to purchasers as needed.⁵¹ The trustees also held almost half of the company's shares in trust for Nicholson. The extent of Hillegas' share in the enterprise or the amount of compensation he received for his efforts as a member of the board of managers is unknown. In any event, the venture failed, doomed by the liens on the company of Nicholson's many creditors, as well as by Pennsylvania's demand for \$110,390, which had disappeared during Nicholson's tenure as state comptroller general. Nicholson perished in 1800 in debtor's prison and Nichols may also have suffered financially. In his will, Hillegas took great pains to protect the inheritance of his daughter Margaret Nichols from the creditors of her bankrupt husband.⁵²

Hillegas took time from his business and speculative ventures to involve himself in numerous civic enterprises, beyond his efforts on behalf of Christ Church, mentioned previously. He subscribed £15 for the construction of the Freemasons' Hall in 1754 and was among Pennsylvania Hospital's original contributors in 1755, for which institution he served as treasurer in 1780. He helped to manage two fund-raising lotteries in 1761 aimed at establishing a public school in Germantown and at benefiting the College, Academy, and Charitable Schools of Philadelphia. In January 1765 he served as one of five treasurers of an informal group of gentlemen who, motivated by "the great distress of Numbers of the Poor through the Inclemency of the Season," collected donations in the city of Philadelphia, the Northern Liberties, and Southwark for their relief. From 1773 through 1776 Hillegas also served as one of three auditors appointed by the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas to settle the debts of Joseph Richardson, a horse breeder whose property had been seized by the sheriff.⁵³ During the uprising in 1793 in the French colony of St. Domingue (Haiti), the French Society of the Friends of Liberty and Equality in Philadelphia collected money for the relief of "the distressed Citizens of Cape-Francois" who had been forced by that "conflagration" and by the "destruction of the means to subsistence . . . to seek an asylum in the United States." Hillegas was among those individuals "solicited to co-operate with the committee in raising the necessary supplies." Whether Hillegas participated in the effort, however, has not been found. In September 1795 he was named by Governor Thomas Mifflin* to help superintend a lottery drawing to benefit two companies intent on opening canals between the Schuylkill River and the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers.⁵⁴

Concerned as well about the danger posed to urban areas by the risk of fire, Hillegas wrote to Benjamin Franklin in London in 1769 for information about the cost and feasibility of sheathing roofs in copper instead of the combustible wood shingles commonly used in Philadelphia. In reply, Franklin sent Hillegas information about the use of copper and other metals for roofing houses in Europe.⁵⁵ Nothing further has been found on the use to which Hillegas put the information, but he did serve from 1772 through 1776 as a director of the Philadelphia Contributionship for the Insuring of Houses from Loss by Fire.⁵⁶ Remaining interested in fire prevention throughout his life, Hillegas endorsed a safety improvement made by Charles Willson Peale* in fireplaces in 1798, and at his death owned two "fire Buckets" worth 15 shillings.⁵⁷

In more intellectual pursuits, Hillegas was a member of the Library Company of Philadelphia, corresponding with Franklin in 1771 to obtain books for the library. He joined in April 1768 the American Society for Promoting and Propagating Useful Knowledge and continued his involvement after it merged with the American Philosophical Society in 1769. Hillegas also indulged in more leisurely pursuits. He and Jacob Hiltzheimer* socialized together over a period of many years. Hillegas was also a member of the Fishing Company of Fort St. David, located near the falls of the Schuylkill River.⁵⁸

Hillegas was elected a Philadelphia County tax assessor in 1759 and 1760; he was then elected in 1761 to a three-year term as county commissioner.⁵⁹ In that latter office he oversaw the construction of a bridge at the

upper end of Second Street, a civic improvement from which he benefited personally given his numerous investments along the northern end of that street. His responsibilities also included overseeing the construction of other bridges, and the repairing of causeways, the county jail, and the workhouse. In order to complete work on county projects in 1764 he and another commissioner, Joseph King,* gave their private bonds to the city of Philadelphia for a loan to the county of £400. Although clearly committed to public service and civic duty, Hillegas apparently empathized with those individuals who found it difficult to serve when elected. Thus in 1763 he and another county commissioner protested to the Assembly against the substantial fine of £50 imposed on anyone who refused to serve as a tax assessor. In response, a bill was enacted which permitted more flexibility in the levying of fines on nonperforming assessors. During his term as county commissioner, Hillegas also was one of 43 Philadelphia merchants and traders who signed an address welcoming John Penn to Pennsylvania as governor in November 1763.⁶⁰

In September 1765 Hillegas was named by the Assembly one of three commissioners responsible for collecting funds raised through a lottery for the construction of a bridge over Skippack Creek in Philadelphia County. Collecting the funds and building the bridge, however, were both apparently beset by ongoing obstacles. In 1771 the Assembly determined that Hillegas and his fellow commissioners had failed to fully execute “the trust reposed in them,” and thus they were replaced by three new commissioners. By 1788, however, the bridge had still not been erected and the Assembly responded to petitions by naming yet another set of commissioners.⁶¹

Hillegas launched his 11-term Assembly career on the Quaker party’s Philadelphia County ticket in the 1765 election, a pivotal contest for that party. In the 1764 election the proprietary party had capitalized on fears engendered by the Quaker party’s controversial push for the replacement of the Penn family proprietorship with royal government and had defeated both Franklin and Joseph Galloway,* the Quaker party’s leaders. In response the Quaker party, led by Galloway (with Franklin then in England), carved out a position of moderate opposition to the Stamp Act and also sought to increase its own popularity among the German population by enlisting on the Quaker party ticket a well-respected German immigrant, Hillegas.⁶² The Quaker party was triumphant in the 1765 election; Hillegas received 235 more votes than John Dickinson,* the most popular candidate of the proprietary ticket, and 15 more votes than Galloway, as the Quaker party took all eight seats for Philadelphia County.⁶³

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1. Undocumented secondary sources disagree on the exact date of his birth. Egle (*PMHB*, 11:406) and the IGI give 22 April 1728, Whitney (*Hillegas*, 7), Bell, *Patriot-Improvers*, 2:33, and Hillegass, *Genealogy*, 1:37, give 22 April 1729, and an anonymous genealogy (*Hillegas Family*, 5) gives 22 May 1729. However, support for 1729 as his year of birth is provided by both the Phila. Co. Orphans Court, which in Feb. 1750 stated that Hillegas was “of the Age of twenty” (*PCOCEP*, 3:105), indicating that he was born in 1729 or early 1730, and by Hillegas himself, who in Feb. 1778 wrote that he was 48 years old, indicating that, if he had been born in April or May, the year was 1729, not 1728 (*MHLBk.* 1 Feb. 1778). Moreover, the gravestone inscription for Hillegas at Christ Church states that he died “in the 76th year of his age,” indicating that he was 75 years old, and therefore if he was born in April or May the year date would be 1729 (*Clark, Inscriptions*, 520). As for the day and month, the deed in which his mother relinquished to him administration of his father’s estate was dated 23 May 1750, suggesting that the occasion for her passing control to him was his 21st birthday the previous day, implying that he had been born on 22 May 1729 (*PHDBk.* H, 3:214). For a portrait of Hillegas, see Bell, *Patriot-Improvers*, 2:34.

2. RCC notes that he was buried on 30 Sept. 1804.

3. Hillegas served jointly with George Clymer* from July 1775 to Aug. 1776 (*JCC*, 5:634).

4. Hillegas was also named as treasurer when the House resolved in Nov. 1775 to emit £80,000 to support the Associators and in April 1776 to emit £85,000 for “the public Service” (*Votes*, 6:650, 724-25). In each case he was required to give another £10,000 performance bond and expend the money by order of either the Committee of Safety or the Assembly.

5. In 1796 Hillegas was reelected to the office, which had a seven-year term (*SCM*, 14 Oct. 1796; *Statutes*, 13:193-214). There is documentation of his activity as alderman in 1797, 1798, 1800, 1801, and 1803 (*SCM*, 15 April 1797; *CWPD*, 17 June 1798; *PD*, 1800; *JBFC*, 13 Aug. 1801; *JFP*, 2:467). On 10 Oct. 1804, 11 days after Hillegas died, Gov. Thomas McKean appointed Abraham Shoemaker to replace Hillegas as an alderman (*PA*, 9th ser., 3:2055).

6. PADA, 1 Oct. 1804; Clark, *Inscriptions*, 520-21; Hillegass, *Genealogy*, 1:32, 37, 52-54; Burgert, *Kraichgau*, 168; ABPHW, E:36; PHDBk. H, 4:422, 14:54, I, 3:236; RCC, burials, marriages, baptisms; JHD, 23 July 1770; Whitney, *Hillegas*, 27, 36; PMHB, 11:408; STAC, 5:449; *Hillegas Family*, 6; JCC, 2:194, 221, 3:299, 4:165, 5:697, 6:1046; PAG, 4 Oct. 1759, 2 Oct. 1760, 8 Oct. 1761, 9 Aug. 1775, 12 June 1776, 5 May, 23 June 1784, 30 Jan. 1793, 5 Nov. 1794; DED, 2:1090; LDC, 22:466n; Marshall, *Diary*, 4 Aug. 1775; *Votes*, 5:549, 6:511, 594, 597, 710, 724, 733; *Statutes*, 6:456-59, 8:15-22, 32-36, 10:48-52, 11:251-62, 13:126-29; PA, 1st ser., 10:239-40, 261, 276, 513, 737-38, 2nd ser., 3:681, 684, 9th ser., 1:285, 357, 2:1012, 1095, 1173; MCS, 10:537-652 passim; *Proceedings*, 3, 9, 11-12; *Minutes*, 5:413-14, 429, 495, 7:718; JPCCP, 1 Sept. 1760-16 Oct. 1764 passim; MCCPCC, 2, 4; MPCC, April 1792-3 Oct. 1796 passim; PHQSD, Dec. 1799; ECG, misc., bail piece, 10 April 1801; MB&B, 76-77.
7. Bell, *Patriot-Improvers*, 2:33, claims that Hillegas was “one of ten children.” After the death of Hillegas’ father, the Phila. Co. Orphans Court noted that Hillegas was “of the Age of twenty” (PCOCEP, 3:105), indicating that he was born either in 1729 or early 1730. For more on his date of birth, see n. 1, above.
8. An undocumented source claims that the family lived in Alsace prior to the Palatinate (Minnich, *Treasurer*, 9-11); however, Georg Michael Hillegass was baptized in Sinsheim in the Palatinate in 1696 (Burgert, *Kraichgau*, 168).
9. The congregation had been organized by George Michael Weiss; sources disagree as to whether John Frederick Hillegas, who had accompanied Weiss when he arrived in Pa. in 1727, was another uncle of Hillegas (Strassburger and Hinke, 1:9; PMHB, 18:87; Mueser, *Hillegas*, 3; Hinke, *Boehm*, 30). Hillegas did have a brother named Frederick who died as an infant in 1742 (Clark, *Inscriptions*, 520).
10. MHLBk., Hillegas to Hillegas, 1 Feb. 1778; Burgert, *Kraichgau*, 167-68; Mueser, *Hillegas*, 3-4; Hillegass, *Genealogy*, 1:32; Hinke, *Boehm*, 32, 43, 209, 235; ABPHW, E, 36; PMHB, 11:406, 18:88; PHDBk. F, 6:391, 393, 10:263, G, 1:61, 81, 299, H, 4:422, 9:60, 14:54, 17:507, 20:238, EF, 20:587, 590; Muhlenberg, *Journals*, 1:490; PAG, 29 June 1738, 27 Feb. 1750; PCOCEP, 3:117; Duffin, *Guide to Mortgages*, 45; PA, 2nd ser., 2:377, 3rd ser., 24:132; MCCOC, 4:1; Roeber, 124; Clark, *Inscriptions*, 520.
11. PCOCEP, 3:105, 117; PHDBk. H, 3:214; MCCOC, 3:117, 4:1.
12. The fact that the younger brother and father of Hillegas were both buried in Christ Church cemetery in the 1740s indicates that Hillegas did not shift from the Reformed church to the Anglican church as an adult, as suggested by Glatfelter (*Pastors*, 1:267) and Hillegass (*Genealogy*, 1:37), but rather as a member of his father’s household. However, the decision to change religious affiliation made by his father fits the tendency, described by Glatfelter, for mercantile and professional Germans to be active in English-speaking as well as strictly German-speaking circles.
13. PA, 2nd ser., 8:123; RCC, marriages; Whitney, *Hillegas*, 36; Clark, *Inscriptions*, 520; PHDBk. EF, 6:113, 116; VMCC, 2:246-47, 254, 268-69, 273-74, 276-77, 395-97; PAG, 12 May, 30 June 1773.
14. The first two husbands, Samuel Boude and William Connolly, of Deborah Coxe Boude had died in 1733 and 1736, respectively (RCC, burials). Her third husband, Henry Elwes, whom she married in 1744, had a namesake son.
15. The *Hawk* may have been used for privateering (STAC, 8:589).
16. The *Henrietta* left for St. Christopher, in the West Indies, in Dec. 1754 (PAG, 12 Dec. 1754). No further notice of her appeared in PAG, which suggests that she was either lost or sold, or her name was changed. The *Susanna* likewise made one round-trip voyage to the West Indies and then disappeared from PAG’s shipping news (PAG, 21 Jan., 4 Feb., 7 Aug. 1755).
17. PAG, 27 Feb., 18 Dec. 1750, 19 Feb., 17, 24 Oct. 1754, 11 May 1774; PMHB, 25:410, 560; RCC, marriages; PA, 2nd ser., 8:25, 82; Whitney, *Hillegas*, 36; Hocker, *Data*, 42; SOCC, Hillegas, Hillegas to Bell, 19 March 1798.
18. The store was located about six doors above Arch St. and in 1774 was situated next to the Half Moon and Seven Stars Inn (Hocker, *Data*, 126, 131).
19. In early 1752 Hillegas loaned £111 to John Specker of Tulpehocken Twp., Lancaster Co., on security of Specker’s dwelling, still house, and four acres of land (LCDBk. C, 353). Since Hillegas sold stills, most likely Specker’s debt arose from the purchase of that equipment.
20. “[A] great musician,” John Adams wrote about Hillegas, “talks perpetually of the Forte and Piano, of Handell &c. and Songs and Tunes. He plays upon the Fiddle” (LDC, 2:76).
21. The subscription advertised in May 1760 apparently was successful, resulting in the publication the following year of James Lyon’s important American hymnal *Urania* (PAG, 22 May 1760).
22. Hillegas’ known music advertisements all stated “Imported,” although he may have engaged in printing music at some point in his career; his estate inventory included 15 copperplates for music (PHWF, 1804, #163). One genealogical source credits him with being the author of *An Easy Method for the Flute* (*Hillegas Family*, 6), probably a reference to *A Compleat Tutor for the Fife*, published by Hall and Sellers and sold by Hillegas in 1776 (PAG, 19 June, 31 July 1776; Evans 14686). By the 1770s there were three instrument makers advertising in Phila. (PAG, 23 Aug., 20 Sept. 1770, 30 Sept. 1772).
23. MCCOC, 4:1; Bridenbaugh, *Rebels*, 160; PAG, 9 Aug., 15 Nov. 1753, 13, 27 Dec. 1759, 24 April, 22 May 1760, 29 Jan., 28 May, 27 Aug. 1761, 15 March, 22 April, 13, 28 May, 21 Oct. 1762, 5, 26 May, 13 Oct., 10 Nov., 1, 15 Dec. 1763, 5 Jan., 16 Feb., 1 March 1764, 14 March 1765, 21 May 1772, 11 May 1774, 19 June, 31 July 1776; PMHB, 11:3610; Fisher, *Music*, 23; Dichter, *Early*, xxv; Hastings, *Life*, 275-76; MHLBk. Hillegas to Johnson, 28 June 1760; CCJC. Although Hillegas sold instrument strings and music to Thomas Jefferson from 1775 through 1779, he probably did not continue to operate his store after 1776, since he did not advertise after that year and labored under heavy time constraints as Continental treasurer

(PMHB, 113:617-18).

24. He sold paper for cartridges to the province during the French and Indian War (*Votes*, 5:81).
25. Hillegas and Stiegel had known each other since at least 1760, when Hillegas sold Stiegel an Italian violin (MHLBk., Hillegas to Stiegel, 5 May, 19 June 1760).
26. Martic Furnace and Forge had been established in the 1750s on a small branch of Pequea Creek, a tributary of the Susquehanna River (Bining, *Iron Manufacture*, 172).
27. Previous attempts to sell the ironworks had been unsuccessful (PAG, 8 March 1764, 9 July 1767, 22 Dec. 1768, 6 April, 8 June, 13 July 1769).
28. "The Army complain," Hillegas continued, "That they risk their Lives to obtain (inter alia) Prisoners and that afterward for want of care they are permitted to make their escape; If any of ours therefore should have left the Works, it will be best to avoid trouble and Cost to conduct the remaining ones immediately to this City to be delivered up to Gaol from whence we took them. If they still remain," he instructed Slough, "it will be best in you not to hint the least of this Letter to any person whatever, least it might by accident get to their Ears and put them in mind of a think, which before they had no inclination of doing" (MHLBk., Hillegas to Slough, 9 May 1780). Whether previous labor at Martic Forge, while Hillegas was a part-owner, had been slave labor has not been ascertained, although the use of skilled slave and Free Black labor at forges in Pa. was common in the 18th century (Bining, *Iron Manufacture*, 101).
29. *Forges and Furnaces*, 140-41; PAG, 6 Oct. 1763, 5 Jan., 1, 29 Nov. 1764, 9 Jan., 23 Oct., 11 Dec. 1766, 23 March 1769; MHLBk., Hillegas to Cloppen, 20 Feb., 16 July, 27 July 1757, Hillegas to Steegel, 19 June 1760, Hillegas to Slough, 9, 21 May 1780; LCDBk. SS, 371, 375, 378, 382; PMHB, 29:239. Ege was also involved in the Mary Anne Furnace in York Co. (PAG, 23 July 1777).
30. PGM, 22:30; PHTR, 1767, 190v.
31. These figures are based on Oaks, Merchants, 206, 224.
32. The lot had been "bargained and sold but not actually Conveyed unto Michael Hillegas the father" before his death; Hillegas completed the conveyance in 1751 (LCDBk. N, 215).
33. MCCOC, 4:1; PHDBk. D, 5:214, 42:41, H, 11:391, 14:205, 19:520, I, 11:245; LCDBk. N, 217; PAG, 19 July 1764; *Statutes*, 6:22.
34. The disposition of that lot is unknown.
35. His father's estate had included eight tracts of land in the Northern Liberties totaling 116 acres and 7 lots (MCCOC, 4:1).
36. PHDBk. D, 34:437, 36:472, 475, 37:174, 38:214, I, 3:458, 477, 510, EF, 27:595, 597, 600, 603, MR, 10:305, GWR, 33:120, 125; PHWF, 1804, #163.
37. Lot 42 he purchased at the time of the sale, but lots 18, 24, and 36 were purchased at that sale by John Keen, who sold them to Joseph Anthony in June 1786, but Anthony was acting on behalf of Hillegas, who received a formal conveyance of those lots from the Commonwealth in Feb. 1789 (PHDBk. D, 20:548, 22:339; PA, 9th ser., 3:1749).
38. PAG, 22 Nov. 1759, 10 April 1760, 27 May 1762, 10, 24 March, 12 May 1763, 23 Feb., 15 March, 10, 17 May 1764, 19 Dec. 1765, 8 Jan. 1767, 17 Nov. 1773, 18 May 1774; PHDBk. D, 7:218, 20:548, 22:339, 28:304, 314, 31:186, 189, I, 14:139, 141, 143, EF, 12:539, 16:277, 17:186, 18:137, 23:294, IC, 5:629; PHWF, 1804, #163; PA, 9th ser., 3:1749..
39. A glass house was a building where glass was produced.
40. PHDBk. D, 2:124, 14:82, 83, 34:437, 60:180, H, 19:341, I, 16:140; CDBk. Q, 333, P, 337; LOA, D2, 7:320; PHWF, 1804, #163; PA, 3rd ser., 1:554. The disposition of that last-mentioned tract is not known.
41. PHDBk. D, 77:657; PATBk. AA, 16: 24, 26; COMBk. A, 4:231-56; SCDBk. 3:611, 614, 684, 685, 717, 4:154, 211-12, 247, 5:95, 9:267, 11:13, 56, 177, 560, 12:182, 444, 520, 527, 13:111, 178, 311, 14:456, 16:508.
42. See the essay on Trent in *Lawmaking and Legislators*, 2:1001-11.
43. BDBk. A, 389, 392, 396, 401, C, 184, F, 154, 176, 180, 184, 187, 189, 193, 196, 199; NDBk. M, 71-79; GRAM, case 8, box 7, Campbell to Trent, 16 Sept. 1781, 22 July 1784.
44. Deeds for those lands have not been found.
45. PA, 3rd ser., 26:87, 89, 96, 446; PAG, 9 April 1783, 10 Nov. 1784; JFP, 2:357. The testamentary records also indicate he owned land in Armstrong Co., Pa. (PHWF, 1804, #163).
46. Italics in the original.
47. PAG, 17 March 1768; FP, 11:470, 12:345-50, 15:121, 16:111, 235-36; MHLBk., Hillegas to Nelson, 11 Jan. 1779, Hillegas to Zane, 24 Sept., 2 Oct. 1779, Hillegas to Armistead, 22 July 1779; PHWF, 1804, #163.
48. Arbuckle, Nicholson, 410; Livermore, *Land*, 240-41; PMHB, 11:408, 39:170, 172; Swank, *Ironmaking*, 111-12; PAG, 30 Jan. 1793; RCC, marriages; *Hillegas Family*, 7; JNL, 6:197, 239, 262, 338, 415; GRGO, Hillegas to Nicholson, 30 July 1793; Gordon, *Iron*, 77, 155. The coal venture was premature but not illusory; the Lehigh Valley later became a significant coal-producing region (Swank, *Ironmaking*, 44, 109-10).
49. PA, 9th ser., 2:1465-67.
50. For more information on this and like companies, see Chernow, *Morris*, 106-235 passim; Arbuckle, Nicholson, esp. 494-97; Wilkinson, *Land*, 227-28.
51. For the totals, see the "Schedule of Property" as well as individual trust deeds in at least some of the counties, such as

Northumberland, Lycoming, Lancaster, Chester, and Fayette (PALC, 215; PHDBk. D, 67:5, 11; LCDBk. I, 3:109; FDBk. C, 1127; BDBk. E, 125; CDBk., I, 3:109). Hillegas may have eventually acquired title to some of the lands in Lycoming Co., as taxes for property in that county were charged to his estate for several decades (PHWF, 1804, #163).

52. PALC, 215-75 passim; JNL, 6:261; Arbuckle, Nicholson, 494, 496-99; PHDBk. D, 67:11; Arbuckle, *Nicholson*, 186; *DED*, 1360; PHWF, 1804, #163.

53. This Joseph Richardson should not be confused with the assemblyman, the silversmith, or the forger of the same name.

54. *FP*, 5:237; *PAG*, 29 May 1755, 5 March, 23 April 1761, 31 Jan. 1765, 22 Sept., 17 Nov., 8, 22 Dec. 1773, 11 May 1774, 31 Jan. 1776, 3 May 1780, 17 July 1793; SOCC, box 1-B; SOMISC, receipt, 3 Sept. 1756; *PA*, 9th ser., 2:1012.

55. Franklin also wrote to Samuel Rhoads* on the same matter, sending him more information on the prevention of fires, which he asked Rhoads to forward to Hillegas (*FP*, 17:182). Franklin's letters on the subject to Hillegas and Rhoads were published in the May 1790 issue of Mathew Carey's magazine *The American Museum* (*PAG*, 19 May 1790).

56. The contributionship had been organized in 1752.

57. *FP*, 16:236, 17:98; *PAG*, 23 April 1772, 14 April 1773, 13 April 1774, 12 April 1775, 10 April 1776; *CWPD*, 17 June 1798; *PHWF*, 1804, #163. The two men knew each other, although Peale* served in the 1779 Assembly, after Hillegas' Assembly career had ended. In 1787 Hillegas assisted Peale in receiving payment for a portrait of Washington (Miller, *Peale*, 1:455). When Peale began his natural history museum in 1792, Hillegas was one of the prominent men invited by Peale to be supporters; Hillegas apparently did not contribute (Miller, *Peale*, 2:10, 19).

58. *FP*, 18:17, 69, 117; *PMHB*, 21:417-18, 24:13; *Hillegas Family*, 6; Bell, *Patriot-Improvers*, 2:33; *EPAPS*, 71, 86; Hiltzheimer, 20 Sept. 1769, 1 March 1774, 27 Sept. 1783, 16 Jan. 1785; Minnich, *Treasurer*, 18; *DAB*; Whitney, *Hillegas*, 9. Hillegas was not a particularly active member of the American Philosophical Society (Bell, *Patriot-Improvers*, 2:33).

59. Hillegas missed only one meeting during his tenure as commissioner (JPCCP, 15 Aug. 1764).

60. *PAG*, 4 Oct. 1759, 2 Oct. 1760, 8 Oct. 1761; JPCCP, 19 Oct. 1761-16 Oct. 1764 passim; *Votes*, 5:239, 243; *Statutes*, 6:278-80; *PPAML*, 1:115.

61. *Statutes*, 6:456-59, 8:72-74, 13:126-29; *Votes*, 6:268.

62. The claim has been made that the Quaker party also increased its success at the polls in the 1765 election by helping German immigrants become naturalized so that they could vote (Newcomb, "Stamp Act," 266; *Franklin and Galloway*, 122; Tully, *Forming*, 201). No evidence has been found to support this contention. Only one naturalization bill, affecting three immigrants, passed the Assembly between the 1764 and the 1765 elections (*Statutes*, 6:399-401). In April 1765 Pa. Supreme Court justices naturalized 96 foreigners, many of them German, but naturalizations were traditionally accomplished in the April term of that court and thus the fact that they occurred in 1765 suggests nothing out of the ordinary (*PA*, 2nd ser., 2:460-63).

63. *FP-APS*, 69:98.