This engraving by Thomas Phillibrown depicts a scene from the American Revolution. The engraving was published in 1856. It is based on a picture by Alonso Chappel, who was born in 1828. Therefore, it is important not to see this as a primary source from the time of the American Revolution. The engraving is titled *Incident in Cherry Valley—fate of Jane Wells*. In the scene, Jane Wells is pleading for her life as a man attempts to protect her from an American Indian who is about to kill her. The house behind them is being burned by Loyalists and American Indians led by Major Walter Butler and Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant, in Cherry Valley, New York.
The title of this print is The Alternative of Williams-Burg. The print was created by an artist named Philip Dawe. It was published in London in February 1775.

In the scene, a mob is forcing a “Virginian Loyalist” to sign a document, possibly one issued by the Williamsburg Convention. The Williamsburg Convention was a gathering of Virginia lawmakers in 1774. They met to decide what to do after British officials had closed the port of Boston as a punishment for the Boston Tea Party.

In this print, the Loyalist is being threatened by a club-wielding mob of “liberty men,” supporters of American independence. On the left, another man is being led toward a gallows standing in the background on the right. A sack of feathers and a barrel of tar are hanging from the gallows.
Comparing the Documents

The Visual Sources

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the Comparison Essay worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents—and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

Which of these two primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the differences between Loyalists and Patriots during the American Revolution?

Document 1

Document 2
Never ... was a more just, more
honorable, or necessary cause for taking
up arms than that which now calls you
into the field. It is the cause of truth
against falsehood, of loyalty against
rebellion, of legal government against
usurpation, of constitutional freedom
against tyranny. In short, it is the cause
of human happiness of millions against
outrage and oppression. Your generous
efforts are required to assert the rights
of your amiable, injured sovereign [that
is, the King]. They are required to restore
your civil constitution which was formed
by the wisdom of the ages, and was
the admiration and envy of mankind
—under which we and our ancestors
enjoy liberty, happiness and security—but is now subverted to make room for
a motley fabric, that is perfectly adapted
to popular tyranny. Your bleeding country,
through which destitution and ruin are
driving in full career, from which peace,
order, commerce, and useful industry are
banished—your loyal friends and relations
groaning in bondage under the iron
scourge of persecution and oppression—all these now call upon you for succor
and redress.

It is not wild, insatiable ambition which
sports with lives and fortunes of mankind
that leads you forth, driven from your
peaceful habitations for no other cause
than honoring your King, as God has
commanded. You have taken up the
sword to vindicate his just authority,
to support your excellent constitution,
to defend your families, your liberty,
and property, to secure to yourselves
and your posterity that inheritance of
constitutional freedom to which you were
born; and all this against the violence of
usurped power, which would deny you
even the right of judgment or of choice,
which would rend from you the protection
of your parent state, and eventually place
you ... under the despotic rule of our
inveterate Popish enemies, the inveterate
enemies of our religion, our country and
liberties. [Here, Inglis means Catholic
France.]
John Jay, a lawyer, was a key figure in the American Revolution. He went on to a long political career in the early years of the new nation. For example, he helped James Madison and Alexander Hamilton write *The Federalist*. This was a famous series of essays backing the U.S. Constitution during the battle for its ratification from 1787 to 1788. He was the first U.S. Chief Justice. Later he was governor of New York. He was a moderate in the Revolution, often uneasy about more radical Patriots like Sam Adams. Peter Van Schaack was a college friend who could not fully support the colonists in the revolution and who spent seven years in exile in Great Britain. The passage below is from a letter Jay wrote to Peter Van Schaack in 1782.

Your judgment and consequently your conscience differed from mine on a very important question; but though, as an independent American, I considered all who were not for us, and you among the rest, as against us, yet be assured that John Jay did not cease to be a friend to Peter Van Schaack. No one can serve two masters. Either Britain was right and America wrong, or America was right and Britain was wrong. They who thought Britain right were bound to support her, and America had a just claim to the services of those who approved her cause. Hence it became our duty to take one side or the other, and no man is to be blamed for preferring the one which his reason recommended as the most just and virtuous. Several of our countrymen left and took arms against us, not from any such principles, but from the most dishonorable of human motives. Their conduct has been a piece with their inducements [that is, their actions have been as bad as their motives] for they have far outstripped savages in perfidy and cruelty. Against these men every American must set his face and steel his heart. There are others of them, though not many, who, I believe, opposed us because they thought they could not conscientiously go with us. To such of them as have behaved with humanity, I wish every species of prosperity that may consist with the good of my country.