

Case No. 34562

State of New Jersey v. William Cozens
Indictment for Seditious Words (on February 1, 1777, at Elizabethtown, William
Cozens, in the presence of Abigail Brookfield and several other persons, is accused of
uttering seditious words)
Essex : 1779

New Jersey State Archives
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Case Files, 1704 - 1844 (SSV00001)

3/3/2025

Supreme Court Case Files : Case # 34562
State of New Jersey v. William Cozens

<u>Case Number</u>	<u>Case Type</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Dates</u>
34562	Indictment for Seditious Words (on February 1, 1777, at Elizabethtown, William Cozens, in the presence of Abigail Brookfield and several other persons, is accused of uttering seditious words)	Essex	1779
William Cozens is reported to have said the following: "The Americans are Rebels. Notwithstanding I have taken the Oath of Allegiance to the State, I pay no regard to it as I did it to save my life. King George is my King. The Oath of Allegiance I have taken to the State, I think [is] of no consequence because I was obliged to take it to save my Life. I took the Oaths of Allegiance to King George the Second, and King George the Third freely and think I am bound to keep them and I esteem them valid." See also: SOY00001-Essex County Oyer & Terminer Minutes, March 1-16, 1779, page 8 and page 14			

PLAINTIFF	State of New Jersey
DEFENDANT	Cozens, William (Yeoman) (of Elizabethtown)
NAMED IN CASE	Brookfield, Benjamin (Husband of Abigail Brookfield)
NAMED IN CASE	Hinds, John (Deceased; late Husband of Mary Hinds)
EVIDENCE (WITNESS CALLED)	Brookfield, Abigail (Wife of Benjamin Brookfield)
EVIDENCE (WITNESS CALLED)	Hinds, Mary (Widow of John Hinds, deceased)
EVIDENCE (WITNESS CALLED)	Winans, Jacob
OFFICIAL	Paterson, William (Attorney General)
JURY FOREMAN	Hayes, Samuel

34562 State v. Cozens

Ex. 46 v

Seditious Words

Offe Sessions
Jan^y 3. 1779.

The State } Ind^{ty} for
v. } Sedition
William Lyons } Wth D^y

A true Bill

Sam^l Hayes - Thomas.

The Def^y being charged
pleaded Not Guilty, & and
put himself upon his Country,
to try, &c. Wth Peter
Carr. Geo^s.

Witnesses May^r Kinsale / wife
of Ben^t / and Maria / Mary
Hinds, Widow of John Hinds

The Jurors, in Behalf of the State of New Jersey, for the Body of the County of Essex, upon their Oath present, That William Cozens, late of Elizabeth Town, in the said County of Essex, Common, being a pernicious & disaffected Man, and a Person of a turbulent Mind & seditious Disposition & Conversation, and contriving, practising, & falsely, maliciously, advisedly, and seditiously intending to terrify, disunite, & discourage the good Subjects of this State, to dispose them to favour the Pretensions of the Enemy, & to alienate the Affections of the People from the present Government, on the first Day of February, in the Year of our Lord, one thousand, seven hundred, and seventy seven, at Elizabeth Town, aforesaid, in the County of Essex aforesaid, and within the Jurisdiction of this Court, having Discourse then and there with a certain Abigail Brookfield, then being a Subject of this State, concerning the Oath of Allegiance, which he the said William Cozens had taken to the State & Government of New Jersey, and concerning the present War, and the King of Great Britain, in the Presence and Hearing of the said Abigail Brookfield, and of various other Persons, Subjects of this State, then & there being present, did falsely, maliciously, advisedly, unlawfully, and seditiously say, assert, affirm, pronounce, and with a loud Voice exclaim these false, malicious, seditious, and opprobrious English Words following, that is to say, The Americans are Rebels; notwithstanding I (meaning the said William Cozens) have taken the Oath of Allegiance to the State, I again meaning the said William) pay no regard to it (meaning to the Oath of Allegiance aforesaid) as I meaning again the same William) did it to save my Life: King George (meaning George the Third, King of Great Britain) is my King, (meaning the true & rightful Sovereign of him the said William, and to whom he the said William owed Fealty and Allegiance as a Subject.) And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their Oath aforesaid, do further present, That the said William Cozens, afterwards, to wit, on the day and Year aforesaid, at the Place within the Jurisdiction aforesaid, having Discourse then and there with a certain Jacob Minans, then being a Subject of this State, concerning the same Oath of Allegiance so as aforesaid taken by the said William to the State of New Jersey, and concerning the King of Great Britain, and the Oath which he had taken to the said King, in the Presence & Hearing of the said Jacob Minans, and of other Persons, Subjects of this State, then and there being present, did falsely, maliciously, advisedly, unlawfully,

and seditiously say, assert, affirm, pronounce, and with a loud voice declare these
 false, malicious, seditious, and opprobrious English words following, that is to
 say, The Oath of Allegiance I (meaning the said William Loyung) have
 taken to the State, I (meaning the said William) think of no consequence
 because I (again meaning the same William) was obliged to take it
 to save my life; I (meaning the said William) took the Oath of Allegiance
 to King George the second, and King George the third, (meaning the late
 and present King of Great Britain,) freely, and think I (meaning
 the said William) am bound to keep them. (meaning the Oaths last
 aforesaid) and I (again meaning the said William) esteem them (meaning
 the last mentioned Oaths) valid; to the wit example of all
 others in the like case offending, against the Honor of the Act of the
 Council and General Assembly of this State in such case made
 and provided, against the Peace of this State, the Government,
 and Dignity of the same,

Jm. Caterpa, Att. Genl.

Offe Session
 Jan. 5. 1779.

The State }
 v. }
 William Loyung }
 } Ind. for
 } seditious
 } words

A true Bill

Saml Hayes - Foreman.

The Def. being charged
 pleaded Not Guilty, &c and
 put himself upon his Country,
 &c &c, &c
 Wm. Caterpa
 Att. Genl.

Witnesses Mary. Brookfield (Wife
 of Def.) Sarah Winans Mary
 Kinder, Widow of John Kinder