William Duane, Philadelphia's Democratic Republicans, and The Origins of Modern Politics

THE Jeffersonian era, once synonymous with the rise of democracy, now is viewed by historians as at most a transitional period in political culture, as yet more traditional than modern.* There is a growing scholarly consensus that politics in the early republic, both in ideas and practices, was closer to eighteenth-century patterns than to the voter-oriented, mass party politics of the 1840s and after. Richard Hofstadter, Michael Wallace, and others have taught us that party itself was still viewed as inherently pernicious. According to this thesis, it was another political generation before men recognized the potential benefits of democratic conflict; leaders of the early republic held to the Whiggish ideal of consensual harmony.[1] Similarly, recent studies of political practices in this era tend to the common conclusion that post-Revolutionary politics was still a gentleman's avocation. Partisan disputes, once viewed as fundamental, are now seen as mere

[1] Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780–1840* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969); Wallace, "Changing Concepts of Party in the United States: New York, 1815–1828," *American Historical Review*, LXXIV (1968), 453–491. Lynn L. Marshall, "The Strange Stillbirth of the Whig Party," *ibid.*, LXXII (1967), 445–468, was the first major study to contrast the ideologies of the first and second party systems. On changing concepts of leadership and public service see Perry M. Goldman, "Political Virtue in the Age of Jackson," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXXVII (1972), 46–62. Recent studies of the first party system which stress the links to traditional political thought are: Lance Banning, "Republican Ideology and the Triumph of the Constitution, 1789 to 1793," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., XXXI (1974), 167–188, and Daniel Sisson, *The American Revolution of 1800* (New York, 1974). For an excellent review of the literature on the ideology and political culture of the early republic, see Robert E. Shallhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d. ser., XXIX (1972), 49–80.

quarrels among contending elites.[2] Nor, it is argued, was the party organization into Federalists and Republicans so clearcut or advanced as formerly believed. Indeed, some have questioned the existence of a "first American party system."[3] Taken together these studies suggest, in effect, that for this period political history is elitist history, willy-nilly, with little to tell us about citizens below the leadership class.

Before the consensus hardens further, let us look at the problem with a new focus. A commendable trend toward state and local studies has substantially modified interpretations drawn from politics at the national level. But, as historians, we have not sufficiently analyzed the internal mechanisms of party, either local or national. Much of the significant political conflict of these years occurred, this essay contends, not so much between as *within* parties. We have tended too easily to dismiss intraparty strife as mere factionalism, ipso facto evidence of an old-fashioned politics still organized around personal and regional loyalties. Such an assumption assures that we will continue to have a history as written by the winners. Those who spoke for a party were not invariably its most representative members. Looking behind the public face of party, we may perhaps glimpse more clearly the concerns of activists and voters. To do so is to question the prevailing interpretations of the nature of politics in the early republic.

Politics in Philadelphia in the years just after 1800 may serve to illustrate the need for alternative interpretations. At first glance, the Philadelphia experience appears to verify the Hofstadter thesis about party instability. Pennsylvania's Republican Party, so crucial in the election of Thomas Jefferson, was considered a bulwark of Republican strength nationally. Yet by 1805 the party in Pennsylvania was broken, and two Republican candidates opposed each

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[2] See, for example, the following state studies: Richard R. Beeman, *The Old Dominion and the New Nation, 1788–1801* (Lexington, Ky., 1972); Paul Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic* (Cambridge, 1964); Carl E. Prince, *New Jersey's Republicans: The Genesis of an Early Party Machine, 1789–1817* (Chapel Hill, 1967).

[3] See Ronald P. Formisano's provocative critique and interpretation of "Deferential-Participant Politics: The Early Republic's Political Culture, 1789–1840," *American Political Science Review*, LXVIII (1974), 473–487.

other for governor. The schism began in Philadelphia as early as 1802, and quickly spread to statewide politics. It would be a mistake to regard this early breakdown into factionalism as proof of the weakness of party or of partisan thinking. The schism did, however, reveal tensions that were inherent within the Republican alliance. Once in power, the Republicans were forced to recognize that they held fundamentally differing notions about the meaning of party and about what kind of party they wanted. The conflict they experienced over these essential questions transformed the political character of Philadelphia.[4]

When the Republicans took office in 1801, five men could be said to hold the effective leadership of the party in Philadelphia: Alexander James Dallas, William Duane, Tench Coxe, George Logan and Michael Leib. Two others, not direct participants in city affairs, who influenced party developments there were Governor Thomas McKean and Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin, Pennsylvania's representative in Jefferson's cabinet. Among the Philadelphians, Dallas and Duane were pre-eminent in influence.

Dallas was perhaps the most universally respected man within the party leadership, considered in some quarters "the life and soul of the Republican cause" in Pennsylvania. He was a Jamaican of Scottish background who emigrated to the United States at the end of the Revolution, entered law practice in Philadelphia, and rose in politics as a protégé and adviser of Governor Thomas Mifflin. From his position as Mifflin's Secretary of the Commonwealth, Dallas became the outstanding organizer of the Republican interest from the early 1790s onward. More skillful behind the scenes than as a public figure, Dallas eschewed elective office but continued in the powerful post of Secretary of the Commonwealth when his hand-picked candidate, Thomas McKean, was elected Governor in 1799. In 1801 he resigned his state office to accept President Jefferson's

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4 The interpretation offered here sharply differs from that implicit within the standard work on Pennsylvania politics in this era: Sanford W. Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics, 1800–1816* (Harrisburg, 1952). That book remains a highly useful factual account and an indispensable starting point for further study. See also Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans in Power: Party Operations, 1801–1809* (Chapel Hill, 1963), 213–220, for a good, brief description of the Pennsylvania schism.

appointment as federal District Attorney. Dallas' position as the city's highest ranking Republican officeholder, his close friendship with Secretary Gallatin, and his influence over Governor McKean all ensured him of top political standing in Philadelphia.

William Duane, a newcomer and relative outsider, who was never part of Dallas' inner circle, was nonetheless the second most powerful Republican in the city as a consequence of his role as party editor. Duane had taken over the *Aurora* in 1798 following the death of Benjamin Franklin Bache and had built it into perhaps the most outstanding political newspaper in the country, an indispensable source of Republican strength in the election of 1800. Jefferson called it "the rallying point for the Orthodox of the whole union," "our comfort in the gloomiest days," and John Adams named Duane as one of the three or four men most responsible for his defeat.[5] Duane was an Irishman and former newspaper editor in Calcutta who had come to the United States in 1796 as a political refugee from the British Empire. A year earlier, the British government had expelled him from India as a "dangerous incendiary." Forcibly deported to London, he briefly became a speaker and writer for the radical London Corresponding Society, then opted to leave for America in search of a more congenial political atmosphere. Duane's rough political apprenticeship prepared him well to stand up to the so-called Federalist "reign of terror" of 1798 to 1800. As *Aurora* editor, he was continually harassed—indicted three times for seditious libel, threatened with deportation, dragged through the streets by rioters, beaten and whipped by a mob of officers for refusing to reveal a source. The courage that Duane showed in resisting intimidation established him as almost a folk hero in the minds of ordinary Republicans and that power over public opinion made him a force to be reckoned with in politics.[6]

In 1801 Dallas and Duane were cordial if hardly intimate political allies. Four years later they stood at the heads of opposing wings

[5] Jefferson to William Wirt, Mar. 30, 1811, William Wirt Papers, Maryland Historical Society; Adams to Benjamin Stoddert, Mar. 31, 1801, Charles Francis Adams, ed., *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States* . . . (Boston, 1850–1856), IX, 582; Adams to Christopher Gadsden, Apr. 16, 1801, *ibid.*, 584.

[6] See Kim Tousley Phillips, "William Duane, Revolutionary Editor" (doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1968).

of a party hopelessly divided over issues concerning the essential nature of party itself. The Dallas wing, formally named the Constitutional Republicans, was commonly known as the Quids. Duane's section called themselves the Democratic Republicans or, more frequently, simply the Democrats. For simplicity, the name Quids and Democrats will be used from the outset to distinguish the factions in the making.[7]

Philadelphia's Federalists, meanwhile, virtually disappeared as an organized party. "Truly humbled" by the Republican victories of 1799 and 1800, the Federalists temporarily secluded themselves in a self-imposed political exile. Their "utmost ambition" was keeping "Duane & his Gang from the supreme Power." To this end, when they voted, they voted Quid.[8]

The Federalists could bring themselves to cooperate with the Quids because they found them less socially offensive than the Democrats. In defeat, the Federalists were ready to concede that not all Republicans were Jacobins. Rather, as one of them put it, they "very obviously consisted of two classes of men." On one side were "all the well informed, well disposed citizens" and on the other was "crowded the *rubbish* of our community."[9] This suggestive social commentary, while overly simplistic, was nonetheless essentially accurate in pointing out the presence of class differences among Republicans that tended to separate them into Quids or Democrats.

The conflicting social elements that went into the party in formation made Republican unity in Philadelphia inherently precarious. During the 1790s, the Republicans had aimed to incorporate nearly everyone below the highest stratum of society. They had succeeded in steadily expanding their constituency, in part because the Federalist leaders were so patently exclusive. With them, in the

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[7] President Jefferson dubbed the two groups the "moderates" and the "high-fliers." Jefferson to Gallatin, Mar. 28, 1803, Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin* (Philadelphia, 1879), I, 119–120. His terms appropriately suggest the differing qualities of partisanship that were instrumental in the schism. The term "radicals," frequently used for the Democrats, is better avoided because of its anachronistic connotations.

[8] John Rutledge to Robert Goodloe Harper, Aug. 3, 1805, Robert Goodloe Harper Papers, Library of Congress.

[9] *Gazette of the United States*, "Ephraim," Mar. 11, 1801.

absence of the right credentials of family and social position, mere wealth and achievement were not sufficient claims to acceptability. Foreign birth, for example, was likely to disqualify a person for Federalist Party service.[10] As a result, ambitious men who lacked the social cachet to rise politically as Federalists tended to take their "talents to the best market."[11] The Republican Party leadership in 1800 was top heavy with such men. Merchants, lawyers, men of wealth and business prominence enjoyed an influence in the party that was wholly disproportionate to their numbers. The Republican voting strength came from the mechanic classes, the Germans and the Irish who lived in the working-class wards at the edges of the city and in the crowded, lower-class suburbs of the Northern Liberties and Southwark.

The social disparities within the party were bound to produce stress. As compared with the most prominent Federalists, all Republicans were social outcasts, but that basis for mutuality became rather strained once the common enemy was gone. Republican leaders from the commercial-professional wing of Quids, once in office, tended to display their own social pretensions. Ambitious for respectability for both themselves and their party, they were ready to slough off an identity with the party's less respectable elements by discouraging their participation in party affairs. Duane and those who became Democratic activists had a different conception. Their goal was to strengthen the partisan identity of mechanics and the ethnic minorities by drawing them into an active, ongoing involvement in the party apparatus.

The Democrats' efforts at party building were partially frustrated, for a time, by the Quids' reluctance to appear partisan. The trouble between them began over the question of patronage. Duane and the Democrats urged a "clean sweep" of the Federalists from office, while the Quids, led by Gallatin and Dallas, counselled

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[10] This was evidently the case with A. J. Dallas. The burden of Federalist argument, against "counsellor Creole," as William Cobbett called him, was that he was an "arrogant assuming foreigner." *Porcupine's Gazette*, Aug. 5, 1798; *Gazette of the United States*, Sept. 11, 1799. See also *ibid.*, Apr. 17, Sept. 4, Dec. 18, 1799. The Federalists' nativism probably helps to account for the Republicanism of other rich, distinguished immigrants, such as Albert Gallatin, Stephen Girard, and Congressman John Swanwick.

[11] "A Westerner," commenting on Dallas, in *ibid.*, Aug. 6, 1799.

restraint and conciliation. Behind the opposing views on removals
and patronage were conflicting attitudes toward the idea of party
itself. The Quids were hesitant to do anything that might perpetuate
the two-party system. If parties persisted, in Dallas' view, "each
general election will involve the hazard of civil war." Therefore it
was crucial to open the "door to reconciliation."[12] The Democrats,
for their part, had no aspirations to consensual harmony. They
wanted to defeat the Federalists, not absorb them, for they neither
expected nor wished to see partisan conflict wither away.[13]

Philadelphia's Democrats of 1801 were as candid as the Jack-
sonians of the next generation in their appraisal of the political
value of patronage. Seeing the advantage it had been to the Federal-
ists, they concluded that it would be "political suicide" not to
follow their example. A spoils system made better sense to them
than dividing the "honours & profits" of government with political
enemies.[14] Governor McKean had disappointed them with his
patronage policy by ignoring party considerations in favor of his
own relatives and personal associates.[15] New appointments, in their
estimate, should be calculated to reward party loyalists and help
consolidate "the republican interest."[16]

The leading Quids, with their eighteenth-century standards of
political propriety, were disgusted by the "clamor" from the "office-
hunting caitiffs." Appointments should be based on "integrity and
capacity" alone, regardless of party affiliation, in Secretary Gallatin's
opinion. If the Democrats' view were to prevail, it would reduce
government to a business. To Gallatin, the demand for removals
suggested that the "hard struggle" by Republicans was not fought
on principle but for "the sake of a few paltry offices . . . mere ad-

12 Dallas to Gallatin, June 14, 1801, Gallatin Papers, New-York Historical Society. See
Wilson Cary Nicholas to James Madison, May 1, 1801, Rives Collection, Madison Papers,
Library of Congress, for a quintessential expression of the antiparty philosophy of Republican
moderates.

13 See, for example, the unabashed partisanship in the survey of government clerks which
"Citizen W. Duane" furnished to Gallatin in 1801, Gallatin Papers.

14 *Gazette of the United States*, quoting *Aurora*, Mar. 4, 1801; Thomas Leiper to Jefferson,
Sept. 22, 1802, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

15 McKean practiced what Ronald Formisano has characterized as "a *patron-client* type
of patronage." "Deferential-Participant Politics," 479.

16 Duane to Jefferson, June 10, 1801, Jefferson Papers; Michael Leib to Gallatin, May 14,
1801, Gallatin Papers.

ministrative offices of profit."[17] The Quids themselves tended to see politics as a civic duty, if sometimes an unpleasant one.[18] To them, the Democrats appeared to be turning it into a profession.

The dispute over patronage crested in the spring of 1803 when the Democrats decided to take their case directly to the President. His caution in removals, as they saw it, was not a policy of his own choosing but the work of conservative advisers, especially Gallatin.[19] To give him the "pretext" he needed to justify a change in policy, the Democrats set out to rally public sentiment on the question through a series of local ward meetings. The Quids were enraged by the meddling, the efforts to stir public opinion on a subject they believed was better left to the discretion of government. In the end, the Democrats' petition campaign came to nothing. Jefferson drafted a friendly reply to be sent through William Duane, but Gallatin disliked its "appearance of apology" and on his advice the President withdrew it. But the dispute exposed an intensity of feeling that made it evident to most observers that schism in Philadelphia was inevitable.[20]

The schism broke wide open the following year when the Quids tried to stop Michael Leib's re-election to Congress. A similar attempt had been made two years earlier, but had been suppressed by party leaders bent on unity, including at that time both Dallas and Duane. In 1804 Leib's enemies would not be stopped. When they failed to defeat his nomination, the Quids bolted the Republican

17 Dallas to Gallatin, June 14, 1801, *ibid.*; William Jones to John Randolph, Mar. 19, 1803, Uselma Clarke Smith Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP); Leonard D. White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801–1829* (New York, 1951), 152; Gallatin to Jefferson, Aug. 11, 1803, *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, I, 135.

18 Dallas to Gallatin, Sept. 30, 1801, *ibid.*; William Jones to Jefferson, May 20, 1801, Jefferson Papers.

19 There was probably some truth to the Democrats' contention. Certainly Gallatin was more conservative than Jefferson at his most cautious. During his second administration, Jefferson made his own decisions on Pennsylvania appointments, independent of Gallatin, and the results favored the Democratic partisans. Thomas Leiper to Jefferson, Mar. 23, 1806, Jefferson Papers; Gallatin to Jefferson, Aug. 6, 1808, *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, I, 402.

20 Michael Leib to Mathew Carey, Dec. 12, 1802, Lea and Febiger Papers, HSP; Gallatin to Jefferson, Aug. 11, 1803, *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, I, 134–135; Jefferson to Duane, unsigned draft, July 24, 1803, Jefferson Papers; William Jones and others to Jefferson, draft, Feb. 12, 1803, Uselma Clarke Smith Collection; William Jones to John Randolph, Mar. 19, 1803, *ibid.*

ticket and, with the aid of Federalists, ran their own independent candidate against him. Leib survived the election, barely, but the Republican Party in Philadelphia was doomed. From that point on, Quids and Democrats openly competed for Republican votes as rival parties.[21]

On one level, Leib's troubles were the result of a personal rivalry with George Logan. The two, who had disliked each other since their days in the Democratic Republican Society, contested for exclusive leadership of Philadelphia County, those districts adjacent to Philadelphia but outside the city limits.[22] Logan, the Quaker pacifist and gentleman farmer, was popular in the rural areas of the county. But Leib, a German physician who had abandoned medicine for politics, had the clear advantage. He controlled the densely-settled Northern Liberties, which held more than 40 percent of the county's population and a majority of its Republican voters.[23] Moreover, Leib was the more astute—some said, unscrupulous—politician. Logan had the help, however, of his close friend Tench Coxe, a man almost without peer in political infighting. It was Coxe who directed the fight against Leib in 1804, and Leib launched a vendetta in retaliation which ultimately cost Coxe his federal appointment.[24]

But personal rivalries were not the whole story. The most damaging case against Leib was the charge that he was morally unfit for office. He was tarnished by a personal scandal, going back many years, that he may have defrauded the Penrose family of several thousand dollars in government securities. Although the charge was never proved conclusively, and the case was settled out of court,

[21] For fuller, somewhat differing accounts of the bolt from Leib in 1802 and 1804, see Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 43–45, 68–73, and Phillips, "William Duane," 148–153, 158–160, 164–170.

[22] *Ibid.*, 104–107; Minutes of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, 141–146, HSP; Eugene P. Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790–1800* (New York, 1942), 147–148; Frederick B. Tolles, *George Logan of Philadelphia* (New York, 1953), 141, 145, 233–234, 245–246.

[23] Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 62.

[24] Jacob E. Cooke, "Tench Coxe, Alexander Hamilton, and the Encouragement of American Manufactures," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d series, XXXII (1975), 369–392. Leib, in the United States Senate, succeeded in 1812 in abolishing the position of Purveyor of Public Supplies, held by Coxe since 1803. See Michael Leib from [John Steele or William Linnard?], Jan. 11, 1811, Society Collection, HSP; *Annals of Congress*, 12th Cong., 1st Sess. (Washington, 1853), 106, 1212–1213, 2257–2261.

Leib had failed to clear his name of suspicion.[25] In these circum-
stances, he could never have survived politically, despite his strength
in his home district, except for the support of William Duane. The
Aurora editor put his own reputation on the line in Leib's defense,
and that decision opened a new chapter in Philadelphia politics.

Duane believed that Leib's only real crime, in the eyes of the
Quids, was his Democracy. Other politicians, including Tench Coxe,
had survived equal or worse scandals. Leib was to be ostracized,
Duane was convinced, because he played a different style of politics
from the gentlemen seeking to run the Republican Party as their
own private club. Leib was not a club member by anybody's reckon-
ing. He played street politics as Philadelphia had rarely seen it.
His style was as distasteful to the Quids as to the Federalists before
them. All this Duane charged and the Democrats agreed with him.
In retrospect, the Quids may well have been right to dismiss Leib
as an opportunistic demagogue. But the Democrats could not have
conceded that, given the context of the quarrel. To them, the issue
was greater than the personality of a single man. Therefore Leib
was toasted around town as the pillar of democracy and his cause
was made the symbol of a wider struggle.[26]

The Quids were dumbfounded by Duane's moral obtuseness, as
they saw it. During the campaign of 1804, they reported, Duane
remarked that morality was not a necessary quality in a legislator.[27]

25 Leib to Albert Gallatin, May 8, 1801, Gallatin Papers; *The Following Testimonials of
the Conduct and Characters of Dr. Michael Leib and Colonel William Duane are Taken from the
Records of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania* ([Philadelphia], 1816), pamphlet, HSP; *Gazette
of the United States*, Sept. 4, 1799, Apr. 17, 23, 25, 1801; *Freeman's Journal*, June 13, 14,
Aug. 20, 1804.

26 See Phillips, "William Duane," 191–193. In "The Transformation of Urban Politics,
1700–1765," *Journal of American History*, LX (1973), 605–632, Gary B. Nash has argued
that, as early as the mid-eighteenth century, Philadelphia and other cities experienced a
democratization of political style and tactics which served to undermine the traditional
political ethos. While it is significant that political elites learned to broaden their appeal and
solicit the votes of the lower classes, Nash perhaps exaggerates the "tendency to shift power
downward." As he notes, leaders retained their conservative social outlook. And lower-class
voters were, at best, passive participants in the electoral process. Michael Leib, on the other
hand, did not merely dabble in mass politics; he made it a fulltime occupation. He was con-
sistent not sporadic in grounding his political fortunes squarely upon support from the masses
and disdain for elites. And he envisioned working-class voters as active, indispensable partners
in a political machine directed by himself.

27 *Freeman's Journal*, "Clonensis," July 20, 1804.

Perhaps he said it, perhaps not. But the sentiment perfectly summed up what Duane and the Democrats believed was at issue. In their opinion, *public* character not private reputation was the test of an officeholder. Personal morality, however genuine, was no guarantee of sound government. The job of an officeholder was to faithfully represent the will of his constituents—nothing more, nothing less.[28] With these views, Philadelphia's Democrats had come a long way from the political heritage of the eighteenth century, expressing a philosophy of politics customarily associated with the Jacksonian era.

It was precisely on this question—who is fit to govern in a representative democracy?—that Quids and Democrats contended throughout Pennsylvania in the gubernatorial election of 1805. The Quids claimed a superior weight of character that entitled them to recognition. The Democrats refused to defer to their self-estimation. More importantly, they challenged the very concept of a class of "natural leaders," more fit than ordinary men to represent the people wisely. In their opinion, the Quids' attitude was not only condescending but dangerous, a perversion of the meaning of popular sovereignty as they understood it. The Quids, indeed, saw themselves as "stewards" of society, offering their talents, their education, their wealth, the benefits of all their attainments in the public service. In this election, they were to be baffled and angered by the public's ingratitude.

In 1805 Governor Thomas McKean was forced to seek re-election to a third term without the endorsement of the Republican caucus, for the Country Democrats in the legislature at Lancaster had lost all patience with him. McKean was a thorough-going Quid. His aristocratic lifestyle and opinions were made doubly offensive by his personality—vain, arrogant, and notoriously ill-tempered.[29] In truth, Governor McKean had never been popular with the Democrats within the party. Since 1799 they had been obliged to tolerate him because of the influence of A. J. Dallas over party decisions. In

28 An especially clear statement of these views is in William Duane, *Experience the Test of Government: In Eighteen Essays. Written During the Years 1805 and 1806....* (Philadelphia, 1807), pamphlet, HSP.

29 *Gazette of the United States,* Aug. 6, 12, 14, 16, 28, Sept. 9, 1799; Gail Stuart Rowe, "Power, Politics, and Public Service: The Life of Thomas McKean," 256–259, 270, 279, 323–324, and *passim* (doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, 1969).

1805 the Democrats rebelled and nominated one of their own number, Speaker of the House Simon Snyder, as the caucus choice for Governor. McKean's friends, led by Dallas, were now forced to organize the Quids officially into a third party to support the incumbent.

McKean and the Country Democrats had come to loggerheads on the issue of judicial reform. The legislature sought to simplify court procedures and create a new system of speedy, local justice, but the Governor thwarted their efforts with repeated vetoes.[30] During this phase of the developing quarrel, Duane and the Philadelphia Democrats remained essentially neutral. The city Democrats, while broadly sympathetic to the intentions of their rural colleagues, did not share their confidence in the democratic or reform potential of localism.[31]

The judicial reform issue, however, fully engaged the Philadelphians when it turned to the question of judicial life tenure. Here was an issue with the force to crystallize the ideological differences separating Democrats from Quids. To the Quids, with their paternalistic notions of government, any violation of judicial independence was unthinkable. As the Democrats saw it, judges were no more intended to be above the will of the people than any other officer of government.

The subject of judicial tenure came into sharp focus in January 1805 with the acquittal of three state Supreme Court Justices impeached for misconduct in the case of Thomas Passmore. Every Democrat agreed that the judges had been grossly arbitrary, but Dallas, speaking for the defense, had successfully argued that the judges had acted within their powers under the common law.[32] To Duane, the outcome of the trial illustrated two things: it demonstrated the latitude and discretion that the common law gave to ʾudges to create law and thus to impose their personal vision on

30 On judicial reform in Pennsylvania, see *ibid.*, 51–58, 65–67, 77–81, 86–87, and Richard E. Ellis, *The Jeffersonian Crisis: Courts and Politics in the Young Republic* (New York, 1971), chaps. XI and XII.

31 For a sample of the *Aurora*'s progression on the issue, compare the editorials of Jan. 4, 1803, Mar. 22, 1804, and Feb. 1, 1805. On the geographic split, see *ibid.*, Jan. 4, 1803; Elizabeth K. Henderson, "The Attack on the Judiciary in Pennsylvania, 1800–1810," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI (1937), 132.

32 Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 55–58, 66–67, 77–80; Ellis, *The Jeffersonian Crisis*, 165–170.

society; and it showed the failure of impeachment as a protective mechanism, proving the need to limit judicial tenure as a means to make judges responsible.[33]

City and Country Democrats allied, at this point, and campaigned together for judicial reform through amendment to the state Constitution. Their call for a constitutional convention became the focus of the gubernatorial contest between McKean and Snyder. The Democrats proposed a series of revisions which together would have shifted the balance of power in government, created by the Constitution of 1790, by weakening the judicial and executive branches and strengthening the lower house of the legislature.[34] Indeed, their stated intention was to restore the democratic structure and spirit of the state Constitution of 1776.[35] Evidently they miscalculated, however, in seeking to revive old constitutionalist sentiments among Republicans. By 1805 the constitutional issue, as such, was an abstraction without force to engage the close attention of voters. Even before this gubernatorial campaign was over, the Democrats began to retreat from their commitment and, ultimately, the idea of a constitutional convention was allowed to die quietly.[36]

While the Democrats were flexible on the constitutional issue, the Quids were not. Organized as the Society of Constitutional Republicans, they defended the Constitution of 1790 as if the safety of the republic hung in the balance. Their fears cannot be dismissed as exaggerated campaign rhetoric, for they were more alarmed in private than they were willing to admit publicly. To avoid alienating voters, they concealed their true feeling that tampering with the Constitution was an invitation to anarchy, and argued only that a convention would be inexpedient.[37]

[33] These points are repeated in numerous editorials and guest articles in the *Aurora* during 1805. See, for example, *ibid.*, Jan. 28, 30, 1805.

[34] Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 80–84, and chap. IV, *passim*.

[35] For an especially clear statement, see Thomas Paine's letters "To the Citizens of Pennsylvania on the Proposal for Calling a Convention," *Aurora*, Aug. 31, Sept. 4, 7, 1805, reprinted in Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York, 1945), II, 992–1007.

[36] Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 94.

[37] Dallas to Robert Smith, Apr. 11, 1805, in George Mifflin Dallas, *Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas* (Philadelphia, 1871), 117; Dallas to Albert Gallatin, Jan. 26, 1805, Gallatin Papers; Gallatin to Dallas, Mar. 30, 1805, Simon Gratz Collection, HSP.

It is significant that Quids and Democrats differed in intensity on this issue, for it suggests a crucial divergence in their political thought. Behind their differing conceptions of the structure of government was a deeper disagreement about the relevance of structure itself. The best studies of the Revolutionary ideology have taught us that constitutionalism was the genius of the age. All of that generation, Federalists and Anti-Federalists alike, shared a common faith that the success of the republican experiment depended upon the creation of balanced institutions of government that would serve as a perpetual check against the abuse of power. Recently, Lance Banning has argued that "Most of the inherited structure of eighteenth-century political thought persisted in America for years after 1789," and that the "intellectual universe" of "constitutionalism" informed the origins and character of Republican Party thought.[38] These interpretations brilliantly illuminate the political philosophy of the Quids, and allow us to understand their passionate concern for the safety of the carefully balanced Constitution of their state.

They cannot, however, serve to explain Democratic thought, for the Democrats no longer entirely shared that common vocabulary of political ideas. Subtly but surely, they were moving away from the constitutionalist mode of thought toward the modern ideas of partisans. They questioned whether governmental institutions, however designed, could be relied on to protect liberty. No system could provide an automatic check on tyranny, William Duane argued. "There is no *check*—and can be none—but the *people*." The Democrats' goal, therefore, was not so much to alter the structure of government as to go beyond it. Their trust was in direct action by the people, through the mechanism of political party.[39]

The Democrats' partisan thinking is especially revealed in their positive attitude toward conflict. Here they diverged sharply from the classical eighteenth-century canon with its consensual ideal. The fear of perpetual agitation had occupied the Framers of the Consti-

[38] Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (Chapel Hill, 1969); Banning, "Republican Ideology and the Triumph of the Constitution," 173, 187–188.

[39] Duane, *Experience the Test of Government*, 7, and *passim*. This pamphlet is perhaps the fullest, clearest expression of these views.

tution more than any single issue and they had structured the government, deliberately, as a buffering device to screen out conflict. The notion that conflict and agitation were inherently dangerous made parties abhorrent to this generation.[40] These ideas persisted among Philadelphia's Quids. That the Democrats were "noisy" was one of their most typical complaints. A. J. Dallas lamented that so long as William Duane had influence "the state, the United States will never enjoy quiet."[41] In truth, tranquillity was not their aim. On the contrary, the Democrats believed that continual agitation was essential to political health. In Duane's metaphor, "Like the continual motion of the sea, which preserves its sweet and its saline particles from evaporating, so does a continued rulling of the democratic waters prevent their stinking, stagnating, or being converted into a pestilential pool of monarchy, aristocracy or priestcraft."[42]

The traditional fear of conflict, Duane and others pointed out, was grounded in distrust of the people's capacity for self-government. It was the attitude of those who believed that "the sovereignty of the people is ideal and not real."[43] The Quids, indeed, understood popular sovereignty as the Founders had conceived it; through the principle of representation, they had found the means to ground government squarely on the consent of the people, yet, simultaneously, to eliminate the need for their immediate or direct involvement. The people ruled everywhere, yet nowhere.[44] Only through representation, the Quids agreed, could freedom and order be held in balance. The alternative was to permit individual "passions" and "interests" to overwhelm the "standard of reason, order and law." To them, this was the "crisis" now posed by the Democrats. They aimed to shatter the invisible barrier between the

[40] Hofstadter, *Idea of a Party System*, chap. II, provides an excellent summation of the ideas behind the creation of "A Constitution Against Parties."

[41] Dallas to Gallatin, Apr. 4, 1805, Gallatin Papers.

[42] *Aurora*, Apr. 1, 1805. Duane, using the pseudonym of Jasper Dwight, had brilliantly argued for the value of political conflict in his first political pamphlet in America, written in reply to George Washington's warning, in the Farewell Address, against the "baneful effects of the Spirit of Party." *A Letter to George Washington . . . Containing Strictures on His Address of the Seventeenth of September, 1796 . . .* (Philadelphia, 1796).

[43] Duane, *Experience the Test of Government*, 7-9.

[44] See Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, 596-600, and Part Six, *passim*.

public and the government. "The object is to reduce government
to its elements," according to Dallas, "rendering the immediate
agency of the people perpetually necessary to every executive,
legislative, elective, and judicial purpose."[45]

From their point of view, the Quids were right to see this moment
as a crisis. Dallas correctly perceived the threat to traditional
constitutionalism behind the Democratic program. The Democrats
sought to revise the meaning of popular sovereignty, to transform
theoretical principle into working reality. Their various constitu-
tional proposals added up to a single demand for responsibility by
every officer of government to his constituents. By this they meant
not an abstract responsibility arising from a sense of obligation, but
a constant, concrete dependence upon public opinion. Perpetual
scrutiny was the only guarantee of faithfulness in office, in their
opinion. To argue, as the Democrats did, for government "founded
on public opinion" was to fly in the face of traditional political
thought with its fear of "factious majorities." In their view, "a
majority of the people," quite simply, "can not be a mob." On the
contrary, "the *opinion of the majority*, in representative democracies,
is the *only criterion*" of wise policy.[46] Consensus was the grand
illusion of the past, majoritarianism the received faith of the future.
Deliberately, self-consciously, Philadelphia's Democrats were push-
ing their countrymen toward that future.

The Democrats' expressed faith in the innate wisdom of majorities
struck at the roots of the philosophy of stewardship. In this guber-
natorial election, they set out to challenge society's so-called "natural
leaders" and to disabuse them of their pretensions. No man better
personified the claims of the "natural aristocracy" than Thomas
McKean. As Governor, he was neither bashful nor discreet in de-
manding deference to his superior knowledge and experience.[47] On
one notorious occasion he told a visiting delegation that he was

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[45] Dallas to Gallatin, Jan. 26, 1805, Gallatin Papers; Dallas to Robert Smith, Apr. 11,
1805, in G. M. Dallas, *Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas*, 117.

[46] *Aurora*, "Lucius," Mar. 17, 19, 24, 1808. See *ibid.*, "Regulus," Mar. 21, 23, 1805; Duane,
Experience the Test of Government, 7–9, 14–16, 42–45, 51.

[47] See Rowe, "Power, Politics, and Public Service," 270, 323–324, and *passim*. See also,
for example, McKean to George Logan, Feb. 19, 1803, Logan Papers, HSP; McKean to
Joseph Hiester, July 31, 1807, Gregg Collection, Library of Congress.

plagued by "ignoramuses" and "clodpoles (or, if they please, clod-hoppers)" within his own party. His outburst set the theme for the 1805 campaign. The Democrats announced as criteria for their candidate that he "should not be a lawyer, and that a clod hopper should be preferred."[48] This was the Quiddish world turned upside down. "It is avowed here," reported Dallas, "and it will be in practice by the reformers everywhere, that lawyers, men of talents and education, men of fortune and manners, ought not to participate in the formation, or in the administration of a democratic government."[49] The malice toward lawyers was especially pronounced in this campaign. Lawyers as a group were uniformly opposed to radical judicial reform, convincing Democrats of a conspiracy by bench and bar. But beyond this timely reason for hostility, lawyers were a natural target. To the Democrats, lawyers as a class represented an especially flagrant example of the arrogance of those who claimed a special competence for public leadership.[50] Personally, they preferred a clodhopper.

The Clodhopper candidate, Simon Snyder, was not elected in 1805. He became Governor three years later and served for three terms, the most popular Governor in Pennsylvania's history during this era. Thomas McKean, the incumbent, was returned by a narrow margin and served a harrowing three more years, threatened with impeachment and virtually devoid of party support. The official returns belied the real results of this election. In all its implications, it was a victory for the Democrats.

Privately, the Quids conceded defeat to William Duane. They had hoped to "rally the genuine Republicans," but had failed, and it was no secret that McKean "owes his re-election to the federalists." The *Aurora* had overwhelmed them, as they feared. In Albert Gallatin's postmortem judgment, Duane had "easily gained the victory for his friends. I call it victory," Gallatin admitted, "for the number of republicans who have opposed him . . . do not exceed one fourth or at most one third of the whole."[51]

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48 Higginbotham, *Keystone*, 85–87.

49 Dallas to Robert Smith, Apr. 11, 1805, in G. M. Dallas, *Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas*, 117.

50 See *Aurora*, Feb. 6, 12, 1802, for a strong, early expression of this view.

51 Dallas to Gallatin, Jan. 26, 1805, Gallatin Papers; Gallatin to Jean Badollet, Oct. 25, 1805, *ibid.*

To the Quids, Duane had become the monstrous symbol of every hated political tendency. That he perhaps spoke the true sentiments of Republicans was unthinkable to them. Most intolerable was the suggestion that he had "the confidence" of Thomas Jefferson. When a Federalist taunted a Quid that Duane was a friend of the President, the Quid beat him in a fistfight then wounded him in a duel.[52] The Quid, no doubt, felt consoled that he had vindicated Republican honor. But while the Federalist lost the fight, he won the argument.

Jefferson maintained a careful neutrality in this election which, in its effects, encouraged the Democrats and hurt the Quids. His failure to endorse the incumbent could easily be interpreted as a rebuff, especially after Duane's associate, Michael Leib, coaxed a letter from the President denying that he supported McKean. Leib campaigned from tavern to tavern flaunting the secret letter and "perhaps a thousand persons of the lowest class of society have already seen it," a Quid complained.[53] Jefferson's neutrality in the party schism was typical, reflecting his personal wish to avoid alienating anyone. But, at a number of points, he betrayed an affection for his "high-fliers," as he called them, that gives reason to question his reputation as a moderate partisan.[54]

What the Quids most wanted from the President, but failed to get, was an explicit renunciation of William Duane.[55] When he ignored their tacit demands, some Quids secretly turned bitter against Jefferson himself. A disenchanted A. J. Dallas, for example, dropped out of state politics and put the ultimate blame on Jefferson for the uncongenial atmosphere of Pennsylvania Republicanism. His "countenance, to the presumptions of the Aurora" was the

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[52] Dallas to Gallatin, Apr. 4, 1805, *ibid.*; Duane to Joseph Clay, Dec. 12, 1805, Clay Papers, New York Public Library; William J. Duane to Clay, Dec. 16, 1805, *ibid.*

[53] Unsigned letter to Jefferson, Aug. 24, 1805, quoted in Cunningham, *Jeffersonian Republicans in Power*, 219; Leib to Jefferson, July 22, 1805, Jefferson Papers; Jefferson to Leib, Aug. 12, 1805, *ibid.*

[54] See note 19. Whether from friendship or shrewd political sense, Jefferson consistently supported Duane over the years. He believed, in sharp contrast to the opinion of moderates, that the "over zealous" Democrat reflected the attitudes of "a great portion of the republican body." Jefferson to James Madison, Aug. 16, 1803, Jefferson Papers.

[55] See Dallas to Gallatin, Apr. 4, 1805, Gallatin Papers; McKean to Jefferson, draft, Feb. 18, 1805, Thomas McKean Papers, HSP; Jefferson to McKean, Mar. 3, 1805, *ibid.*

"true cause," in Dallas' opinion, "why no man of real character and capacity . . . has the power to render any political service."[56]

It is not surprising that the Quids had fallen for, compared with the Democrats, they were political amateurs. Elections are not won on debate alone, no matter how attractive the ideas. The Democrats' ideology clearly implied new forms of political action, and this the Democrats understood. They initiated political practices as advanced as their political thought. Their politics resembled the politics of the 1840s in sophisticated understanding of the role of party organization. Here, too, the example of Philadelphia offers reason to question the Hofstadter-Wallace timetable for the emergence of modern conceptions of party.

For a decade after 1800, Duane and Leib presided over a party organization of impressive depth and complexity.[57] The Democrats were the first politicians in the city's history to recognize that effective politics was a year-round occupation, not a seasonal distraction. The informal apparatus of the party operated constantly through a number of overlapping groups—political clubs, social clubs, ethnic fraternal associations and, largest of all, the militia. The uniformed volunteers of the Philadelphia Militia Legion were, in essence, a Democratic political army some 800 strong.[58] If he wanted to, a Democrat could go to some sort of party gathering most any night of a week, if only to the local tavern that served as the clubhouse in his neighborhood. There were picnics, parades, militia drills, Tammany meetings, fraternal dinners—a steady round of occasions all serving to keep the party's members socially involved and emotionally committed.[59] As a result when election season came around each fall, the party cadre could call upon the

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[56] Dallas to Gallatin, Apr. 21, 1811, Gallatin Papers. See Cunningham, *Jeffersonian Republicans in Power*, 220.

[57] See Phillips, "William Duane," chap. IV, for a fuller discussion of the organization and social-cultural composition of the party.

[58] A comparison of the roster of militia officers (*Pennsylvania Archives*, 6th Series, IV) with the names of Democratic party activists, compiled from newspaper sources, makes clear the connection between political ambition and militia service. Abundant, widely scattered evidence testifies to the party affiliation of the rank and file.

[59] One important criterion of modern politics is the presence of "party as a reference group in the electorate." Formisano, "Deferential-Participant Politics," 481. By this criterion, Philadelphia's Democrats qualify as a modern party.

services of hundreds as campaign workers in their wards and districts.

Philadelphia's elections were won or lost on the neighborhood level.[60] The Democrats were the first to see this, and they left little to chance in their techniques for turning out the vote in the Democratic strongholds. By rolling up immense majorities in the four poorest wards, on the northern and southern fringes of the city, and in the slum-ridden Northern Liberties, they repeatedly managed to offset the large voting margins that the Federalist-Quid coalition enjoyed in the fashionable center of the city.[61]

The Democrats' core constituencies were Philadelphia's two largest ethnic minorities, the Irish and the Germans. As social outgroups, both had excellent class and cultural reasons to identify with the Democrats in their war on elitism. The majority of Germans were probably middling mechanics, but their economic status as skilled craftsmen was not matched by an equivalent social standing. While they were not ordinarily the victims of open bigotry, as were their immigrant parents and grandparents, they were still treated as a group apart and slightly suspect. No doubt they were sensitive to remembered cultural slights and to the covert prejudice that persisted.[62]

[60] This was particularly true in Philadelphia because of peculiarities in the election procedures which exaggerated the importance of ward-level elections. Phillips, "William Duane," 212–216.

[61] The characteristic geographic split in Philadelphia's voting pattern may be seen, for example, in the returns for Michael Leib's congressional race in 1804 and William Duane's defeat for the state senate in 1807. *Aurora*, Oct. 11, 1804; *Democratic Press*, Oct. 14, 1807. Using tax assessments, Stuart Blumin has estimated the wealth of each Philadelphia ward and district in 1820. "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," in Stephen Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (New Haven, 1969), 187. Blumin's figures for 1820 may be used as a reliable general indicator of the city's economic profile in 1800–1810. A similar pattern of residential segregation by wealth existed as early as 1780. See John K. Alexander, "The City of Brotherly Fear: The Poor in Late-Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," in Kenneth T. Jackson and Stanley K. Schultz, eds., *Cities in American History* (New York, 1972), 82–83, 93 n. 27. See also Anthony N. B. Garven, "Proprietary Philadelphia as Artifact," in Oscar Handlin and John Burchard, eds., *The Historian and the City* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), 177–201, and Norman Johnston, "The Caste and Class of the Urban Form of Historic Philadelphia," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, XXXIII (1966), 344–349.

[62] On persistent prejudice toward Germans see, for example, Robert Liston to Lord Grenville, Nov. 5, 1799, British State Papers, Robert Liston Correspondence, Library of Congress; *Gazette of the United States*, Nov. 22, 1799; *Spirit of the Press*, Oct. 5, 1805, "A Lutheran," Jan. 1807, Oct. 1808, Aug. 1809; *The Tickler*, Sept. 28, 1808, Aug. 2, 1809. On the tendency to bloc voting by Germans, see Thomas Leiper to Jefferson, Sept. 19, 1802, Jefferson Papers.

The city's Irish were economically and socially just one step above the bottom, defined by the black population. As early as 1800, the immigrant Irish in Philadelphia competed with blacks for the same jobs and the same houses, the worst the city had to offer.[63] There was nothing covert about the prejudice they encountered. Irish-baiting became popular in America long before the potato famine. It can be dated, more or less exactly, to the mid-1790s with the rise and fall of the United Irish. Britain's suppression of the abortive rebellion drove thousands to America as refugees from political reprisals as well as from economic dislocation. A substantial minority of the newcomers were Catholic, but it was not the religion of the Irish that alarmed native-born citizens of this generation. Rather, the alleged radicalism of their politics was the prime source of suspicion and hostility.[64] They were shunned, too, for their poverty and for cultural habits that offended proper Philadelphians.

A political coalition of the Irish and the Germans became the backbone of the Democratic Party created by Duane and Leib. The Irish editor and the German physician each had solid foundations for popularity with his own ethnic constituency. When these two merged their political interests, it laid the groundwork for a formidable alliance. The various subgroups of the party tended to be organized along ethnic lines. Particular Tammany tribes and Legion companies, for example, were dominantly Irish or German in their membership. This innovation, more than any other, set Philadelphia's Democrats apart from the typical Republican organization. Party moderates everywhere resented the appeal to ethnic identities and would have agreed with Thomas Ritchie when he blamed Philadelphia's troubles upon the presence of Irish and Germans who could be organized into "clans and tribes for political purposes."[65]

[63] Cedar ward, the poorest neighborhood in the city, was the center of South Philadelphia's "Irishtown" and also the center of black population. See the city census of 1808 in John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609–1884* (Philadelphia, 1884), I, 537. W. E. B. DuBois noted that by 1800 immigrant Irish were displacing free blacks in jobs. *The Philadelphia Negro; a Social Study* (New York, 1967).

[64] On the political motivation for emigration, see the hints in Maldwyn A. Jones, "Ulster Emigration, 1783–1815," E. R. R. Green, ed., *Essays in Scotch-Irish History* (New York, 1969), 55–56.

[65] Quoted in Charles H. Ambler, *Thomas Ritchie: A Study in Virginia Politics* (Richmond, 1913), 31–32. See John Randolph to James M. Garnett, July 29, 1811, Randolph-Garnett Letter Book, Library of Congress.

The Democratic leaders were equally deliberate in their efforts to nurture a sense of fraternity between the party's two major ethnic components. They saw to it, for example, that Germans and Irish mingled at militia turnouts and similar social opportunities.

To expand on the ethnic advantage, the Democrats recruited new immigrants as partisans well before they became voters. The party set up appropriate machinery, of course, to encourage prompt naturalization. Moreover, Congressman Leib had helped to open up a loophole in the naturalization law that temporarily expanded the numbers eligible to become citizens.[66] Charges of fraudulent naturalizations and fraudulent voting by aliens were reiterated throughout the decade. Such charges, whatever their accuracy, testified to the Democrats' success in effectively organizing Philadelphia's ethnic minorities.

Two hazards threatened the stability of the Irish-German coalition: it could become the victim of a nativist backlash, or it might succumb to distrust aroused between its member groups. By 1810 these hazards had combined to destroy the ethnic alliance, but only after a decade.[67] Obviously, Philadelphia's Democrats had not mastered the art of stable mass politics. Still, their innovations as party-builders entitle them to identification as essentially modern partisans.

How should Philadelphia's political experience be understood? Were the city's Democrats wholly anomalous to their generation when they challenged the antiparty axioms of consensus and deference? Or did they represent a more widespread drive toward party and all that it stood for—the recognition of heterogeneity, the acceptance of conflict, the rejection of deference? The legitimization of party marked a profound transformation in American political culture, not complete until the 1840s. The Philadelphia example

[66] The naturalization act of 1804, introduced by Leib a year earlier, exempted aliens who had immigrated before 1802 from the requirement of filing first papers, or a declaration of intent, and permitted their naturalization upon the sworn testimony of a witness that they had resided in the United States for five years. The Democrats set up a committee on naturalization to encourage use of the special law, which continued as a regular feature of the party organization.

[67] Phillips, "William Duane," 279–287.

indicates that the process of transformation was underway well before the Jacksonian era.

Philadelphia's Democrats were "precocious partisans," to be sure.[68] Their complex urban environment gave them reason, earlier than most, to question the antiparty tradition. But if they were not typical, one suspects, neither were they unique. No doubt the impetus toward party was experienced at different rates in different places, and with varying degrees of success or frustration. Judging from Philadelphia, it seems likely that it appeared on a community level before it surfaced nationally. A look within Republican Party groups in other localities would probably reveal a similar struggle between traditionalists and modern partisans. While traditionalists tended to dominate for a while longer, the advocates of modern party were nonetheless working, if frequently unnoticed, to change the nature of political thought and practice in America.

In brief, the case of Philadelphia suggests the need to modify our understanding of the timing and the process for the emergence of modern politics. The first party system was a transitional period in politics, certainly. But it was a politics in transition, not so firmly rooted in eighteenth-century precedents as historians currently would have us believe. At present, we have distinguished too sharply between the supposed "traditionalism" of the first party system and the "modern" politics of the second. Such a demarcation, while it has been useful as a concept, tends ultimately to distort the complex reality of political change. To acknowledge this is simply to acknowledge what we know to be the complexity of the historical process.

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[68] The phrase is Ronald P. Formisano's, "Deferential-Participant Politics," 473.