Anthony Wayne: Soldier as Politician

ANTHONY WAYNE is remembered in history primarily as a "proud, quick-tempered, impetuous, and even arrogant" soldier of the Revolutionary War, possessed of a "reckless courage, dash, and daring . . . reminiscent of a romanticism found back in the days of chivalry." He was, in the words of Hugh F. Rankin, "an anachronism in the eighteenth century," a "knight errant riding forth to do great and noble deeds," a "military romanticist." "General Wayne had a constitutional attachment to the sword," said Henry Lee of his colleague in arms, "and this cast of character had acquired strength from indulgence." Thus, Wayne was first and foremost a military man, "an inspiring leader on the battlefield." As a soldier, he was a conservative and came to favor armies made up of long term enlistees rather than militiamen. Militia, in his view, tended to create military disorder and chaos without possessing any particular military or political virtues.

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There was, however, another side to Anthony Wayne's life, less well known but important. He was an active politician during one of the great ages of American politics. Certainly he is not to be compared with Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton. Nonetheless, he was a shrewd, flamboyant politician who often showed flashes of genuine ability in organizing, leading, and dominating his fellow citizens to achieve what he believed was in their, and his own, best interests. During his times of army service (and belying his reputation as a rash, impulsive officer who acted first and thought later) he exercised deeply ingrained habits of care toward civilians in his department and total subordination to civil authority, both national and state. When called upon as an army commander to act the role of diplomat, especially at Greenville in 1795, he showed great skills in articulating and negotiating the American position.

In all these political activities, Wayne displayed little of consistent ideology, except to remain true to republicanism and a conviction that military men should always be subordinate to civilian power. He started the war as a believer in both governmental and military amateurism, and he continued even into the 1790s to adhere to the Whiggish idea that a sort of "militia politics" (here using the term "militia" in the same way John Adams did to describe "militia diplomacy") was the best way to organize affairs of state. Curiously, he held on to this conception long after he had abandoned the same notion for the army. His wartime experiences were instrumental in changing his mind about the desirability of military amateurism, and it would appear from the evidence that he could just as easily have drawn the same conclusion about problems of political amateurism. For some reason, he did not.²

In any case, once the Revolutionary War got under way, by far the greatest amount of Wayne's time and correspondence were taken up in attempts to persuade officials in his home state of Pennsylvania and the Continental Congress to give him necessary supports to keep his battalions in the field. Disgusted that adequate assistance was not forthcoming, he came to believe that the politics of the Revolution had taken too sharp a turn toward a decentralization and radicalism that

had created dangerous inefficiencies in governmental affairs. As the war wore on, he expressed views that were more and more at variance with his earlier, more liberal positions on how government, society, and the army ought to be organized and who should dominate those institutions. In short, within the framework of his larger republican ideals and his insistence on amateurism in politics, Wayne was converted in the 1770s to the political stance, which he advocated until the end of his life in 1796, that strong central government ought to be instituted by, and maintained in the interests of, the propertied and "aristocratick" elements of the nation. From this same galaxy of perceptions, he concluded that the officer corps of the army ought likewise to be recruited from the elites — but with the idea of creating a more professional service. Since he was a member of the small social group which in his scheme would run things, and since he might be helped personally by securing a "place" in such a structuring of government, it is not surprising that he became a Federalist in the last years of his life.

The analysis of Wayne's public career that follows, confirms the view that the man had an innate sense of how to mix high principle and crass practicality in order to gain office or achieve things in politics. Perhaps in this regard he was typical of most successful American politicians of his or any other age.

Anthony Wayne's political career began in 1774 when, at the age of 29, he was deeded by his aged parents the ancestral family farm at Waynesborough in Chester County, Pennsylvania. Since his father, Isaac Wayne, had been a man of local eminence, Anthony claimed with the acres almost as a right of birth the same position of political and social leadership. Personal characteristics as well propelled him into the public's eye, for he was a charming, gregarious man, whose loyalty to friends knew no stint. In time, as he inevitably made enemies by his conduct in public office, it became clear that his antagonism toward opponents was just as unremitting in the opposite direction. His was a personality that accepted of no middle position on questions of friendship and hate.

Wayne assumed his place in government just at the time many Americans began to react against Britian's so-called "Coercive Acts," and he quickly joined the patriot party in opposition to royal power. His neighbors, approving of his stance as well as his natural leadership
talents and personal attractiveness, elected him chairman of the Chester County Committee of Safety in 1774. His fame began to spread quickly through the province, and when he ran for election to the Provincial Assembly later that year, he won handily on a platform of keeping Pennsylvania aligned with the non-militaristic policies formulated by the First Continental Congress in the same year. It was not long, however, before Wayne was identifying with a more martial spirit in the Assembly, and on May 12, 1775, he was elected to a committee appointed to spend £5,000 for military supplies. A month later, he was put on a province-wide Committee of Safety by the Assembly, along with his friends, Robert Morris, John Dickinson, and Benjamin Franklin, with instructions to defend Pennsylvania against aggression should the need arise. To that end the committee organized and called into service a militia, the “Associators,” and began more serious attempts to collect necessary equipment and arms to supply this force.

Throughout the rest of 1775, Wayne became more interested in things military, and his natural bent toward romanticism and knighthood led him toward the pageantry and trappings of the profession of arms. As war threats loomed larger in Pennsylvania after the battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts, he began to devote the bulk of his time to getting the defenses of Pennsylvania in some order. He met regularly with the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety and in the Assembly argued unsuccessfully against a provision in the militia law that allowed men to pay an exemption fee and avoid joining the Associators. In his free time, he read military literature and drilled volunteers to infuse them with his own warlike spirit. By October, he had acquired such a “radical” reputation that his Chester County

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neighbors accused him of favoring independence from Britain. Although he used the press vehemently to deny the charge as "an idea so pernicious" that it "could not originate but among the worst of men for the worst of purposes," he was replaced on the Chester Committee of Safety by a Quaker.3

This political setback, while damaging to Wayne's monumental ego, did his reputation no lasting harm, for on January 3, 1776, with full support of Pennsylvania's delegation, the Continental Congress appointed him colonel of one of the national regiments being raised in Pennsylvania. From that point on, his political life was subordinate to military service and consisted largely of comments made in correspondence with his family or civilian friends in government. That the new-minted colonel whole-heartedly embraced the revolutionary cause is seen in his fervid, Whiggish statements during the first year of the war about what the struggle meant in terms of the progress of mankind.6 Expecting that he might be killed in battle, he advised his wife Polly to tell everyone that he "fell in the Support of their Rights — and the Rights of Mankind," and he instructed her to see to their son's education, that when the lad's country later needed his services he might follow in his father's footsteps, "altho the path should be marked with his . . . Blood."7

However strong were Wayne's ardor and enthusiasm about defending "the rights of mankind" in the opening months of the Revolutionary War, they were quickly tempered by his subsequent military service. Soon it would become a fixed principle with him that dealing with the weak, decentralized government of Pennsylvania while trying, with less success than he wished, to keep an army in the field was a

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Wayne to Mrs Mary Wayne, April 22, August 12, 1776, April 1, 1777, to Sharp Delany, November 5, 1776, to Horatio Gates, December 1, 1776, Wayne Papers, HSP. See also Wayne to Mrs Mary Wayne, April 28, 1776, Anthony Wayne Papers, Detroit Public Library, Detroit
losing proposition. Consequently, he came to despise all those characteristics of his province's government — one house legislature, annual elections, diffuse executive power, weak judiciary — that he believed contributed to its impotence. Even while the constitution was being put together in the fall of 1776, he received disparaging comments about it from his political friends John Morton, Benjamin Franklin, and Benjamin Rush. But Wayne, unacquainted with the politics of the situation, would not criticize the proceedings. "I will waive the Subject," he wrote Franklin, "and like Uncle Toby ride my own hobby." Throughout 1777, however, one of his friends, Rush, continued to clamor to him that Pennsylvania's government was an "absurd" product of a people "intoxicated on liberty," that "a single legislature is big with tyranny." By mid-1777, Rush had convinced his military comrade that the Pennsylvania system was worthless, and Wayne spent the rest of the war blasting the State's constitution as a "usurpation & tyranny" which was "not worth Defending," calling its supporters "obstinate & incapable," and threatening — at least once (with a large amount of hyperbole and absolutely no determination to carry out his plan) — "that He & his Corps wd. turn them out or 'cut the Throats of the Rascals, he did not care wch.'"\footnote{Charles Royster, \textit{A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783} (Chapel Hill, 1979), 313; "Letter of John Morton to Anthony Wayne, 1776," \textit{Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography}, XXXIX (1945), 373-74; "Excerpts from the Papers of Dr. Benjamin Rush," \textit{ibid.}, XXIX (1903), 29; Selsam, \textit{Pennsylvania Constitution}, 186; Benjamin Rush to Wayne, September 24, 1776, April 19, June 5, 1777, William Irvine to Wayne, October 27, 1778, Wayne to Benjamin Franklin, October 2, 1776, to Benjamin Rush, June 2, 1777, to Thomas Mifflin and James Wilson, November 23, 1778, Wayne Papers, HSP; Rush to Wayne, April 2, 1777, Josiah Trent Collection, Duke University Medical Center Library, Durham, N.C.; Edward H. Tatum, ed., \textit{The American Journal of Ambrose Serle, Secretary to Lord Howe, 1776-1778} (San Marino, 1940), 362; Burton Alva Konkle, \textit{George Bryan and the Constitution of Pennsylvania, 1731-1791} (Philadelphia, 1922), 162.}

Wayne's disgust with his home state's government and its proponents stemmed from his conviction that he and they were ensnared in a bizarre paradox: he was powerless to defend the constitution for precisely the reasons they liked it. The government, growled the commander to his like-minded friends in politics, could not or would not collect taxes, enlist men for military service, supply soldiers already enrolled, or arm officers with necessary powers to enforce military discipline. Its members were simply too radical, too imbued with
Whig ideology's biases against standing armies to give him necessary supports. That Pennsylvania was more conscientious in these matters than most other states, as Professor Charles Royster has noted, was of no comfort to him. Hence, while he served with the Continental line, he kept up a running barrage of complaints to Pennsylvanians in and out of government about his problems. Lack of supplies and clothing was a major concern. "In this [last] article," he told Governor Thomas Wharton in April, 1778, "we are in a worse condition than . . . Falstaff's recruits — they had a shirt and a half to a company." Since no improvements in these conditions were forthcoming during the summer, despite his correspondence with other political friends such as Richard Peters, Robert Morris, and Joseph Reed, Wayne was plaintively wishing "from my very Soul" to retire to "my Sabine fields." When his Pennsylvania troops mutinied in January, 1781, he refused to condone their usurpation of authority but was not surprised. Two months before, he had predicted that they were desperate and angry enough at real civilian neglect to try desperate measures.9

As disgusting as was the supply problem for Wayne, perhaps even worse for him was the paucity of soldiers being supplied the army and the quality of the ones that were forthcoming. By the end of 1776, he had rejected as utter nonsense all radical Whig arguments that soldiers could be actuated to fight by the "impulse to freedom." Quoting Marshal Saxe, he declared that this was "a false notion," that only discipline could make America's troops less "than so many Contemptible heaps of Rabble." In February, 1776, he returned to a tirade against Pennsylvania's militia law, which he had begun a year before and would continue through most of the war. The measure, he said, was too favorable to the "opulent," because they could buy substitutes, usually Negro slaves or others with no stake in the fight; hence, the burden of war was falling too heavily on the "poor and middling inhabitants." The result was conducive to neither fairness nor quality.

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Wayne’s solution: a draft of “all able-bodied men, from sixteen to sixty” or a fine for those who refused.  

Over time, the problem became more and more one of inducing men to enlist in the regular battalions. As Benjamin Rush noted to Wayne (who had already figured out the problem), under the law a man could get a bounty of $100 for serving two months in the militia but only $20 and a $45 per month salary for enlisting as a regular for the duration of the war. Thus, the tendency was for the worst ne’er-do-wells of society to join the Continentals, and few even of these. Wayne was incensed with the situation; to the Assembly he fumed in 1778, “For God sake by some means Complete your Regiments,” and noted that in his two brigades he was deficient by 1,763 men. The Assembly’s response was to mollify Wayne by appointing a committee to study the problem. Not until 1781 did it enact substantive reforms by exempting from militia duty certain classes that furnished recruits for the Continental line. Even this modest measure, said Colonel William Irvine to Wayne, “goes down hard with people who are fond of Militia.”

Besides being upset by the way the Pennsylvania Assembly neglected the army in general, Wayne and his officers felt that they had particular grievances against a government controlled by “antimilitaristic” radicals. Early in 1779, he and they formed a committee to lobby in Philadelphia for improvements in pay, provisions, and post-war pensions. The men who controlled the Assembly, characterized by Wayne and his officers as “yellow Whigs,” were scandalized by this “military interference” and dragged their feet for months on the
measures advocated by the soldiers. Wayne and his supporters were equally put out, especially by the imputation that they ought not dabble in “civilian” matters. Not long before, in another but similar context, Wayne had declared, “I have as high an Idea of Civil Liberty as . . . any [civilian],” and he had asserted that his military rank did not negate his “rights of Citizenship.” In a countermeasure against the “yellow Whigs,” Wayne and his fellow officers issued a manifesto in the Philadelphia press, denouncing those “who have exhibited by their conduct an enemical disposition or even luke warmness, to the independence of America” and specifically naming the officer corps as the only true source of revolutionary virtue. By early 1780, Wayne was writing to fellow officer William Irvine, “A most wretched & unworthy torpidity pervades every publick body,” and he was once more blasting the Assembly for its failure to supply the army. By October he was musing to his political friend, Joseph Reed, that he could get nothing at all from the state of Pennsylvania except lectures about military “Perseverance, fortitude & economy” every time he mentioned money or justice for the officers.12

Despite his grumbling, however, Wayne was serious about his commitment to military subordination to civilian authority, and he never made even the slightest gesture toward intervening in his state’s politics with the Pennsylvania battalions. Had the idea been proposed to him, he would have been horrified, even when most fiercely angry against the Pennsylvania government. His loyalty was finally repaid, for in mid-December, 1780, the army bill, which incorporated many of the officers’ demands, was enacted. As one historian put it, “the Republicans had taken care of the army” — not quite to Wayne’s full approbation, for he continued months afterward to advocate changes in the laws to favor military men. Yet, he was satisfied generally and as long as he remained in the army had to recognize, if reluctantly, the validity of Joseph Reed’s comments on the matter: “A popular Government must in the nature of things be most generally agreeable to the People of this State . . . property is too casually distributed . . .

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ever to permit the Aristocratick influence which some wish and which I admit to be the most natural to the Sentiments of Gentlemen [like you who are] used to the discipline and subordination of an army.”

When the war ended in 1783, Wayne returned to his native state as a military hero with powerful influence in the counsels of politics. Immediately, he plunged with his conservative friends Benjamin Rush, Peter Muhlenberg, Arthur St. Clair, William Irvine, Thomas FitzSimmons, and other leaders of “respectability” into a war against the liberal constitution. In September, he declared rather rhetorically to an intimate, Francis Johnston, “I had long determined in my own mind, never to put it into the power of the public to Insult me more” by running for office. Yet, he now recognized that there existed “a Crisis in which the future happiness, or Misery, of the Citizens . . . stands suspended.” All this, of course, was arrant nonsense, because at least since 1777, Wayne had every intention of going into Pennsylvania politics as soon as the shooting ended, for he had blood in his eye against the state’s constitution. Hence, on election day, October, 1783, he offered himself as a candidate, along with Muhlenberg, St. Clair, Irvine, and other conservatives, for the Council of Censors, a group whose purpose as defined by the constitution was to preserve the document inviolate or suggest needed revisions. To say the least, his tactics to assure election to that body were ham-handed, for on the day of the poll he corralled all soldiers he could find in Philadelphia and forced the election judges to allow them to vote. This questionable procedure was later contested by supporters of the constitution, but they had no success, for ironically the appeal came to the Council of Censors, the group to which Wayne won election by use of the very procedures under question. The membership of the Censors now gave Wayne and the antigovernment men, or “republicans,” as they fancied themselves, a simple majority. But since two-thirds of the Censors

were needed to conduct business, it soon became apparent that the Republicans would be unable to carry out their design.\textsuperscript{14}

Their "design" was nothing less than to extirpate the existing constitution of Pennsylvania, which they had long viewed in the same light as had Benjamin Rush in 1776. On January 2, 1784, by a vote of twelve to ten, Wayne and his conservative friends had the Censors recommend to the Assembly that the constitution by "amended." Seventeen days later, they forwarded a list of specifics, "suggesting" such revisions as the establishment of a two-house legislature, a strong one-man executive, and an independent judiciary. The proconstitution minority of Censors protested vehemently against these proceedings, asserting that the changes were illegal because they had not the sanction of two-thirds of the membership. Actually, there was nothing illicit about the devious maneuvers of Wayne and his friends, and they piously replied that they were merely giving the Assembly information to allow it to "judge upon a matter, you and we, and all our posterity are so deeply interested in." Privately, Wayne asserted to a friend, "We have been laboriously engaged in forming a Constitution for this State upon the Principals of the Bill of Rights in which we meet with much opposition from \textit{Caitiffs} of such obscure origin that even their very names were never known in Penns. until within this year or two then only as the Insignificant tools of party." Clearly, then, he saw his activities in terms of preserving aristocratic order against the hordes of unwashed. But he also admitted another fact: "their Sullen NO will . . . prevent the calling of a Convention." He was right, for in June, 1784, another election brought a majority of proconstitution men to the Council, and Wayne, his wishes thwarted despite his best, or worst, schemes (and it is hard to believe that his opponents were more devious than he was), gave up in disgust.\textsuperscript{15}


His attention now turned toward the Assembly itself, where he hoped a broader field of activity might present itself, even if he were in a minority in his political views and hated the government's structure. In October, 1784, his popularity with the electors of his district was proven by an easy election to the Assembly. Wayne served two one-year terms without particular distinction, mostly speaking out against intolerance against Loyalists and painting himself into an even more constricted conservative corner. When these people (including Tories and those unwilling to take oaths of allegiance on religious grounds) were not enfranchised, he submitted a bill, which was defeated, asking that they not be required to pay taxes. Much of his time, however, was taken up in trying to get the Assembly to redeem at face value wartime certificates issued to the officers when money was nonexistent during the war. His failure in this attempt, combined with his powerlessness in other Assembly matters, made him furious at his old political adversaries and caused him to lash out in words that precisely summed up his political views at the time. The radicals were jealous, he fumed to Irvine, of the "model of Virtue, perseverance, & bravery" that the soldiers had presented in the late war. The example of these men was now "hurtful to the eyes of the leaders of faction & party, who possessed neither the virtue nor fortitude to meet the Enemy in the field." Hence, their jealousy motivated them to use every pretext to "depreciate the merits of those who have filled the breach & bled at every pore." His opponents, in a word, had "been put in possession of extreme of liberty at too cheap a rate" and now turned on their benefactors whom they ought to reward. Their souls, said Wayne, were "D - - n bad." Even two years later, he was still bitter against his state, describing it as "devoid of Justice, of Gratitude."

Henceforth, almost all of Wayne's political efforts were directed toward national issues and offices, for as he was fond of saying to friends and cronies from 1786 onwards, he had had enough of Pennsylvania radicals to last him a lifetime! Besides, he had become a part-time rice planter in Georgia (having received from that state a plan-
tion for his services there during the war). To run this operation, he had gone deep in debt, was now hounded by creditors, and needed a federal job in order to gain both money and immunity from prosecution for his debts. In 1787, therefore, he emerged as an ardent Federalist, and although the new constitution drafted that year fell short of his authoritarian desires, he was elected a delegate to the Pennsylvania convention and helped get ratification by his state. To the Marquis de Lafayette he praised “this rising Empire” America and assured the Frenchman that George Washington would be the first president. In closing his letter, he mused disingenuously (for he was a republican, despite his rantings against too-weak radical constitutions), “I wish he had a Son.”

Wayne now turned with fervor toward trying to secure an office in the new government. At first, he attempted to stir enthusiasm in Pennsylvania for his congressional candidacy, but a quickly rising anti-Federalist tide in the state precluded his success. Consequently, he went to Savannah in late 1788 and tried to win favor in Georgia for election to the Senate. When opponents suggested that he was not even a citizen, he heaped scorn upon them and accused them of being Tories. When others charged him with having given lenient terms to Loyalists after seizing Savannah in 1782, he declared that this was “an act of Cruelty and a crime of the deepest die.” Going before the legislature to campaign, he presented a platform that advocated reducing taxes and getting the federal government to assume responsibility for the state’s frontiers, which were being raided by Indians and Florida-based Tories. In the end, however, he was seen by the Georgians as a “foreign” usurper, and he lost the election.


18 Wayne to Edward Telfair, November 1, 1788, to Benjamin Fishbourne, November 5, 1788, Fishbourne to Wayne, November 3, 12, 1788, Elihu Lyman to Wayne, November 3, 1788, John Baker to Wayne, November 20, 1788, John Burnett to Wayne, December 8, 1788, Wayne Papers, Clements Library, Wayne to _____, November 1, 1788, Wayne Papers, HSP, Wayne to Asa Emanuel, December 15, 1788, Anthony Wayne Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah
Undaunted, Wayne began in 1789 to seek a military position, primarily by dabbling in national politics to create one. To a number of federal officials, including President Washington, his friend Henry Knox, who was Secretary of War, and Congressman James Madison, he proposed a plan “to make an Establishment in the Southern District similar to that wh. Genl. St. Clair presides over” in the Northwest. His purpose was to open the territory for “National Speculation” by curbing there the power of hostile Indians, Florida Loyalists, and Spanish grandees. And who did he have in mind to serve as the first territorial governor? Why, himself of course. This scheme, too, came to nothing when the anti-Federalists in the Senate, led by William Maclay, accused the administration of manipulating the news from Georgia to overrate the dangers there. While Congress authorized Washington to send a few troops southward, it would accept no more general officers for the military establishment. Wayne in this case had been caught in a tide of anti-Washington and antimilitarist rhetoric in Congress, and the decision had little to do with him personally — except that he was a Federalist.\(^{19}\)

With his dream of martial glory temporarily faded, Wayne, ever resourceful, turned his attention in late 1790 to securing a congressional seat in Georgia’s First District. His quest against incumbent James Jackson, an old comrade, was successful but flawed, for he won election in a campaign marred by horrendous corruption. The political manipulations that took place in Wayne’s election were not common in Georgia during this time, and, while he was probably aware of the frauds, his campaign manager, Judge Thomas Gibbons, a noted Savannah lawyer, was responsible for them. The judge’s iniquities included reporting more votes for Wayne in one precinct than there were eligible voters, and suppressing and falsifying of voting lists in

another precinct. From these scandals ultimately came the impeachment and conviction of Judge Henry Osborne, who had assisted Gibbons in throwing the election to Wayne.\textsuperscript{20}

For Wayne himself the frauds were a thorn in his side from the time he took his seat in Congress, detracting from his ability to conduct business. He tried to focus on some important debates in the House, and he did support Washington's attempt to expand the size of the army at this time. His major contributions were to make speeches to allay the fears of his anti-Federalist and antimilitarist colleagues about the dangers of a standing army, and to vote in favor of a successful administration bill to establish a five thousand man force for service in the Northwest Territory (the same troops he would later command). The preponderance of his time was taken up in trying to thwart an appeal by Jackson (whom he now disparagingly referred to as "the Little General") to overthrow his election. Although he fought a months-long rearguard action, his opponents' arguments against him were based upon fact, and they finally prevailed. On March 21, 1792, his seat was declared vacant.\textsuperscript{21}

Just when his political career seemed at its lowest point, Wayne's luck changed, and he secured from President Washington the one appointment that he wanted most but had dared not hope to win: command of the American army in the Northwest Territory. Ironically enough, this was the position he had least campaigned for. Instead, he had sought to be named Surveyor-General or Adjutant-General. But the resounding defeat of Wayne's fellow Pennsylvanian, Arthur St. Clair in November, 1791, by an Indian army north of the Ohio River had made it necessary for the Federalist administration to select a new commander. Washington, aware that Wayne was a frequenter of taverns and a convivial host who stinted not on consumption of alcohol, was not much impressed with the man. "Open to flattery; vain; easily imposed upon; liable to be drawn into scrapes;" perhaps "addicted to the bottle," was the way the President summed up Wayne's character. Thomas Jefferson agreed. "Brave and nothing else," he said of Wayne,

\textsuperscript{20} Wayneto Edward Telfair, February 1, 1791, Keith Morton Read Georgia Manuscripts, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens

a man who might “run his head agt. a wall where success was both impossible and useless.” These assessments were unfair because they were untrue. Wayne was no drunkard, and his military record in the Revolutionary War refuted rather than confirmed Washington’s and Jefferson’s points. The General had shown himself a competent, careful leader of men, anything but impetuous or thick-skulled in warfare. In fact, his storming of Stony Point in 1779 showed him to be a master of planning and skillful execution — the two most important requisites of any military officer. Hence, Wayne gave the administration no real cause to be concerned with his appointment. When Washington finally did commission him, the President put the best face upon it, declaring that Wayne possessed “many good points as an Officer, and it is to be hoped, that time, reflection, good advice, and above all, a due sense of the importance of the trust which is committed to him will correct his foibles.” Wayne’s nomination also caused quite a ruckus outside administration circles. In Virginia, native state of Henry Lee (who had been passed over in the appointment), James Monroe declared that the news was greeted with “extreme disgust.” In the Senate, Monroe conducted a vigorous campaign against Wayne’s appointment and in favor of Lee’s, but in the end Washington’s wishes carried the day, even if, as James Madison noted, “rather against the bristles.”

Thus pompous, gouty, acerbic Anthony Wayne, charmer of friends and implacable opponent of enemies, assumed the most important military command of the time. Although he came to his post, as Professor Richard H. Kohn has noted, “as the least of the possible evils, Wayne turned out to be among the most brilliant appointments in the Federalist era.” Anyone familiar with his previous record and personality need not have been surprised. There was a great deal more to the man Wayne than the popinjay martinet that he appeared to be in society and in most of his letters. Consequently, he devoted himself for more than four years — actually until the end of his life — to

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supporting Federalist policies with steadfast loyalty in a sensitive position where one false step could incur embarrassment or danger for Washington’s government. His greatest gift to the President was, of course, his skillful handling of his military command and his resultant victory over the Indians at Fallen Timbers in 1794. This achievement he accomplished despite backbiting criticisms of his leadership within and without the army, which were taken to such extremes that anti-Federalists in Congress later refused to vote him thanks for his triumph! In diplomacy, Wayne carefully dovetailed his martial activities with Federalist programs. Through 1792 and 1793, he delayed his campaign against the Indians (although feeling his situation “awkward, unpleasant & embarrassing” and at least once lashing out against restraints) in order to give the administration time to try peaceful overtures and avoid, as Secretary of War Knox noted, having America appear the oppressor of a weak people. He also carefully coordinated his activities against British and Spanish military installations in the West with the treaty negotiations of John Jay and Thomas Pinckney in Europe. And he acted as America’s sole agent in hammering out with the Indians the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.

In politics, the General did all within his power to support “that great & good man” Washington. Within the army he was quick to punish any attempts by his officers to criticize the administration, so much so that Knox was forced to intervene and soften his rigid regime. Within Congress he was glad to allow his letters to be used by Washington to mitigate criticism of military policy that cropped up from time to time from anti-administration “Demoncrats” and other “Cai-

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24 Wayne to Knox, July 27, August 24, 1792, April 27, May 27, July 10, August 8, September 17, December 23, 1794, Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester, to Wayne, October 6, 1794, Wayne to Arthur St. Clair, June 27, 1795, Wayne Papers, HSP, Samuel Flagg Bemis, Jay’s Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy (New York, 1923), 180
Throughout his tenure in the West, he paid careful attention from his command post at Detroit to cooperating with local civilians, that passions against the central government such as were manifested in the Whiskey Rebellion might be dampened. His successful record in civil-military relations while in the Northwest Territory is attested to by the regard in which he was held by the region’s governor, St. Clair, and by the citizens of Detroit. The latter, in a testimonial on November 14, 1796, asserted that he went out of his way to preserve civil government and authority while commanding in their area. Of perhaps more importance, he was compelled to contend with double dealing separatist intrigues and anti-Federalist power plays against himself, which were guided by his second in command, that “worst of all Bad Men,” James Wilkinson.

Successful in all these endeavors, Wayne near the end of his life finally received the public adulation that he so long had yearned and struggled for, in both politics and the military. Returning to Philadelphia in February, 1796, he was met beyond the Schuylkill River by a troop of horse and escorted to the city’s center to the accompaniment of a fifteen-cannon salute and the ringing of bells. All the while, thousands of citizens crowded to see and cheer him. For two weeks he was wined, dined, and admired, leading John Adams to comment jealously, “The man’s feelings must be worth a guinea a minute.” Naturally, politicians began to discuss General Wayne’s future, hoping they might cash in on his popularity. Some administration men already had touted him to be secretary of war, but that position had gone to

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James McHenry. "Terror," said one excitable opponent of Wayne, had "seized the public mind from the apprehension that we should be reduced to a State of insolvency" if he got the appointment. Although this perception of Wayne was politically motivated and unfair (for he was extremely careful of public property), nonetheless it worked to keep him from the office. Other men made a faint-hearted attempt to push him for the governorship of Pennsylvania, but he was forced into a race against a popular incumbent, his old military colleague and friend, Thomas Mifflin, and his heart was not in it. Thus, he was buried at the polls, 30,020 to 193. In the end, at Washington's behest, he retained his military command, returned to the grateful community of Detroit in the Northwest, and in December, 1796, died with his boots on at Erie, Pennsylvania.

In evaluating the political life of the flamboyant and controversial General Wayne, it is correct to reemphasize his role as a "militia politician." In all affairs of state, his was a career distinguished by an insistence that amateurism was a virtue in men who would order governments — at least as long as the amateurism was confined to himself and his supporters. Such a view stands in stark contrast to his more conservative resolve after 1776 that in matters martial professionalism was an absolute necessity. It is a paradox of his life that he was unable, or unwilling, to admit that his Whiggish opponents in the state of Pennsylvania and in the anti-Federalist movement after 1787 might have had historical reasons to fear that a regularized, professional military could be inimical to liberty. This is only one indication among many in Wayne's career to suggest that he never took philosophical consistency in politics very seriously. In fact, there is hardly any evidence in the record of his life to indicate that he analyzed his political theories at all. Adherence to republicanism and an insistence on subordination of military to civilian authority are the only two consistent political viewpoints that permeate the public life of the "military romanticist" and conservative soldier, Anthony Wayne.