JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY AND THE TREE OF LIBERTY, 1800—1803

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PITTSBURGH in 1800 had all the vigor of a youngster growing up. There was a rangy awkwardness in the way the houses sprawled themselves indiscriminately over the land from the Point. Grant's Hill, Water Street, and Liberty Street bounded most of the dwellings. Off toward the Allegheny were the remnants of the King's Artillery Gardens—still a sanctuary for pear and apple trees of a bygone century, but now the setting for the well-furnished log house of the affluent James O'Hara, neophyte industrialist. The log houses of the early pioneer settlements were beginning to give way to frame and brick houses that marked permanent communities. Wood and Market Streets were paved and several others were graveled, but even so, dust and mud were not of the past. Lombardy poplars, locusts, and weeping willows relieved the ugliness of the colorless and sometimes soot-blackened houses.

Pittsburgh after 1794 was in a period of transition. No better can this be exemplified than in the politics of this time. Before the Whiskey Insurrection, politics in Pittsburgh had been dominated by the "rich, the well-born, and the good," among whom those of the Neville connection played a leading role. It was a monopolistic and aristocratic set-up that irked the democratic elements in the region.

But by 1800 there had appeared one man who was equal to the Federalist machinations of the Nevilles and their ilk.

1This article is but one of the products of research conducted by Mr. Everett as a graduate student in history at the University of Pittsburgh.—Ed.

2Leland D. Baldwin, Pittsburgh, the Story of a City, 102, 105, 146, 166 (Pittsburgh, 1937).
That man was Hugh Henry Brackenridge. The congressional election of 1798, in which Brackenridge had split party solidarity by instigating Presley Neville to run against the regular choice, John Woods, proved the canny lawyer to be a logical leader of the scattered Democrats in Pittsburgh. Although the Democratic-Republican party did not lack for leaders in the counties of western Pennsylvania, it did not have firm party lines in Pittsburgh proper. So it was that the job of organizing a strong party fell to Brackenridge—the Scot who had become anti-Neville and incidentally anti-Federalist.

The stronghold of Democratic-Republicanism after 1798 was Market Street. Here, along this street in a row of clapboard houses, policies were to be planned and attacks to be made on the bastions of Federalism. It must have irritated John Scull's soul to have seen his neighbor across the way, H. H. Brackenridge, gather his cohorts of Jacobinism about him.

It is peculiar how taverns have aided in shaping the trends of political thought in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. At that time the two important influences in political thought were churches and taverns. So it is little wonder that this Clapboard Row Junto held bibulous dinners at Smurs, at the General Butler Tavern, and at John Marie's. Probably in these places, more than in the sanctity of church

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3Baldwin, *Pittsburgh*, 174; Russell J. Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics*, 146-148 (Pittsburgh, 1937). It was the devastating criticism brought against the anti-Federalists in connection with the XYZ affair that weakened their chances in the congressional election of 1798. And it was the skullduggery of Brackenridge that enabled Gallatin to defeat Woods by a greater majority than in 1796.

4Before 1798 Brackenridge cared little for party labels; he held that individual ability should be the standard for determining candidacy for any office. It so happened that he wanted to be courted by the "haves," the clique of the Nevilles. But he was not courted; indeed, he believed he was defeated by the machinations of the Nevilles in 1794. Thus it seems that he was anti-Neville before he was ever anti-Federalist.

environs, were laid plans for the gubernatorial election of 1799 and the presidential campaign of 1800.

Amid this stronghold of Federalism named Pittsburgh, Republican partisans had begun to arm themselves with slings and arrows of abusive attack. As time went on the blunders of the Federalist party gave solid timbers upon which the Republicans could build their platform of opposition: time was to prove an aid to the anti's. Between 1798 and 1800 Democratic-Republicanism was to prosper under such men as Adamson Tannehill, officer of the Revolution, malcontent, and chairman of the Republican party in Pittsburgh by 1800; John B. C. Lucas; Abner Lacock, secretary of the Republican party; Samuel Ewalt, Allegheny County's first sheriff; Nathaniel Irish, former Revolutionary officer; John Johnson; William Gazzam, of the "pigheaded Irish"; James Kerwin; James Riddle; Thomas Baird; John Smur; Col. Thomas Morton; Alexander Fowler; Dr. Andrew Richardson; Tarleton Bates and Walter Forward. But of all men Brackenridge and Gallatin were to furnish ammunition to blast at the stronghold of Federalism in the west.6

The gubernatorial campaign of 1799 was to be a test of Republicanism in western Pennsylvania. In this year John Scull, a Quaker and a master of invective, used his Pittsburgh Gazette as a vituperative sounding board for Federalism. The major contestants in this struggle for the governorship were James Ross, Federalist United States Senator from southwestern Pennsylvania (one might also add brother-in-law of the arch-Federalist John Woods), and Thomas McKean, chief justice of the Pennsylvania supreme court for more than a score of years, a former president of the Continental Congress, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

6Tree of Liberty, August 80, 1800; Erasmus Wilson, ed., Standard History of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 743-744 (Chicago, 1898); Ferguson, Early Western Pennsylvania Politics, 150.
Ross's candidacy was announced in the Pittsburgh Gazette. The Herald of Liberty, founded in 1798 in Washington, Pennsylvania, was now ready to take up battle for its candidate, Thomas McKean. The attacks made by this new organ of Democratic-Republicanism under the editorship of John Israel were of the type that blistered and rankled in the mind. The barbs hurled by Israel struck not only Ross but also seemed to rebound and lodge in the tender parts of Scull. Israel labeled the Federalist candidate a “Reviler of Religion; a Deist; an Atheist; a Speculator; a Landjobber; an active Agent in exciting the Western Insurrection.” Scull in turn said that McKean was “the man who had suffered his daughter to renounce her religion in order to form a connection with a Spanish nobleman.” Furthermore, the Federalists tried to add salt to the wounds of the Israel-ites by saying that if McKean were elected governor then Tench Coxe, “the pilot of Lord Howe and his army into Philadelphia,” would most likely become secretary of state. So it was that the first anti-Federalist press to be founded in southwestern Pennsylvania was raising its voice in loud squeals of opposition propaganda. At last the anti’s had a voice to bruit their propaganda throughout western Pennsylvania.

The election of 1799 was a victory for the Republicans—but in a way, in local politics at least, there was a small slap of defeat. True, McKean was elected governor by a margin of only 6,669 votes, but on the other side of this ledger of votes it must be noted that McKean lost Allegheny, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties. It was an indication that the citadel of Federalism was yet to be destroyed in

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1Pittsburgh Gazette, October 5, 1799; J. Cutler Andrews, Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette, 44 (Boston, 1936). It seems that McKean himself was rather apt at hurling epithets on a state-wide basis; he received the Presbyterian vote by accusing Ross of having sung songs over a card table. Moreover, McKeanites asserted that Ross had a propensity for mimicking the douce Reverend John McMillan, Gallatin's old backer.
western Pennsylvania. Still it was a Republican victory with their controlling the executive's post and the lower house of the legislature. The forces of Federalism still held in the senate, however. But it was a victory—a victory to be celebrated.

On the evening of October 26, a meeting was held at the tavern of Captain John Smur. The meeting was of a bibulous nature with H. H. Brackenridge officiating as chairman, Samuel Ewalt as vice-president. Many toasts were drunk amid cheers and general high-jinks. From here on the accounts of this meeting are different. According to the Gazette, November 2, 1799, the rumor spread that an armed party was gathering in front of the tavern to prevent a parade in honor of McKean. The banquet came to a close with unseemly haste; and the idea of a parade, if one had been planned, was dropped. However, according to Wilson, so boisterous did this meeting become that upon its dismissal, some of those who were most enthusiastic "visited the houses of the friends of the defeated candidate, Ross, played the rogue's march, and otherwise humiliated the supporters of that gentleman. Several members of this meeting were arrested the following day upon the charge of rioting, and there seemed to have been no doubt of their guilt. If one were to take the evidence of original sources, it would seem that the incident as told by the Gazette should be unimpeachable, although the Gazette was not averse to withholding the complete truth. But whatever the case the partisan questions now became hot with invective. New scores were added to old and western Pennsylvanians from this time forward considered political affiliations as measures of character.

The heavy antagonism to which the election had given rise

\footnote{Ferguson, \textit{Early Western Pennsylvania Politics}, 152, 153; Wilson, \textit{History of Pittsburgh}, 743-744.}
now brought a break between Scull and Brackenridge. Before the election of 1799 the Quaker had always published with impartiality the proceedings of both parties, but now he denied the critics of the Adams administration the use of his paper.

Thus it was that Scull permitted violent articles denunciatory of the anti-Federalists to appear in his paper. It must have nettled Brackenridge, that he who had done so much for Scull in establishing his *Gazette*, in 1786, and had even secured another printer, John Boyd, when the Quaker needed him, should now be denied the use of that paper. At any rate he retaliated with statements that soon Pittsburgh was to be the headquarters of a Democratic-Republican newspaper.

On November 30, 1799, Scull in a solemn dirge detailed the prospectus for a new paper sponsored by H. H. Brackenridge; the reason Scull gave for the establishment of such a paper was a scurrilous verbal attack made upon the Scotsman and published in the *Gazette*. Scull, to appease him, had given the name of the author and had thought this sufficient to restore equanimity. But Brackenridge's dander was up. He replied to Scull that the editor should have disapproved and rejected the "damnable" article. And then it was that Brackenridge climaxed the issue by saying that he had desired a private press for his own use as a literary man for some time, since Scull was neither well-adapted to the publication of pamphlets nor given to low rates.

This sly attack lit a powder-charge of indignation in John Scull. Brackenridge had touched him in a vulnerable spot, and he gave vent to his feeling with: "What Printer prints cheaper than I do? What sheet is better filled than mine? He may indeed get a Printer to publish what may be more agreeable to himself—but I submit to my readers, whether any can fill the sheet with more useful intelligence?"9

9*Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 7, 1799.
So it was from the thrusts and parryings of a quill-pushing editor and a rampant Scotch lawyer that a second newspaper was to be born in Pittsburgh.

As a parting shot Scull turned his mockery on Judge Brackenridge in an open letter in the Gazette, December 21, 1799: "To H. H. B..................................e, Esq., President of the Jacobin Society, Professor of Chivalry, Privy Councillor to the Governor of Bantam, Poet Laureat to the Herald of Sedition, Biographer to the Insurgents, Auctioneer of Divinity, and Haberdasher of Pronouns, &c., &c."

It is little wonder that H. H. B. was only too glad to break Scull's monopoly in the field of local journalism. Brackenridge found his printer in John D. Israel, publisher of the Herald of Liberty in Washington, Pennsylvania. So on August 16, 1800, Israel published the Tree of Liberty, a four-column anti-Federalist sheet, in a building on Clapboard Row owned by Mr. Brackenridge; and for over a year Judge Brackenridge was the leading editorial writer. The Tree of Liberty became as a sword in the hands of the Republicans; no Federalist was safe from its attacks.

REACTIONARY versus REVOLUTIONARY

Far inland from the seacoast, cutting across the boundaries of every section and of most of the states, lay the frontier, a place of shifting and turbulent limits called the "back country." And men that had broken the back of the frontier, to civilize it and tame it, have been eulogized before this. Inevitably the thrust of mankind westward in this country has been measured in movements, first, of the explorer; second, of the trader; third, of the early settler. And when the land was broken with the plow, then it was that the frontier was on its way to being tamed. But somehow in the measurement of mankind's civilizing influences upon the West another
taming force upon the inland areas has been omitted: the pioneer newspaper. Just as the settler civilized the frontier so that it was ever moving westward, so it was that the pioneer editor was securing the advance of culture and ideas across the wilderness. Newspapers in the West were to become sounding boards of public opinion and actual links between the frontier and the outside world—termed the East. So it seems that the pioneer printer should receive a place in the sun for his conquest of the minds of frontiersmen, just as the explorers, traders, and settlers have received recognition for their conquests of the frontier lands.

At the very beginning of the nineteenth century Pittsburgh still retained the qualities of a frontier town in a period of transition to a settled community; it was part of the newspaper frontier in the development of the West. Before 1800 there had been only one newspaper in this thriving community, but now with the advent of John D. Israel's Tree of Liberty, a new and different organ of public opinion was to influence western thought.

Like so many men in American history who have made their impression on local communities and have died and been swallowed up by the obliterating power of time, John D. Israel left few records of his own life history. The only available information may be summed up briefly: nothing is known of his birth, other than that he was a Jew; he married Margaret Redick on January 27, 1803; he died in Washington, Pennsylvania, on October 7, 1806; he was the publisher of the Herald of Liberty and the Tree; and it is held that he was a recorder of Washington County.

From the very beginning, the Tree of Liberty challenged the Federalist party. The paper was blatant with its title and

An article in the Tree of Liberty, September 6, 1800, intimates that Israel was not a Jew despite his Jewish name. However, the assertion is not strong or direct enough to give it credence.
insignia; the title of the Pittsburgh *Tree of Liberty* was emblazoned with a large name in semi-Gothic script and a rebus in the form of a stately tree covered with luxuriant foliage—with numerous heads lying among the roots of the tree, symbols of revolution to Scull. It irked John Scull so much that he could not but quiz Brackenridge as to the persons whose heads had been severed and laid under the tree: “We suggest the propriety of adding a Guillotine to the Tree, and a headless trunk or two in the background, together with Judge Marat smiling and enjoying the carnage—French things should be completely French!!”

It was probably Brackenridge’s bland answers that aroused Scull to such a pitch of invective. At the very beginning Scull tried to blister the Republican organ with all the sarcasm in his soul. Time and time again he lashed out at John D. Israel for being a Jew and being supported by the Brackenridge clique. In August, Scull published this scathing article:

**Echo from Coal Hill**

Have you heard of the New Press?
Echo of the Jew Press
What, is it published and by a Jew?
Echo and by a Hugh.
Of the Aurora Another edition?
Echo a mother of sedition.
Jacobinism imaginary is or is real
Echo Israel.
On all that’s military who is a sarcasm?
Echo ask Gazzam
Who has done over Squire Fowler?
Echo Squire Bowler.
What, our Alexander the Great?
Echo All eggs under the grate.
Who fills the Judge vacancy one of the law bench?
Echo one of the low French.
At Marie’s who was President on the hill?

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11 *Pittsburgh Gazette*, August 29, 1800.
12 As quoted in Wilson, *History of Pittsburgh,* 744.
Indeed, Scull beat upon religion as a tom-tom to arouse the public against the Jew. Scull in smug piety quoted a correspondent as saying, in part: "I reverence the Bible and do not like . . . to see the word of God profaned. Messrs. Brackenridge and Israel have taken a motto to their paper from Revelations 22, 2. where the Holy Spirit speaking of the Tree of Life says, 'And the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations.' These sacred words they have profanely applied to their newspaper."  

The Federalists charged Brackenridge with being the owner of the Tree and responsible for its "pernicious" utterances, but Brackenridge repudiated this statement, saying that although he had originally intended to establish a newspaper he had given up the idea upon hearing of Israel's intention. Whether or not he was financially interested in Israel's press, Brackenridge had at least an organ to express his opinions and views of Jeffersonian Republicanism in the West. From the very beginning of the Tree, Judge Alexander Addison became the butt of Brackenridge and his friends. Brackenridge had become a member of the state supreme court on December 18, 1799, and he had become involved in an angry controversy with his fellow jurist Addison: it was just a strong case of politics. So it was little wonder that Addison became the prime

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13Pittsburgh Gazette, August 23, 1800.
target in local political skullduggery. Brackenridge even went so far as to say in a diatribe addressed to his enemy: "It... is a strong proof of the love of order and respect for the laws among the people, that under a sense of the groundless and degrading LIBEL, they were not fired with sudden indignation, and did not drag you from your seat, and tread you under foot."14

This bombast of Brackenridge only convinced Scull that a revolution was planned and that Brackenridge had lost his reason entirely. He announced his suspicion of revolution in great headlines on November 28, 1800: the cry of "Insurrection" was splashed across the head of the paper—probably the first time that a newspaper at the Forks of the Ohio had used a heading that approximated the modern sensational headline.

In their scufflings in journalism Brackenridge and Scull were but following the precept of the day that the best way to attack political parties and their principles was to attack personalities. At this Scull was adept, but Brackenridge was even more skilled. It is little wonder that Scull heaped more hot coals on the fires of political dissension when he attacked Brackenridge with his pen again; Scull said he had a letter in hand from a citizen of Washington County to the effect that on Brackenridge's late "mad" circuit the judge had become "terribly drunk" in Canonsburg, had stridden around the tavern naked, and had induced the local boys to throw buckets of water over him. "The foregoing narrative," continued Scull, "would seem almost incredible to any person unacquainted with Mr. Brackenridge, yet it can be proved by the oaths of many witnesses. His cursing and swearing were shocking beyond anything ever heard before: A person of Noblesburgh is willing to make oath that the Judge damned the Landlord

14Tree of Liberty, November 15, 1800.
fifteen times while he was getting whiskey to make the eggnog stronger. When these things are done by a magistrate high in office, we cannot expect reformation or punishment of the profane and dissolute among us.”

Out of the brimstone of personal encounters with the quill was to come the basis for political propaganda in southwestern Pennsylvania.

THE TREE AND ITS SHILLELAGHS

The term newspaper as applied to the *Tree of Liberty* is apt to be considered an inappropriate name. On the frontier, news was apt to be relegated to a minor position. That which was given a front-page place was usually advertisements, or foreign news, with the local news tucked away on the second or third page. News of the type that would now rate first-page space was limited to a few lines that were devoid of details: Israel announced the marriage of “Henry Baldwin to Miss Marinna Norton of the Genessee Country” in four lines; his death notices were usually shorter and to the point. But if the *Tree* did not report all the news, such as fires, marriages, deaths, storms, and public meetings, it did serve to spread political propaganda. If the paper lacked local items in politics, it borrowed word for word from other Jeffersonian journals; the January 22, 1803, issue had excerpts from the *Aurora*, the *Richmond Examiner*, the *American Literary Advertiser*, and the *National Intelligencer*, all placed under Pittsburgh “news”—but not one solitary recording of a local event. On the other hand, some local events of political significance were reported at great length, as in the case of

—*Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 5, 1800.

—*Tree of Liberty*, July 3, November 6 and 27, 1802. In the first of the November issues cited, the wedding of “Robert Callender esq. to Miss Harriet Butler” was reported in five lines, and in the second, a mere line and a half sufficed for news of the death of this same Callender.
the recording, word for word, of each toast offered at Marie’s and at the July 4th celebration on Grant’s Hill and at Smur’s. Occasionally such prodigal use of space caused the issuance of an “extra,” devoted, not to new and strikingly important news, but to advertisements crowded out of the regular edition.

One measure of the political influence of a paper is the actual area in miles covered by its circulation. This premise being true, the Tree of Liberty’s influence in Pittsburgh alone would have been small, had it only covered that area, but its spread into the back country areas made it a powerful influence. For here in the back country cabins were pioneer farmers hungry for news. Probably no greater instrument for conversion to Jeffersonian democracy existed than the newspapers, and of these the Tree of Liberty held an almost unchallenged position in western Pennsylvania. There is definite proof that the Tree had a circulation as far as Erie, Crawford, Venango, Warren, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland counties; this is demonstrated by the political notices that appeared in Israel’s paper from these counties. Furthermore, it is evident that it had subscribers as far west as Chillicothe, Ohio, for a new tavern there, the Spread Eagle, received a two-inch-long spread in Israel’s paper. On the other hand the Tree announced that it “will not send post through the Forks of the Yough, unless there are more subscribers. He will discontinue riding April next.” And strange as it may seem the German Farmers Register of Greensburg, the first German paper to be published in the western country, had its subscriptions taken through the office of the Tree of Liberty. So it was that this brain child of Israel and Bracken-

\[\text{17}]{\text{The July 10, 1802, issue of the Tree gives seventeen toasts—word for word—and eight others from “volunteers.” Probably the toast most full of “hot air” was that of General Fowler, perhaps the wordiest man in western Pennsylvania at that time.}}\]

\[\text{18}{\text{January 1, 1803.}}\]
ridge was no small force in spreading Jeffersonian democracy. In Pittsburgh it was the only strong organ of that party, with only one strong opponent, until 1805, when Ephraim Pentland established the Commonwealth on July 24.

However important Israel's paper might have been in spreading Jeffersonian democracy up to 1810, the Tree of Liberty played little part in the election of 1800 in western Pennsylvania, because the selection of presidential electors that year was made by the state legislature. But even so, it was to be a young stripling attacking, with marked success, the citadel of Federalism in southwestern Pennsylvania.

The issues that colored western Pennsylvania politics were mainly not unlike those issues to be found in other states. But to a Pittsburgher or a backwoods farmer of democratic leanings in 1800 those issues were aptly defined and limited. If he were asked to list his political viewpoints, he could easily turn to the Tree of Liberty during election time and point them out one by one.

On Saturday, September 27, 1800, the Tree published this item on its third page: "Albert Gallatin, the friend of the People, the Enemy of Tyrants, is to be supported on Tuesday the 14th of October next for the Congress of the United States. Fellow citizens ye who are opposed to Speculators, Land Jobbers, Public plunderers, high taxes, 8% loans, and Standing Armies, vote for Mr. Gallatin." There, in that paragraph, was a party platform that a man could read and understand. A backwoods farmer in Erie, Westmoreland, or Crawford County could read this issue of the Tree and know what the paper stood for; he knew what grasping land jobbers and speculators were, and he would be for any man or any paper to oppose such creatures. And so it was that the misuse

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24 It is supposed that the Tree of Liberty was discontinued by 1810, the last extant issue being that for May 24, 1809—Alston G. Field, "The Press in Western Pennsylvania to 1812," ante, 20:234.
of office by the Federalists was to add solid planks to form a Democratic-Republican platform for the state and finally for the nation. Besides, the Republicans and the Tree were well versed in selecting the right Federalist misdeed to make a platform for their party opposition: the strength of the Republican party was to flourish and increase with each Federalist blunder.

From 1800 to 1803 the Pittsburgh Republicans conducted their campaigns against the Federalist party through blistering attacks upon Federalist leaders. They were thus able to personify the vices and misdeeds of Federalism, and the contest between the two parties became, not a contest of ideas, but of personalities, a verbal attack upon an individual being more likely to meet with success than a criticism of ideas alone. Each verbal brickbat hurled was thrown not at intangible ideas but at human beings holding and expressing these various ideas. So it was that when Federalism began to crumble in western Pennsylvania it was best exemplified by the fall of individuals in power—local, state, and national.

From the very beginning the Tree of Liberty did not generalize its campaign; it was as personal and direct as a handclasp or as brutal as a slap in the face. A frontier farmer in reading the Tree knew that that paper was against Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Chief Justice Ellsworth, Judge Chase, et al.; from the blasts of that paper he would be convinced that these men were pro-British land jobbers and public plunderers: these were the men holding national offices that were made ready for the political slaughter of 1800. Ridicule was a weapon deftly used against these men, weapons understood by the readers of the Tree.

In the third issue of Israel's paper, August 30, 1800, attacks upon almost all the important Federalists in national politics
set the tenor of the criticisms to follow. In that number the following comments were given:

The President is at Braintree, superintending the faithful execution of the laws. Chief Justice Ellsworth is at Paris, negotiating a treaty which no man in the United States could do but himself—Judge Chase, like an itinerant monte-bank is displaying electioneering tricks in Maryland and the Supreme Court of the United States and those who are looking for justice from it are taking a nap in Philadelphia until Judge Chase shall have concluded his gambols! Hail Columbia happy land!

Then there followed an individual attack on Hamilton:

It is said that Alexander Hamilton declared his determination to be at the head of a triumphant army in the course of four years, or he would lose his head—We have often heard of French gasconade; but we have now to place along side of it Creole gasconade in America—Alexander Hamilton heading an army to effect a Revolution!!! Why the very idea is as pregnant with laughter as if we should be told of Sir John Falstaff's military achievements. He may indeed affect to be the cunning, intriguing, concealed, and seally dastardly Sieyes; but it is insult to say that he would ever become a Buonaparte.

The attacks made in 1800 upon the local celebrities in politics were apt to be vitriolic and libelous. Inevitably the acid poured into the diatribes against Federalists was based upon this belief: “It is not Government they [the Federalists] are anxious to support, but themselves in Government.”20 With this as a guide the first and logical butt to receive local Republican maledictions was Scull, and he was an easy target. Scull was a man of humble tastes and medium talents and lacked the brilliancy, logic, and finesse necessary to cope with such a man as Brackenridge. The attacks upon Scull were of a general type, steeped in invective, and usually in poetic form. The Poet's Corner was the place used, many times, for the mauling of the Quaker's character. Probably the most effective of all political verse written during the first two years of this paper's publication was that concerning John Scull. The sixth issue of the Tree sets the standard for all verse to come:

20Tree of Liberty, September 16, 1800.
Pray, Sap-Skull John, Why did you get
That handsome head for your Gazette;
Adorned with flourishes and slashes,
And other such out-landish dashes?
When your own head wants obliteration,
As much as any in the nation,
Your thickish, sappy, dunder skull.21

And so Scull descended to infamy in the Tree's "Catalogue of Rats;" and the "Laboratory of Slander" of Israel's paper stepped up the bitterness of attack with its following remarks:

Poor Johnny in his last Gazette
Begins to bray and fret
Swearing that Israel is not known—
A stranger lad, not yet half grown
But of all the charges that are laid
To Scull, it surely can't be said,
That He's a stranger—For he's well known
By his spindle shanks and hard skull bone.
Aye faith By Them, he's known as well
As Polecat is by fragrant smell,
Or muskrat, or the bearded goat,
Or man that's under petty coat.22

Scull, for all his influence in Federalism, could not be held up for specific condemnation as an officeholder, for the simple reason that he did not hold political office in this period of his life. However, it was not long before the Republicans, under the inspiration of Brackenridge, were able to lay a charge of misappropriating money against Scull. The charge was of a tenuous nature, and it took the brilliance of Brackenridge's pen to make it seem plausible. The accusation, summed up briefly, was this: Scull and the board of directors of the Pittsburgh Academy were charged with misappropriating money "in not fencing the lot in."23

However, in Scull's next issue of his paper, and in the November 15, 1800, Tree of Liberty, he told why the fencing of the
Academy, of which he was treasurer, was not carried out: because "the posts, railings, and pailings" cost too much and were the property of H. H. Brackenridge. This show of fight on the part of Scull evidently angered Brackenridge, for he referred to his opponent in the Poet's Corner as follows:

He sets his type—That once was Sc-ll,
But now turned to a water gull
G—d——— their bloods.

In the November 29, 1800, issue of the Tree, Brackenridge, wrapping the mantle of dignity about his shoulders, wrote as a misunderstood martyr to the effect that he, Brackenridge, "had offered lumber to Scull at a loss"; thereupon Scull declined because the aforesaid "posts, railings, and pailings" were the property of the vilified Brackenridge. "So Major Craig got them for Garrison." From that time on, charges of malfeasance in office against Scull gave way to shafts against his more personal and generally "sappy" shortcomings. But be it said that Scull was not without defense against Israel's attacks, for in 1803 so violent had the articles in the Tree become that Scull brought suit against Israel for libel and won the verdict.

Running parallel with the campaign against Scull was the lining up of forces against the leading champion of Federalism in Pittsburgh, Major General Presley Neville. As usual in formulating policies or in laying plans for verbal attacks, a group of men, in this case field officers, met at "citizen Marie's in the borough of Pittsburgh, Friday 7" of November. Here at Marie's after being fortified with liquor, General Alexander Fowler embarked upon an attack on the uprightness of General Neville's character. In his usual loquacious style Fowler finally got down to points with the statement: "Bridage-Inspector Major-General Neville delivered arms, drums, etc. to sundry Regiments: What have become of them? Those that received
them must be accountable." There followed a bombastic harangue on the advantages of Republican principles as opposed to Federalist. From the various inflated speeches of General Fowler that were printed in the *Tree of Liberty*, it may be inferred that the militia men of Pittsburgh were mainly, if not entirely, Republicans. The militia even went so far as to adopt the French term of citizen when referring to civilians; furthermore, a strong indication of Republicanism in the militia in the early part of the nineteenth century is the fact that William Gazzam, ambitious son of Erin and supporter of Republicanism, served as brigade major and countersigned all the stuffed orders of Fowler.

Israel, as editor of the *Herald of Liberty* in 1799, had probably expressed the only strong opposition to James Ross in the gubernatorial campaign of that year. Now as editor of the *Tree of Liberty*, Israel was still prone to hurl verbal missiles at Pittsburgh's senator. If there were to reconstructed a consistent, long-range plan of action against the citadel of Federalism, it would be found in the ever-present attacks on James Ross and Alexander Addison; probably no other two men of the Federalist party in Pittsburgh drew such constant fire from the *Tree of Liberty*. In the western counties it must be realized that Ross had much strength; in the gubernatorial campaign of 1799 Allegheny County gave him a majority of 1,130 votes; Fayette County cast 1,156 votes for Ross and 1,011 for McKean. All in all Ross gained a majority of the votes cast in the four original counties of southwestern Pennsylvania. And this indication of his political strength in 1799 is a suitable standard for judging his strength in 1800. So it was the express purpose of the *Tree of Liberty* to destroy, if possible, the political career of this man.

Late in its second month of publication, (on September 20,
1800,) the *Tree* endeavored to link Addison and Ross with Pickering and his pro-British sentiments, with the statement: "Timothy Pickering was the favorite of the British minister Liston, the intimate of Ross, and bosom friend of Addison." In the same edition Israel promised his readers: "We shall in our next number give accounts of Scott and Earnest (?) as contractors, where Alexander Addison, James Ross, John Woods appear intimately concerned with about 20,000 dollars of the Public Money. Prepare your minds fellow citizens." In the September 27, 1880, issue there followed a rather detailed, if not entirely truthful, account of the misappropriation of the money. This bit of propaganda was kept alive in the columns of Israel's paper throughout 1800 and 1801, to add fuel, when needed, to any outburst against Federalism. A summary of the epithets applied to Ross by Israel would have included: speculator, land jobber, public plunderer, pro-Britisher, and high tax man.

At the moment when the anti-Ross campaign was wearing rather thin, Israel hit upon a salient bit of scandal to tear down Ross' political character. On June 12, 1802, the *Tree* came forth with the following boast: "James Ross, they say, will neither run for governor, nor senator next fall—and the reason is obvious—because too many secrets have been discovered since the election in '99." In the same issue blatant accusations were made that a "certificate of the president [Adams] was passed to the credit of James Ross, esq., applied to secret services." The sum of payment was five hundred dollars. So James Ross was again in the fire, and for a while burned and did not participate in any campaign for governor until 1808. Israel found pleasure in dropping slight barbs in his paper concerning Ross' shortcomings; in the June 19, 1802, edition of the paper he could not help but be catty with his statement: "Mr. Ross is completely up to the hub; at least his
wheels appear clogged with about five hundred dollars, of secret service money."

Be it said that the vicious accusations Israel had published concerning Messrs. Ross, Woods, and Addison during the campaign of October, 1800, resulted in several lawsuits for damages. In 1802 Ross secured judgments against Israel, and the latter never got over his dislike for Ross. Even in 1803, when Senator Ross made a long speech that advised the adoption of measures for "immediately taking possession of New Orleans, without preliminary negotiation," the Tree ridiculed him as a demagogue trying to obtain once more that political backing that he had lost—by advocating a measure that he knew western Pennsylvania would support.25

Nor were there any halfway measures in Israel's treatment of Addison. In the seventeenth edition of his paper,26 he implored his readers to send in any documents that "may serve to impeach Alexander Addison." This attempt to oust Addison, who had served as the president judge of the fifth Pennsylvania district since 1791, became the outstanding issue in local politics throughout the first three years of the publication of the paper. From the very beginning the Tree of Liberty did everything in its power to heap derision upon this man. Each small item that Israel could seize upon against the judge was turned into a machine of destruction; Israel used Addison's own words as weapons pointed against him. It was in this use of small things and in the repeating and twisting of Addison's words that Israel and the Republican politicians were to bring about the judge's downfall. Efficacy was found in such a statement as this: "Judge Addison, it appears, has returned to the Western country—it was remarked that during the stay in Philadelphia, the good Federal Judge was for two successive days

25Wilson, History of Pittsburg, 747; Tree of Liberty, February 26, 1803.
26December 6, 1800.
closetted with the British Minister—this is no surmise, it is fact probable." 27 Thus the blight of pro-British sympathy was affixed to the name of Addison, to win the enmity of staunch Republicans.

Hugh Henry Brackenridge also took pleasure in blistering Addison whenever he could. When the president judge of the fifth Pennsylvania district lashed out at the Republicans with the observation that signs of revolution were in evidence in America and especially in the western country, Brackenridge took diabolical pleasure in heaping ridicule upon Judge Addison with the following attack:

The letter of Mr. Addison published in the last number of the Tree is the most complete jumble of fear, falsehood, and gasconade that we recollect to have been comprised in so small a space. His mind must have been worked to the highest pitch of distraction and his spleen must have raised chin-high, before he could have been forced to take up pen to write to whom he did. No doubt he then needed the oily, soothing tongue of his friend Robert Liston to allay his swelling breast and to subside his timid nether lip—But he had him not!—And in his Honor's reason, to wit, his passion urged him to commit his thoughts to paper, and announce or threaten, indirectly, "another insurrection provided his resentment should be aroused." Mr. Addison ought surely to have been cautious upon that head. He ought to recollect the respectable figure he exhibited in the Western insurrection, before he talks of another. He ought not forget his declaration against Excise and Excisemen—Nor ought he forget how suddenly he whirled about as soon as he heard of the approach of the army, and after he had had an interview with Secretary Hamilton. 28

It would seem that, among all the political rivalries in western Pennsylvania, the one between Brackenridge and Addison was the most bitter and long lasting.

The Tree of Liberty on August 15, 1801, announced that "Brackenridge has been represented as the editor of this paper; or at least controlling it. As to him it will now be free from even the suspicion of control unless it can be believed that

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27Tree of Liberty, August 80, 1800.
28Tree of Liberty, August 80, 1800.
at the distance of 200 miles and occasionally more it is his power to influence or govern. He leaves this place with his family for Carlisle on Monday next.” But even so, Addison thought Brackenridge still had a fist in the political conspiracy against him.

Addison was the political antithesis of Brackenridge, so much so that they were as forces at opposite poles. It is possible that Addison viewed every new officeholder of Republican leaning as a tool of Brackenridge. In any case when John B. C. Lucas took his seat as an associate judge in Allegheny County, Addison took occasion to deliver a dissertation on the degrading influences of the secret societies, Jacobins, on American life and politics. Now it is worth noting that John B. C. Lucas had been educated in the French law schools and had been elevated to office by McKean, a Republican; and it was the French and the Republicans that Addison looked upon as treacherous elements in America.

By December, 1800, the Tree of Liberty had launched a hearty anti-Addison campaign, and Addison provided the ammunition to be used against himself. In that month, when Judge Lucas, newly appointed to an associate judgeship, tried to give a dissenting opinion, Addison addressed him with the order: “Silence, Sir, you have no right to speak here, I am the Organ of this Court.” John McDowell, another Federalist judge, supported Addison’s dictum. Lucas turned to the Tree of Liberty to air his grievances, and it was now that the anti-Addison campaign gained body: here was something that could be used as a lever to oust Addison, and the Tree blantly asked its subscribers to furnish information that could be used to impeach the Federalist judge. And in June, 1801, at a session of the court of common pleas, with only Addison and Lucas on the bench, Lucas in trying to supplement the charges

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29 Tree of Liberty, December 27, 1800.
delivered by Addison, was again brusquely silenced by the president. Later in the day, when Lucas insisted on his right to address the jury, McDowell again upheld Addison's viewpoint.

Lucas made out an affidavit against Addison. And in March, 1801, when charges were brought against Addison in the state supreme court, Chief Justice Edward Shippen gave the decision that the charges were not indictable. But this did not cool the wrath of the Republicans against Addison.

The Tree in an editorial on its first anniversary flaunted its colors against Addison-ites and Federalism with the following bit of bravado:

This number commences the second year of the Tree of Liberty, under auspices at present the most flattering, and encouragement equal to what we had a right to expect, considering the dangerous nature of the soil, the unpropitious season at which we planted, and the repeated attacks of Caterpillars and Grubworms that are common in this country... That the Branches may continue to spread, and its roots take hold, it will be proper to remind our friends that another payment is this day due.30

By January 11, 1802, weapons more pointed than bravado were used against Addison. On that day friends of Lucas presented the state house of representatives with a petition signed by 384 inhabitants of Allegheny County, asking for the impeachment of Addison.31 Now the ball was rolling that was to oust the hard-crusted Federalist who had monopolized the position of president judge of the fifth Pennsylvania district since 1791.

Finally, in the February 5, 1803, edition of the Tree, an insertion was made in small type, an insertion that was labeled as having come from Lancaster and dated January 29: “On Thursday last the house of representatives being in committee of the whole for that purpose and the members of the Senate

30Tree of Liberty, August 15, 1801.
31Ferguson, Early Western Pennsylvania Politics, 170.
being introduced, the speaker of that body pronounced sentence against judge Addison as follows: "That Alexander Addison, president of the several courts of common pleas, in the fifth district of this state, shall be, and hereby is removed from his office of president aforesaid, and also is disqualified to hold and exercise the office of judge in any court of law within the commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

Also in bold letters beneath the statement of Addison's downfall was the additional statement: "Resolved that a committee be appointed to prepare and report an address to the governor for the removal from office of said John McDowell."

Through Addison's fall, Federalism suffered in western Pennsylvania, and the Tree became a clarion of a triumphant Republican party.

PYROTECHNICS IN POLITICS

Besides dealing with local and state politics, it was the purpose of this paper to set up pro-Jeffersonian propaganda in western Pennsylvania. As Jeffersonian democracy grew strong so also did the Tree of Liberty. In the September 6, 1800, issue appeared a biography that covered the entire front page; a more eulogistic study could not have been made. It strikes out at the opponents of Jefferson with:

The Federalist prints having commenced the series of scurrilous attacks upon the character of the virtuous Jefferson; confining themselves entirely to Billingsgate abuse, leaving his conduct unimpeached, as if the characters of Messrs. Adams and Pinckney were to be raised in proportion to the quantum of ribaldry poured fourth against the Republican candidate, induces us to publish the following biographical sketch, to refute the calumnies, and place in proper point of view the Man whom the United States look upon as the rock of their Political Salvation.

To glorify the name of Jefferson further, Israel had a habit of adopting information from any paper that would add to his prestige; indeed, he was not averse to copying an article from

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"Tree of Liberty, February 5, 1803."
Bartigis' Republican Gazette that used Jefferson's name in an essay of Biblical flavor to oppose the "sons of Belial and the aristocrats." And although the Tree could not have had much influence on the election of 1800, it was using and developing tactics that were to serve in strengthening the Republican party: to Israel the verbal cudgel of bellicosity together with the rapier of sarcasm and wit were much stronger weapons than pure reason.

When word was received that Jefferson was elected, Israel flaunted the flag of victory, on December 27, with a parody of the marching song of '76:

December third has passed away
Jefferson's elected,
Ross and Wood are "up to the Hub"
And villainy detected.
Yankee doodle, keep it up;
Yankee doodle dandy,
The Democrats have beat the Rats,
Pass about the brandy.

Comment upon Burr as a running mate of Jefferson is decidedly scanty until 1803 when the Tree thought it an appropriate time, on February 12, to lash out in a vicious attack on Burr for collaborating with a Mr. Ogden to get Federalist backing.

The efforts that Jefferson's supporters made to consolidate their forces in local elections in western Pennsylvania, from 1799 to 1803, were to lead to the strengthening of the national party in time for the re-election of Jefferson in 1804. An increase in power given to the state political party meant in turn a like increase in the national organization. The best measure of this growing power of the Republican party appears in the fact that candidates for state offices were elected with increasing majorities until 1804.

In the summer of 1800 candidates for local elections were

*Tree of Liberty, October 18, 1800.*
announced in the *Tree of Liberty*, on August 30, with the following brief notice:

At a large and respectable meeting convened in the house of John Marie in the borough of Pittsburgh on the 28th instant to fix upon a suitable character to support at the next election in the room of John B. C. Lucas who was nominated (together with Samuel Ewalt, esq.) by a respectable meeting on the last court week as a suitable person to represent this county in general assembly, but who by subsequent circumstances can not be considered as a candidate—Whereupon Col. Thomas Morton was nominated, and unanimously agreed upon a suitable person to be recommended to the citizens of Allegheny and Crawford Counties. The meeting then concurred with a Resolution of the former meeting to support Albert Gallatin for the Congress of the U. S., John Hamilton of Washington County as state senator, Samuel Ewalt and Col. Thomas Morton for the General Assembly, Nathaniel Irish County Commissioner, and John Johnson as Coroner.

Resolved that the foregoing proceedings be signed by the chairman and published in the *Herald* and *Tree of Liberty*.

A. Tannehill, Chairman
A. Lacock, Sect.

In October, the Republicans were able to gloat in victory in an article entitled “The Resuscitation and Triumph of Republicanism in Allegheny County,” and it concluded with this crow of triumph:

Notwithstanding the sham of Col. Neville’s affecting to decline to lull the people into a confidence of success . . . the Republicans have awakened from their slumber and have triumphed over error and delusion—They have succeeded in the whole ticket: they have elected Gallatin to Congress, Hamilton to the Senate, Ewalt and Morton for the State Representatives, all firm decided Republicans.34

In the election of 1801 the *Tree of Liberty* played a part in returning Thomas Morton to the state senate by a vote of 1,806 to 1,113. The struggle to return Morton to office was based on a shrewd contrast between his, the wisdom of old age, and the fickleness of youth in his opponents. The *Tree* waxed expert in dispensing its potent political axioms: “Respect is due old age . . . Even where the mind is naturally good, it may be ruined by premature advancement . . . Age is safest

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34*Tree of Liberty*, October 18, 1800.
to be trusted... Youth is the season of vanity and self-love... It is on these principles that Thomas Morton has been taken up by the Republicans of Allegheny County for a Senator.”

In the campaign that year rumors were circulated to disrupt the solidarity of the Republican action; rumors had it that Samuel Ewalt and James Martin were challenging Morton as rivals for the state office. Indeed, Ewalt found it necessary to use the Tree to make the assertion: “Samuel Ewalt, Republican, denies that he is against Thomas Morton, Regular Republican candidate for the Senate.” And underneath this statement James Martin also gave his statement that he did not wish to contest the choice of Morton.

From all indications in 1801 there seemed to be a drift toward a schism in the Republican party just at a time when unity was of prime importance. The initial incident that touched off the fireworks was the breaking of friendly relations between General Fowler and William Gazzam. It seems that the general had fallen in love with his own loquaciousness and desired to give Congress a chance to hear his bombast. In the August 29, 1801, issue of the Tree, Gazzam gave information that he and Fowler had fallen out, and insinuated that Fowler was out to satisfy his own selfish desires.

Linked with Fowler in this break from the dictates of the Republican party was Dr. Andrew Richardson. The Tree in support of the Republican party carried on a mud-slinging campaign to detract from the character of these two balky individuals: skeletons of past political misdeeds were resurrected and rattled for its readers. Accusations that Dr. Richardson in the summer of 1798 had made the toast, “damnation to Jefferson and his party,” were made by James Patterson and William Ayres. This heinous utterance received proper spread in Israel’s paper, and the Republicans were out to cook Richardson’s goose. The September 5, 1801, issue might be
called an anti-Fowler and anti-Richardson organ; Richardson was aptly roasted in a column by "Juventus" who critically commented: "Doctor Richardson may administer pills, and powders, poultice wounds, probe cancers, set bones, let blood and draw teeth, until he is as old as Sennex himself, and know nothing of making laws."

In the same issue Gazzam properly blistered Fowler for making the drunken assertion that Gazzam was Brackenridge's tool and not worthy of his place in the Republican councils.

In the issues that followed there were more raucous accusations made against the two insurgents. It was as if the Republican party had developed a cancerous growth that needed to be cut out for the benefit of that body. Therefore, an attempt to disavow recognition of these two men as being Republicans was set under way. The Tree said that Fowler and Richardson "were supported by Tories," and furthermore, that "it is the Tory party we have to fear and not the division of true Republicans."

The success of the campaign to destroy the insurgents politically is found in the statement of election returns: "William Hoge esq. is elected to fill the seat in congress formerly occupied by Gallatin by a majority of 3,836. In this district Mr. Hoge received 4,672; General Fowler 836 votes. Crawford County Hoge 964, Fowler 67."

A chortle of victory was voiced in the information: "The whole representation of the western country is Republican." In fact Israel grew vituperative with the following challenge to the Federalists: "The Republicans have so completely triumphed in this state, and in the United States that the self-styled Federalists have thought proper in their wisdom, to take the appellation of Federal Republicans. Their falsehoods are detected, their hypocrisy shewn and themselves despised." And so it was that William Hoge was sent to Con-
gress, and Thomas Morton was returned to the state senate. A complete Republican victory was secured with the election of Samuel Ewalt, Captain John M'Masters, and Abner Lacock to the state house of representatives.\(^\text{35}\)

The following year the Federalists had small hope of success in western Pennsylvania. Knowing this, they took upon themselves the appellation, Federal Republicans. On September 18, 1802, the *Tree* reported the meeting of this party in the barest details:

A meeting of Federal Republicans of Allegheny, Beaver and Butler Counties in Jeremiah Sturgeon's tavern on Saturday, 11th September to consider candidates. The candidates named were:

- Governor Thomas McKean
- Congress John Wilkins, Jr.
- Assembly Andrew Richardson
- William Plummer
- Ephraim Jones
- Commissioner John Johnston, esq.

Probably for the first time since the beginning of political squabbles between the two parties did the Federalists, under the name, Federal Republicans, adopt a conciliatory attitude and state a definite platform. The platform for the year 1802, as stated by John Wilkins, was as follows:

1. To repeal tax on Brown sugar and salt
2. To have taxes laid on luxuries of life
3. To organize Beaver and Butler Counties
4. To have "aliens to come forward at next court to be naturalized"
5. To have the *Tree of Liberty* reprimanded
6. To have "this platform carried out for the good of honor, etc., etc."

The Republicans in this issue smelled rats—Federalist ones; in fact they claimed the "party of rats" was using the name of McKean "that by popularity of the Governor they may gain some votes for the only object they are anxious about this year—John Wilkins for Congress."

Wilkins made a strong bid for office. He had an astute plan

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*Tree of Liberty, August 15, 29, September 5, 12, October 24, 1801.*
to line up the farmers on his party's side—something that had never been achieved by the Federalist party in western Pennsylvania. His plan was simple: a few months previous to the election, Wilkins issued a "Circular Letter calling upon citizens to form a company for the exportation of produce of the western country." Just as Jefferson was to bind the western farmers to the banner of the Democratic-Republican party in 1803 with the purchase of Louisiana, so Wilkins wished to secure the support of the frontier farmers through his amorphous plan to export western produce. The plan was a good one—but only of a political nature; for after the defeat of the Federal Republicans this plan never materialized under John Wilkins' backing.

The Republican party had a strong list of candidates for the election in 1802:

- Governor Thomas McKean
- Congress John B. C. Lucas
- Assembly Samuel Ewalt
- Abner Lacock
- John M'Master
- Commissioner Col. James Martin

Of all the positions named it was the rivalry for the congressional office that was to prove a hotbed of contention. Lucas and Wilkins were not mild men by any means. Each man berated the other, and of the two, Lucas was the more apt at hurling invective. In the western country the French spirit was still strong enough to be used as part of a platform. And so it was the Tree that, on September 25, enumerated the "reasons why John B. C. Lucas should be our Representative in Congress":

- He is a man of talents
- He is not a speculator
- He is a Frenchman . . . as Rochambeau, Lafayette, Gallatin are . . . thus a Republican.

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\(^{35}\)Tree of Liberty, November 6, 1802.

\(^{36}\)Tree of Liberty, August 21, 1802.
The weapons that Lucas used in fighting Wilkins wore thin the nerves of the Federalist candidate, so that lashing out at Lucas in words did not satisfy Wilkins' ego: now it had to be a more savage attack that would inflict physical pain, and so it was that Wilkins got another man to do his dirty work. While Lucas was dining "at Maries' on the 15th of this instant, Henry Wolf, a relation and friend of John Wilkins, Jr. entered and talked to the Republican candidate." Without the slightest provocation, while Lucas was about to take a bite of food, Wolf took up a cudgel and began to beat him. Luckily Lucas was able to fend him off, took out a pistol, and shot at his opponent, missing him. In an open letter to his "Republican Friends" Lucas stated: "It is now 18 years since I first knew him [Wolf], and there never was a single word of dispute . . . between him and me, until a few weeks before the last election."  

With all the fireworks of hot tempers displayed in the gubernatorial election in 1802, there was a decisive victory for the Republican party. The election returns of Allegheny, Beaver, and Butler counties showed a complete triumph for Lucas and his running mates.

THE MEASUREMENT OF THE TREE

The years from 1799 to 1803 embraced a period of organization for the Republican party; it was a period of testing and proving methods for winning elections, and the structure of that party in western Pennsylvania was welded into shape by the aid of H. H. Brackenridge, a Scotsman, and John D. Israel, a Jew. Each victory gained in local political contests was to be magnified into greater importance when considered in terms of the national election of 1804. The lining up of interests here and there, however small and however

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<sup>56</sup>Tree of Liberty, October 23, 1802.
large, produced party solidarity. There could be no halfway measures in party alignments; a man was either a Franco-
phile and a Republican or an Anglophile and a Federalist.

And in this period of political organization the Tree of
Liberty—although only a four-page sheet, sans headlines, sans
modern polish of newspaper reporting—was the voice of that
Democratic-Republicanism shouting on the frontier. It dis-
seminated political propaganda and the names of the Repub-
lican candidates in the back country. Albert Gallatin was the
prophet of the coming downfall of Anglo-Federalist finance.
Gallatin had a way of using the Tree as an organ to point out
Federalist plundering of the nation with such items as:

The cost of the Federalist treaty with the Dey of Algiers was
$1,131,391.03.

The public debt has increased $9,000,000 since the 1st of January,
1791—Hail Columbia Happy Land!

Isaac Holmes, accountant in the office of war, has plundered the
public of $755,000.

The amount of monies in the hands of collectors of the Revenue,
unaccounted for on the 11th day of May 1800, was $888,364. . . . The
amount of monies in the hands of 18 of the same collectors, 16 of whom
on that day were out of office more than one year, is $221,538.09.

When the Treasury fire occurred—and was discovered within 45 min-
utes, how was it that Oliver Wolcott took away a dozen or 20 trunks,
boxes and bags of private property? 39

The back country farmer on reading the Tree knew that it
stood for reform. Probably never before had the reading
public been made more conscious of money—and its mis-
appropriation in Federalist hands. The Tree and the party it
represented were to become synonymous with financial re-
forms and wise spending.

As for the subscribers recognizing the prominent political
figures in western Pennsylvania, the Republicans listed in
Israel’s paper usually received the accolade of approval by
having their names printed in bold face type and in capital

39Tree of Liberty, September 6, 27, October 11, 1800.
letters; the editor usually listed the opponents in small type, and their party many times without the benefit of capitalization—an expression of contempt. Israel early learned the value of biographical flattery for winning supporters, and he used the art skillfully.

An important point to be noticed is that the Tree was used as a scourge or goad to keep party members in bounds. Those recalcitrant or uncoöperative people who stepped over (as Richardson and Fowler had done) were promptly and verbosely read out of the party with not a little mud-slinging. It was a typical method of a rough-and-tumble people of the back country playing hard politics; it was crude, but it worked. The Tree was as a Samson that flourished and grew strong during times of political campaigns only to lose strength, almost life itself, after an election was decided. This was but an indication of the paper's political nature: it lived to fight battles in politics, not to spread culture, knowledge, or news.

The success of the Democratic-Republican party from 1800 to 1803 reflected in equal proportion the success of the Tree of Liberty. With the success of the election of 1800 established, it wasn't long before Israel was advertising for a printer's apprentice: on August 14, 1802, he advertised for two boys to serve as apprentices. The Tree was booming and so was the Republican party.

So it was that, when the election of 1803 came around, the Federalist party in western Pennsylvania did not attempt to nominate candidates for all the offices. The Democratic-Republican machine had become a smooth-functioning juggernaut that was crushing out Federalism in the west. And the guidance of that machine was expressed through the pages of the Tree of Liberty.