

# The Lancaster Federalists And the War of 1812

G. Terry Madonna

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In the first sixteen years of the nineteenth century, between the first election of Jefferson and that of Monroe, the Democrats' in Pennsylvania boasted that they formed the "Keystone in the Democratic Arch"; and it seemed that the presidential elections of 1808 and 1812 substantiated this claim. The State maintained an unbroken loyalty to the national administration throughout this period. The first decade of the nineteenth century was marked by a succession of Democratic Governors, United States Senators and Congressmen; and the party nearly always controlled the State legislature. On the other hand, the history of the Pennsylvania Federalists was one of continued failure. However, several Pennsylvania counties resisted this trend—Adams, Lancaster and Delaware—and resolutely held aloft the torch of Federalism against the Democratic tide. Notable among these was Lancaster County, where the strength of the Federalist party in the first quarter of the nineteenth century was its most outstanding political feature.

To be sure, the Democrats did offer a serious threat to the Federalists in Lancaster County. This threat often materialized, as it did in 1801-1804 and 1810-1811, when the Democrats held a majority of the elective offices. Nonetheless, during and after the War of 1812, the Federalists began electing their candidates with amazing regularity and by significant majorities, a trend which continued

well into the 1820's. In other areas, particularly in New England, Federalist opposition to the declaration of War in 1812 and the subsequent conduct of the war effort resulted in political suicide. These actions helped to hasten the demise of the already dying Federalist party. Nevertheless, in Lancaster the war became a source of strength and unity which brought on a revival of Federalism unmatched throughout the State of Pennsylvania.

The immediate purpose of this paper is to study the politics of the war period in Lancaster County from 1811 to 1815, emphasizing the developments which occurred within the Federalist party producing this resurgence, tracing the path Federalism followed, and comparing that party's relative strength in relation to the State Federalist party.

### THE REVIVAL OF FEDERALISM: 1811-1812

Outside of the Embargo of 1807, domestic affairs in the first decade of the nineteenth century had monopolized the attentions of both parties within the State. However, the resumption of the European war brought renewed interest in national issues. In Pennsylvania, the Federalists exerted themselves in opposition to the commercial and later in 1812 to the military policies of President James Madison. The United States had been drifting towards war since 1808 when the conflict between England and Napoleon had become broadened and compounded. Meanwhile, a brief interlude in this drift had occurred when Congress repealed Jefferson's embargo and substituted a non-intercourse act which promised that the President would resume commercial affairs with the nation, either Britain or France, that ceased its injurious commercial restrictions against America. When this policy proved a failure, as Napoleon continued to seize American ships, Congress resorted on May 1, 1810, to the preposterous Macon's Bill No. 2 which freed American shipping from all restrictions, while forbidding the armed ships of Britain and France from entering American waters. In addition, if one of the belligerents revoked its commercial restrictions against the United States and the other failed to do likewise in three months, non-intercourse would be initiated against the obdurate party; and the obdurate party proved to be England. In Pennsylvania, the perplexing external situation of commercial restriction and counter-restrictions drove a further wedge between the French-oriented Democratic party and the English-bent Federalist party. After 1810, as conditions grew worse between the United States and Britain and foreign relations became strained, the Federalists of Pennsylvania united, determined to prevent a declaration of war against England.

In Lancaster, the Federalists' first real opposition to the Madison administration and its policies towards Great Britain came in the spring of 1811. The brief encounter between the American frigate *President* and the British sloop-of-war *Little Belt* gave the Federalists the ammunition to launch an attack on Madison and his handling of the affair.<sup>2</sup> The Federalist organ, the *Lancaster Journal*,

on June 7 claimed that the American Commodore John Rodgers had specific orders from the chief executive to provoke a conflict with British vessels, and now for the first time the people could "disclaim confidence in the impartiality, firmness and political honesty of Mr. Madison.<sup>3</sup> The "*Little Belt* affair" became a *cause celebre* for the Federalists as their press vehemently reproached the President and the Commodore—the former for his lack of action in not instituting an inquiry into the conduct of Rodgers and the latter for his arbitrary and warlike attitude.<sup>4</sup>

The principal fear of the Federalists seemed to be that, as a result of this naval engagement, the United States would come under the domination of Napoleon Bonaparte and his imperial designs. Some Harrisburg Federalists believed it was the general opinion among the people that the American government was, at present, under the influence of Bonaparte.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in Lancaster it was held by certain Federalists that

if the people can only be kept hoodwinked a little longer about the *Little Belt* of England, they may then be permitted to see the country snugly enclosed within the Big Belt of Bonaparte.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the State Democrats suggested a policy which would lead to war. The State's leading Democratic daily, the *Aurora*, condoned the skirmish between the President and the *Little Belt* asserting that the people of Pennsylvania would support the government if action was necessary as a result of the conflict. By August, the Philadelphia daily was convinced that war with Britain was inevitable, unless Americans were willing to continue to submit to such violations of their rights as neutrals.<sup>7</sup> Andrew Gregg, one of Pennsylvania's Democratic United States Senators, took it for granted that Congress would take reliable measures because of the recent fracas between America and England.<sup>8</sup> President Madison privately admitted that war seemed likely. To his friend Thomas Jefferson, Madison in early June wrote that

The occurrence between Rodgers and the British ship of war, not unlikely to bring on repetitions, will probably end in an open rupture . . .<sup>9</sup>

The cumulative effect of the "*Little Belt* Affair" was a war mania which spread over America in the summer of 1811. By September, the Federalists of Pennsylvania had become caught up in the whirlwind and gave qualified support to the Madison administration. The *Lancaster Journal* noted that

it was the duty of every patriot to assist in the defense of the country.<sup>10</sup>

However, the Federalist weekly clarified its statement by declaring, that even though the Federalists would support the government with all their energies, at the same time they would use every constitutional exertion to change what they considered to be a "weak and wicked" administration.<sup>11</sup> It was this type of attitude which the Federalists would display throughout the war period, thus escaping

any charge of treason similar to that which was hurled at their New England brethren. The Democratic organ in Lancaster, *The Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, was quick to notice this apparent softening of the Federalist position, and printed an editorial on September 7, 1811, relating

that it would seem that there is to be perfect harmony and unanimity amongst all ranks and classes of the American people.<sup>12</sup>

The "Era of good feeling" continued into the fall political campaign, which was issueless with neither party exerting much effort. Little mention was made of the war fever, or of the crisis which had pervaded the political atmosphere earlier—the "Little Belt affair" being an event of the past. The Democrats nominated Simon Snyder for re-election as governor while the tottering State Federalists did not even take up a candidate. Snyder had received the nomination for governor in 1808 because of his long service to the Democratic party, including 12 years as a Justice of the Peace and 13 years as a member of the State House of Representatives, 6 of which he spent as its Speaker. In addition, Snyder was a German and the Democrats had looked for a substantial majority of the German-speaking people throughout the State to support him. While this held generally true throughout the State in 1808, the Germans of Lancaster County had shown party preference over ethnic considerations and overwhelmingly voted for his Federalist opponent. Snyder's election in 1808 was to be significant for a number of reasons. It marked the first time in Pennsylvania politics that the governor's chair was held by a man who had risen from the ranks of the lower classes. Hitherto, the governor and other important officials of the State had been men of education and property, with social backgrounds and conservative leanings. Consequently, the election of Snyder marked a significant defection and novel departure in Pennsylvania politics.<sup>13</sup>

In 1811 local and State problems had given way to the shadow of international affairs. The political scene in the fall was marked by great apathy. By and large, the Federalists were convinced of the futility of running a candidate in opposition to Snyder and had decided to let the Governor seek re-election unopposed. John Binns, editor of the *Philadelphia Democratic Press*, and publisher for the State administration, had in May confidently predicted that the Federalists would "not take up any candidate in opposition to Governor Snyder."<sup>14</sup> A contingent of Philadelphia Federalists, however, in late August proposed that the Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, William Tilghman, be selected as the Federalist candidate for governor.<sup>15</sup> The Chief Justice wrote privately to James Milnor, a leader of the Philadelphia committee that had proposed Tilghman, declining the nomination and declaring that the State "was not prepared for a change of Governor." It had appeared to Tilghman that the Federalists throughout the State had "made up their minds to submit to the re-election of the present Governor."<sup>16</sup>

Not all the Federalists throughout the State were ready to



**SIMON SNYDER**

**5 November 1759 - 9 November 1819**

**Born in Lancaster**

**Governor 20 December 1808 - 16 December 1817**

acquiesce and allow Snyder to run unopposed. In Lancaster County Federalist leaders devised a ruse to keep the rank and file members of their party from supporting Snyder. By leaving the name of the candidate for governor blank on the ballot, they hoped to induce a write-in vote for a Federalist, preferably William Tilghman. Although on election day, October 8, 1811, this plan was successful in Lancaster County, Snyder was elected by a huge majority throughout the State.<sup>17</sup> The incumbent carried every county with the exception of Lancaster, amassing a total of 52,319 votes; his closest rival, Tilghman, managed a mere 3,609.<sup>18</sup> The Federalists' poor showing in the gubernatorial contest was matched by their performance in the election of State legislators. The party lost all 9 of the senatorial races and would control a negligible 6 out of 31 seats in the

State Senate. In the House of Representatives, whose members were elected annually, a meager 14 out of the 95 seats were in Federalist hands. Only the city of Philadelphia and Adams and Delaware counties had offered solace to the Federalists of Pennsylvania.<sup>19</sup> The Democrats for the second year running were even victorious in Lancaster County, which was generally solidly in the Federalist column, carrying 5 out of 6 seats in the State's lower House. The lone Federalist delegate was the verbose editor of the *Lancaster Journal*, William Hamilton.<sup>20</sup>

The tranquility which had permeated State politics during the fall of 1811 was broken by President Madison's message to Congress which he delivered on November 5, 1811. The Virginian in his message outlined the existing situation in foreign affairs, noting that Great Britain continued its policy of violating American neutral rights, and French policy was spoken of in language far from friendly. The President urged Congress to put

the United States into an armor and an attitude demanded by the crisis, and corresponding with the national spirit and expectations.<sup>21</sup>

The Democrats of Pennsylvania viewed Madison's message with considerable unanimity. A constituent writing to the prominent Democratic Congressman from Montgomery County, Jonathan Roberts, replied that he

understood Madison's message to mean that strong measures are expected to be pursued and so far as I am able to see it is right . . . My feelings all say it is right. The message throughout does honour to the President and the nation.<sup>22</sup>

The partisan *Aurora* applauded the message and heaped praise upon Madison for his strong and vigorous stand against those European nations that were violating American rights on the sea lanes. The Democratic daily particularly welcomed the portions of the message which urged military preparations.<sup>23</sup>

Federalist opinions on the merits of the message were marked by division. The *Lancaster Journal* interpreted the President's message as a war note to Congress. It continued by declaring, "We shall expect an immediate declaration of War against Great Britain."<sup>24</sup> While Lancaster Federalists feared the worst from the message, the *United States' Gazette* concluded that the Democrats were abandoning attempts to use coercion by commercial restrictions, thereby pursuing a milder approach. Pennsylvania's leading Federalist daily was surprisingly moderate, considering the tone of its past editorials which had bitterly denounced the policies of Madison and his Democratic colleagues, especially those of Governor Snyder, who was a favorite whipping boy of the *Gazette*.<sup>25</sup> The *Pittsburgh Gazette*, the leading Federalist newspaper in Western Pennsylvania, interpreted the address as a return to the policies of Washington and hoped now the nation would abandon the proclamations and gunboats, a policy the Federalists found exceedingly embarrassing.<sup>26</sup>

The Democratic government of Pennsylvania continued to give unqualified support to Madison and his program. In his annual message to the assembly in December, Governor Snyder called on the State to be prepared if war came. Snyder declared that the necessity of preparing to meet every effort should bring about the revision of Pennsylvania's militia system.<sup>27</sup> The Governor continued in the same vein when he delivered his inaugural address on December 17, saying

the storm of war which has long been desolating the old world, howls along our coasts and hovers over our habitations; whether it may be despelled [*sic*], or descends upon us in all fury remains undetermined.

Snyder followed his rather cryptic remarks with an urgent plea that

if war is declared, let the voice of faction be heard no more; but let every arm be raised to defend the rights and liberties.<sup>28</sup>

The Democrats in the General Assembly were prepared to go part of the way with Snyder's proposals. Although the State legislators did not enact his program of militia reform, their subsequent actions left no doubt of their war-like sentiments. In the State Senate, John Gemmil, a minister from Chester County, introduced a series of strongly worded resolutions on December 5, 1811, severely criticizing British naval policy. The resolutions denounced British encroachments upon American shipping, the impressment of American sailors, and the far reaching demands made upon the United States Government. The Senator declared that the injustices suffered by America must be forcibly resisted and military preparation should be undertaken at State expense. The most radical resolution urged the seizure of British property to indemnify those whose ships and shipping had been destroyed by the British.<sup>29</sup>

It was at this juncture that serenity and calmness, which had been the outstanding characteristics of Pennsylvania politics in the fall of 1811, became a thing of the past. Despite Simon Snyder's rhetorical pleadings for an end to factionalism, the Federalists refused to comply with such strong and vigorous measures against Great Britain. To the *Lancaster Journal*, the series of resolutions introduced by Senator Gemmil were anathema. It retorted that it hoped the resolutions would not stain the American character by legislative adoption. The Lancaster Federalists considered them as an attempt to effect the measures expressed and implied in Madison's message. The *Journal* feared that the resolutions would invigorate the deliberations of Congress.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the warning of the *Journal*, the Senate with only minor moderations approved them on December 14, by a vote of 18-10.<sup>31</sup> In the House, it was Lancaster County's sole Federalist Representative who endeavored to block the passage of Gemmil's resolutions. William Hamilton, the editor turned legislator, made numerous attempts to weaken the measures by amending them. However, his efforts resulted merely in delaying the final vote which, when it came, was a smashing Democratic victory. Only 12 Federalists and 11 Democrats voted against the resolution which favored the seizure

of British property; it passed handily, 72-23, much to the dismay of Hamilton and his few Democratic allies. While the Federalists were powerless to halt Democratic legislation, they were at least consistent with 12 of their 14 representatives opposing the resolution.<sup>32</sup>

Although the Federalists were too weak to halt Democratic legislation, under the leadership of William Hamilton, they would, nevertheless, continue attempts to stem the tide of Democratic legislation. Hamilton's role in the legislature was of such importance that his career deserves brief mention. Originally a Jeffersonian Democrat, Hamilton had learned the printing trade from Benjamin Bache—who in the early 1790's published the *Aurora* in Philadelphia—and began publishing the *Lancaster Journal* as a Democratic weekly. An advocate of Jefferson in the election of 1796, his vigorous editorials in support of that man cost him the valuable patronage of Lancaster Federalists. Finding it more profitable to "get right," Hamilton easily donned Federalist garb, and with economic assistance from Lancaster County iron-baron Robert Coleman and attorney Charles Smith, managed to keep his paper solvent until 1820.<sup>33</sup> The Pennsylvania Democrats would have reason to regret his defection, because his editorials in the *Journal* and his voting in the legislature left no doubt that his conversion had been complete.

Despite the war-like activities of President Madison and the State legislature, the people of the Commonwealth had fallen into a period of apathy and indecision. Although Madison in his message had passed the ball to Congress, that body did not declare war on Great Britain during the winter of 1811-1812. It had been the general expectation that the twelfth Congress would declare war when it convened its first session in November, 1811. Even though such a declaration eventually proved to be the case, it was deferred until June, 1812. In view of the composition of Congress, the Federalists, with 6 senators and 36 representatives, could not be expected to block legislation.<sup>34</sup> Lancaster County was represented in that body by Joseph Lefever, a farmer from Strasburg Township. As a faithful and loyal Democrat, he generally voted along party lines, much to the chagrin of his Federalist constituents "back home." There was little in Lefever's action, in or out of Congress, to suggest his unhappiness with his party, though late in the summer of 1812 he bolted it and supported the mutinous DeWitt Clinton for the Presidency.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1812, Congressman Lefever supported the war readiness bills that were proposed by the Democrats in Congress. The measures passed included legislation which called for an additional force of 25,000 men to be made available to the regular army, increased the number of troops which the president could call to arms and granted to the president power to call out the militia when the public service required it necessary for the protection of the country.<sup>35</sup> All of these war readiness bills received the vote of Joseph Lefever. While the Strasburg farmer cast his votes for war preparedness, Lancaster Federalists were not silent on

the issues. The *Journal* criticized Congress for making additions to the standing army, an enlargement the "local feds" thought completely unnecessary because the country was in no danger from foreign invasion or from Indian attack.<sup>36</sup>

In Congress, when measures were put forth to finance the war legislation which had been passed, Congressman Lefever's support became much less reliable. Standing firmly opposed to a bill which would place a tax on stills and whiskey and another which called for a tax on licenses to retailers of wines, spirits and similar merchandise, Lefever was protecting the interests of his constituents.<sup>37</sup> As a farmer, he knew all too well that many a German yeoman practiced the craft of distilling whiskey as a supplement to his agricultural pursuits. A lively trade had long since developed, with Lancaster County serving as an effective hinterland to Philadelphia and Baltimore.<sup>38</sup> Even though the measures passed, the Lancaster Congressman escaped the charge of sacrificing the interest of his constituents for party reasons.

On June 4, 1812, Lefever left no doubt where his sympathies rested when, in a secret vote, he stood with the majority in the House, 79-49, to declare war between Great Britain and the United States. In the Pennsylvania delegation 14 out of 16 Congressmen voted in favor of war. Only the steadfast James Milnor and the questionable Democrat William Rodman opposed the measure. Both Pennsylvania Senators, Michael Leib and Andrew Gregg, similarly approved the declaration.<sup>39</sup>

The Federalists in the State had opposed uniformly the declaration of war. The strongest anti-war sentiment came from Philadelphia and vicinity and the tier of Southeastern counties including Chester, Delaware and Lancaster. In early June, 1812, as war seemed inevitable, Federalists throughout the State began to organize in opposition to the impending war crisis. In both Philadelphia and Lancaster, meetings were held of the "Freemen of all Parties, Friends of Peace, Commerce and Agriculture, opposed to Embargoes, Taxes and War." The general purpose of these gatherings was

to avert the calamities of war, secure the benefits of a good market for surplus goods, and to perpetuate the inestimable blessings of peace.<sup>40</sup>

The Federalists at these meetings issued strongly worded comments against the embargo, trade restrictions, large standing armies, and war, and further decided to deliver memorials to Congress asking that body to discontinue the harmful practices outlined by the "Friends of Peace."<sup>41</sup>

Unfortunately for the Federalists, Madison, on Thursday, June 18, 1812, formally issued his famous war proclamation.<sup>42</sup> The Federalist *Lancaster Journal* noted apprehensively in its first issue after the war message, "Look out for the worst that can happen."<sup>43</sup> Despite the President's proclamation, "the Friends of Peace" sent their petitions to Congress. Both the Philadelphia and Lancaster memorials were delivered by the States' lone Federalist Congressman,

VOTE FOR WAR, JUNE 4, 1812,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Not Voting</i>	<i>Total</i>
Connecticut	—	7	—	7
Delaware	—	1	—	1
Georgia	3	—	1	4
Kentucky	5	—	1	6
Louisiana	—	—	1	1
Maryland	6	3	—	9
Massachusetts	6	8	3	17
New Hampshire	3	2	—	5
New Jersey	2	4	—	6
New York	3	11	3	17
North Carolina	6	3	3	12
Ohio	1	—	—	1
Pennsylvania	16	2	—	18
Rhode Island	—	2	—	2
South Carolina	8	—	—	8
Tennessee	3	—	—	3
Vermont	3	1	—	4
Virginia	14	5	3	22
	—	—	—	—
	79	49	15	143

(Taken from Paullin and Wright, *Atlas of Historical Geography*, 109. The vote is in *Annals of Congress*, 12th Congress, 1st Session, 1637-1638).

James Milnor. The Philadelphia memorial contained about 1700 signatures while the Lancaster petitions were composed of 800-1000 names.<sup>44</sup>

The Federalists did not maintain complete solidarity in opposing the war and many of them apparently were willing to give it loyal support once such a course had been determined upon. Prominent Federalist Charles Biddle of Philadelphia wrote to Jonathan Roberts on June 27, stating,

as war is declared it is the duty of all good citizens to support his [*sic*] government to the utmost of his [*sic*] power.<sup>45</sup>

Living in Harrisburg where he practiced law, ex-Revolutionary War General Andrew Porter held an excellent vantage point from which to observe the State political scene. In a letter to his son, George, the General remarked that apparently

The Federalists of this place has [*sic*] given up all opposition to our government, and declare that although they had opposed the war

measures . . . they are determined since war is declared to go every length to support the measure, and that no Man should be permitted to remain in our country, who dare oppose the measures we have adopted.<sup>46</sup>

Andrew Porter's observations were reinforced by the *Lancaster Journal* which on June 26 published an editorial which implied a significant shift in the attitude of some Pennsylvania Federalists. It was concluded by the Federalist weekly that, although the majority of the Federalists were "Friends of Peace", the party would support the war vigorously to "put an end to it." Continuing in the same vein, the *Journal* related that the Federalists had done their best to avert the "calamity"; but having failed in their attempts,

they would join in maintaining the authority and efficacy of the laws, and support all measures adopted by the constitutional authorities for obtaining a quick, a just and an honorable peace.<sup>47</sup>

As future events would prove, the Federalists were prepared to give up opposition to the declaration of war only to take up a new approach. And the new tactic would not be one of desiring an immediate cessation of hostilities, but one of watchful waiting for the Madison administration to blunder in its conduct of the war. As the minority party, the Federalists were relegated to the position of reacting to Democratic programs and policies rather than initiating any of their own.

In late July, 1812, the Federalists had an opportunity to react, in this case to riots which broke out in Baltimore as a result of the inflammatory editorials of that city's leading Federalist gazette, the *Federal Republican*. The editor, Jacob Wagner, frequently and bitterly had attacked the declaration of war. Wagner and his editorial associates were finally threatened with violence by their Democratic opponents. Eventually the pressure became so great that they had to be confined in jail for their own safety and protection. A Democratic-inspired mob succeeded in breaking into the jail where they beat and killed several of the newspaper's supporters. The repercussions of these events were felt as far away as New England, where the Federalists hotly condemned the actions of the Baltimore mob.<sup>48</sup>

In Pennsylvania the events in Baltimore caused a good deal of consternation and produced a fear the Federalists utilized to their political advantage. This fear almost caused a panic in Lancaster where the Federalists vehemently proscribed the "perfidious, barbarous monsters [Democratic mob]." The *Lancaster Journal* in a series of editorials during the month of August severely censured the Democrats for their lack of concern over the liberty of the press and the security of property and person.<sup>49</sup> According to editor William Hamilton, Lancaster was in little danger of mob violence but he claimed

a few threats have been thrown out; but they have been made by men in a passion who think differently when they are cool.<sup>50</sup>

The Baltimore riots brought a response from Pennsylvania's leading Federalist, Chief Justice William Tilghman, who on August 10, 1812, wrote to the prominent Lancaster jurist, Jasper

Yeates, decrying the excesses in Baltimore and questioning the Lancaster judge concerning the "Baltimore affair."<sup>51</sup>

Because it produced a case of mass delusion, the Baltimore riots had a unifying effect on State Federalists. The "Baltimore affair" drove many Federalists into a more conservative position and convinced them that they had been right all along concerning the Democrats and the war. Coming hard on the heels of the Baltimore riots was the disastrous surrender of General William Hull at Detroit in August, an event which added fuel to the Federalist backfire.<sup>52</sup>

If the Democrats were not dismayed by military failure in late summer and fall, the split in their ranks caused real concern among party leaders. The rebellious New York Democrats, long resentful of Virginia's domination of the party, had nominated DeWitt Clinton as Madison's opponent in 1812. This was not a new course for the New York Democrats; they had played a similar game in 1808 when they unsuccessfully attempted to elect George Clinton. In 1812 it seemed unlikely that DeWitt Clinton would carry the States in the South and West, but prospects for victory loomed large if some type of coalition could be effected between the Democrats of the Middle States and the Federalists of New England. Pennsylvania, with 25 electoral votes, became for the Clintonians a pivotal State, the loss of which meant sure and sudden defeat in the October election.<sup>53</sup>

Since Madison had been nominated in the regular way by a Congressional caucus and stood for the continuance of the war, the Pennsylvania Democrats as a whole supported his reelection, although personally Madison aroused no great enthusiasm. On the other hand, Clinton had been nominated by the legislature of New York on a platform opposing the Congressional caucus and favoring speedy peace.<sup>54</sup>

It appeared that the strategy of the Clintonians was to appeal to the Democrats who favored peace as well as to members of the party which had a long-standing hatred of the Congressional caucus method. The influential Democrat W. J. Duane, Sr., editor of the *Aurora*, had been leading the anti-caucus faction in the party and had in the gubernatorial election of 1811 proposed a State convention.<sup>55</sup> However, in 1812, Duane was in a sense the prisoner of his own position. While he opposed the Congressional caucus which had nominated Madison, he also favored the vigorous prosecution of the war, something which was untenable to the "Peace party." Furthermore, Duane had supported Madison in 1808, and it seemed that the only convincing factor in keeping him from supporting the incumbent was his hatred for the Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. The *Aurora* in 1811 had gone so far as to suggest that Madison ought not seek reelection unless he dismissed Gallatin.<sup>56</sup> Duane's inveterate antipathy to Gallatin made it clear that the former could never wholly support a government in which the latter played a principal role. The position of Duane remained virtually unchanged because on March 9, 1812, the *Aurora* declared it would support George Clinton if he were nominated for the Presi-

duane. Although his nephew, DeWitt Clinton, eventually received the nomination, the inference was clear that as long as Gallatin remained an integral part of the national administration no support would be forthcoming from the *Aurora*.<sup>57</sup> However, March was not May, and by the latter month war seemed inevitable; and, when on May 18, 1812, the Congressional nominating caucus met Madison was chosen without opposition. Duane's *Aurora* was conspicuously noncommittal when the news of the nomination of Madison became public. The editor had obviously decided that supporting the impending declaration of war was more important than his anti-administration feelings. Even Democratic Senator Michael Leib, who along with Duane comprised the most vocal opposition to Madison, lent his support to the national government. When fourteen members of the eighteen-man Pennsylvania delegation to the presidential nominating caucus gave all their votes to Madison, Leib added his voice to the majority and supported the incumbent.<sup>58</sup> It certainly appeared that throughout the summer of 1812, even though a few of Pennsylvania's leading Democrats opposed the Madison administration, for one reason or another, unity would prevail on the October 13 general election and the October 30 presidential election.

The Clinton men had felt reasonably sure of Federalist support; however, in an effort to capitalize on the apparent Democratic split, agents possessing sufficient funds to keep the State deluged with campaign literature were dispatched into the State. Attorney James M. Porter, living in Reading, wrote to his father, General Andrew Porter, that the Clinton agents were making a strenuous effort to win both Federalists and Democrats to their cause.<sup>59</sup> Although the results of this campaign tactic were minimal, Clinton's supporters in the State did form a rather ineffectual political organization dedicated to the election of their candidate.

The first meeting of the new political organization was held in a secret session at Lancaster on August 26, 1812, presided over by Democratic Congressman Joseph Lefever, who represented Lancaster County. Although only attended by about 12 people, most of them from Lancaster, it was unanimously agreed to support Clinton and to publish an address which would be then circulated throughout the Commonwealth. The address began as a severe attack on the Congressional caucus method of nominating candidates, particularly the type used to select James Madison for reelection, and went on to denounce the administration's handling of the war effort. In conclusion, it recommended that each county hold conventions and make nominations for presidential electors, including the nominating of a Pennsylvanian for the Vice-Presidency. A State convention was to meet at Lancaster on September 24, 1812, to publish a general ticket.<sup>60</sup> The Federalists of Lancaster, on September 16, 1812, held a rally to approve the nomination for President of DeWitt Clinton and of Jared Ingersoll for the Vice-Presidency. Although open to "American Citizens of all parties", as were the other meetings held by the "Friends of Peace", the Federalists inspired, promoted and controlled the proceedings.<sup>61</sup>

The Federalist Press, in the meantime, had come out in support of DeWitt Clinton. The *United States' Gazette*, which had been partial to Clinton through the late spring and summer, declared its full approval of the Lancaster meeting presided over by Lefever, as well as of the numerous other rallies held by the "Peace party."<sup>62</sup> The *Lancaster Journal* in September threw its support to DeWitt Clinton and predicted Madison's defeat in the October elections. Its editorials claimed that the loss of confidence by the people for conduct of the war would be the major campaign issue. The Democratic Congressman Joseph Lefever was praised for his defection, a path according to the *Journal* traveled by many Pennsylvania Democrats.<sup>63</sup>

Joseph Lefever had become the leader of the Clintonians in Pennsylvania, and his defection from the regular Democrats created quite a stir. The Democratic Congressman had been one of the four members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation to be absent from the Presidential nominating caucus. Jonathan Roberts, speculating as to the preference of the absentee Congressman, predicted that Lefever would "go along" with the Democratic choice.<sup>64</sup> If the Montgomery County Representative was surprised by Lefever's subsequent action, the Lancaster Democrats were even more astonished by this *volte-face*. Years later in his *Memoirs*, Roberts feebly attempted to explain how the Lancaster Congressman's defection had occurred. It appears that DeWitt Clinton had made a trip to Washington, ostensibly to get a grant of land to aid the New York Canal, but apparently trying to gain support for his bid to become president. Clinton approached several Pennsylvania Congressmen, including Roberts, but only succeeded in carrying Lefever to support his cause, as Roberts termed it, "by Masonry or Somehow."<sup>65</sup>

Despite the lack of complete Democratic support, the vigor of the Federalists, the disastrous surrender of General Hull, the fear created by the Baltimore riots and the declaration of war against Great Britain; the results of the general election on October 13, 1812, was an overwhelming Democratic triumph. Meager gains were made by the Federalists in the legislature. The Federalists carried their full assembly tickets in Adams, Chester, Delaware, Luzerne and Lancaster counties and elected one out of four representatives from Bucks county. Only 18 of the 95 delegates who would enter the new legislative session were of Federalist affiliation. In the Senate an inconsequential 5 of 26 seats were held by the Federalists, who managed to maintain their present strength by electing 3 out of the 9 Senators chosen in the election.<sup>66</sup>

The Democrats carried 22 congressional contests, and only a schism in Dauphin County prevented the party from a complete sweep throughout the State for the positions in Congress. In Dauphin, Judge John Gloninger, a doubtful Democrat, was victorious; but the Federalists could derive little pleasure from the victory since his Federalism was even more questionable. The Democrats were confident that even though the Judge might be a Federalist sympathizer he was, at least, a strong supporter of the war.<sup>67</sup>

Following the elections of 1812, the position of the Federalists throughout the State was weak and decadent. The party had not succeeded in electing an assemblyman west of the Blue Mountains. Even Philadelphia, an old Federalist bastion, had fallen in the general election.<sup>68</sup> The Federalists managed to carry Pittsburgh and Allegheny County by a majority of 200 votes. However, since Allegheny was joined with the heavily Democratic Butler County for assembly and Congressional elections, the regular Democratic ticket was successful, offsetting the small Federalist plurality in Allegheny.<sup>69</sup> The Federalists had one consolation, they had carried a Western county for the first time since 1808, even though it had little practical significance.

With Philadelphia temporarily lost to the Democrats, the control of the Federalist party passed into the hands of the Lancaster Federalists. The new position which Lancaster County held in the party was remarkable. The county, with 6 elected Federalist members to the House, represented one-third of that party's representation, a not insignificant proportion. In the Senate, Lancaster controlled one-fifth of the Federalist delegation to that body, and with the recently elected William Hamilton as its Senator, strong and vigorous leadership could be expected. On paper, it appeared that the Lancaster Federalists could wield enormous power in their party. What occurred in actual practice was another matter.

With the general elections returning substantial Democratic majorities throughout the State, little hope was held for a Clinton victory when the presidential election took place on October 30, 1812. Nevertheless, in early October the Clinton electoral ticket was published. Although it was headed by ex-Governor Thomas McKean and included the names of many prominent Democrats, a number of the members of the ticket balked at serving as Clinton electors. The result naturally meant that the Clinton supporters were forced constantly to revise their list of nominees right up to the time of the presidential election.<sup>70</sup>

On October 30, 1812, when Pennsylvanians balloted for President, the results were a foregone conclusion. The Madison electors were chosen convincingly throughout the State by a substantial 48,946 vote to 29,056 for the Clintonians, a margin of not quite 20,000. Only Luzerne, Bucks, Delaware, Chester, Adams, and Lancaster Counties gave majorities to Clinton. In the last county, the New Yorker succeeded by a margin of 1323, which represented the largest margin in the State for Clinton.<sup>71</sup>

Throughout the country at large, voting went much as expected, with Madison receiving all the electoral votes of the Southern and Western States except Maryland which gave Clinton 5 of its 11 votes. Vermont and Pennsylvania, with 8 and 25 electoral votes respectively, were the only States north of Maryland to support the Virginian. The final tally gave Madison 128 votes to 89 for DeWitt Clinton.<sup>72</sup>

The success of the regular Democrats over the Federalists and

the Clinton Democrats can be traced to several factors. The Democratic party's strong stand in support of the war had insured Madison's victory in the State. In the final analysis the war acted as a unifying agent on the Democratic party, at least keeping the major portion of it loyal to the national administration. Since Madison was identified with the war policy, the State Democrats did not intend to weaken their own position by failing to support the chief executive. As the election results had clearly shown, only a few Democratic leaders had bolted the regular party and joined the Clintonites.

Just as the war solidified the Democrats, it also became a source of strength to Federalism. A national crisis had shaken them out of lethargy and apathy. Firmly opposing the declaration of war, they had moderated their criticisms, leveling them at the war effort rather than at the principle of the war itself. The State Federalists were now waiting to see what further developments would occur, thereby making it possible for them to advance their positions even further despite the fact that Federal gains at the polls had been moderate at best.

### THE POLITICS OF WAR — 1813-1815

The declaration of war against Great Britain had saved the Federalist party of Pennsylvania from immediate extinction. The war itself subsequently provided the party with a new lease on life, an extension, however, which more than ever was determined by the national administration's handling of the war effort. Success in conducting military affairs by the Madison government would result in a return to regionalism and parochialism for the Pennsylvania Federals. However, Democratic failure to cope with the British on the battlefield and at sea offered renewed hope, perhaps the only hope, that the Federalist party would maintain itself on a State-wide basis. And judging from the early results of the fighting, it appeared that the Federalist party would be saved from dissolution.

Throughout the fall of 1812, the military situation went from bad to worse. The planned invasions of Canada were abortive if not entirely futile. Detroit and Queenston Heights were names which did not bring proud memories to Americans. It seemed that only William Henry Harrison's forces in the Northwest offered some consolation to the administration in Washington, and even there a steady stream of complaints about shortages of food and clothing reminded all of the unpleasantness of war.<sup>73</sup>

Despite such adverse conditions, the Democrats generally remained confident of an eventual military victory. President Madison in his fourth annual message to Congress on November 4, 1812, proudly related that the misfortune at Detroit was not without a consoling effect. To the chief executive, the loss of an important post and of brave men had inspired a new determination and confidence in American ability to win the war.<sup>74</sup> The Democrats of Pennsylvania held similar views of single-mindedness and determination.

When the State legislature convened on December 1, 1812, the Democrats in that body remained firm in their support of the war and the Madison administration. Governor Snyder's annual message to the legislature outlined the path of support given by Pennsylvania, especially noting that the State had supplied far more militia volunteers than requested by the national quota. The Governor urged the continuance of aid by asking for sweeping revisions in the militia laws.<sup>75</sup>

Very early in the 1812-1813 General Assembly, legislation was enacted offering Pennsylvania's support to the national administration. The Democratic-dominated legislature adopted several resolutions which proposed that the United States continue fighting until all American wrongs had been redressed. These new resolutions, introduced by Senator John Gemmil, were not dissimilar in tenor to the ones introduced by the Chester minister in the previous legislature. They were an obvious attempt to show Great Britain that the earlier American losses sustained in battle were not forgotten and that such defeats would not be condoned. The Federalists, although vastly outnumbered, attempted to defeat the passage of Gemmil's resolutions. In the Senate, ever-present William Hamilton vigorously opposed them and in one case stood alone in a 25 to 1 vote against their passage. Events in the House proved to be much the same. The Federalist assemblymen, led by Lancaster County's John Hopkins and Jacob Grosh, consistently voted against the resolutions which were easily approved over their objections.<sup>76</sup>

The legislature also passed measures of a more substantial nature in support of the war. A bill which provided that the Governor subscribe to a million dollar federal loan passed the Senate by a vote of 28 to 1, with Hamilton again standing alone in resisting passage. The Federalists in the House endeavored to reduce the amount of the loan to \$500,000; however, the Democratic majority by a vote of 54 to 30 had little trouble in squashing this effort to minimize the effectiveness of the loan, much to the dismay of the "Feds" who held to their usual minority position.<sup>77</sup> Additional war legislation passed with similar ease as the Federalists vainly attempted to stem the Democratic tide. Politically obnoxious to the Federalists was a piece of legislation which enabled the militia or volunteers of Pennsylvania to vote while absent from their home districts. Since the majority of the Pennsylvanians involved in fighting the war were Democrats, the measure was rife with political overtones. Uneasily the Federalists watched the bill pass like previous war legislation.<sup>78</sup>

Such were the existing affairs concerning the legislative session of 1812-1813 and the war. The Democrats were almost wholly of one sentiment, while the vestigial Federalists in the minority were impotent even to obstruct. It was partly the hopelessness of the Federalist situation and partly the substantial effort put forth by the Democratic legislature in supporting the war which prompted one Democrat to write, "The Federalist members of the legislature

[1812-1813] are not Tories.”<sup>79</sup> Had the Federalists been strong enough to block Democratic war legislation, observers would have quickly noticed the dissent which was in evidence but which had been swamped by overwhelming Democratic majorities.

The Federalist press throughout the legislative session of 1812-1813 had been strangely quiet. In Lancaster the *Journal* was almost devoid of all political commentary whatsoever. The Federalists' newly found friend, Joseph Lefever, had not returned to Washington for the second session of the twelfth Congress, leaving Lancaster unrepresented in that body. Political activity, for the most part, was at a virtual stand-still. However, in Philadelphia, the *United States' Gazette*, alone among the major Federalist journals of the State, ruthlessly attacked the national administration, the war, and everything that appeared to be Democratic. The high point of the *Gazette's* caviling came when it denounced the appointment of the peace commission to work through Russian mediation. Even though one of the three American commissioners was the prominent Delaware Federalist, James Bayard, the peace attempt was depicted as a hoax and a Democratic ruse to obtain Federalist support for the war effort.<sup>80</sup> Through the spring of 1813, the *Gazette's* denunciations became increasingly more radical. The news of the massacre at the River Raisin, Sir George Cockburn's raids in Chesapeake Bay, and the sacking of Hampton, Virginia, only left the Philadelphia daily more disillusioned, as it scoffed at the reports of such occurrences as mere rumors or as continued Democratic plots. The Raisin River massacre was singled out for particular vituperation. The *Gazette* contended that those who lost their lives during the massacre had been the responsibility of the national administration, and that

the blood of these butchered souls will be heavy upon the souls of the authors of war.<sup>81</sup>

The *United States' Gazette's* extreme sentiment was the exception rather than the rule. British activities around the mouth of the Susquehanna in mid-May, 1813 temporarily unified both parties in the southeastern portion of the State in supporting the war effort. In the Federalist stronghold of Lancaster County, the British advances in Maryland provided the first real war scare. Even though the danger was more imaginary than real, contingents of Lancaster volunteers representing both parties marched to Elkton, Maryland, to prepare for any eventuality. The Federalist weekly, the *Lancaster Journal*, struck a harmonious chord when it avowed,

the men who went to Elkton, Caste [cast] aside all party considerations and marched to the relief of their neighbors . . . This the Federalists will always be prepared to do.<sup>82</sup>

Amidst much fanfare, the Lancaster recruits returned home three weeks later, having seen no action. The *Democratic Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, in the same spirit, pointed out that the volunteers had conducted themselves with “strick [sic] propriety” in Elkton.<sup>83</sup>

The Federalists' newly espoused position was neatly summarized by the *Lancaster Journal* which took great pains to clarify its position on the war and its conduct. Immediate peace was not the Federalist goal because the war effort in 1812 did not indicate that it could be made upon safe and honorable terms. To the *Journal* peace could be concluded only after the military had won back the territory conquered by the British and the Indians were taught that aggression would merit nothing.<sup>84</sup> It was this type of conviction that prompted General Andrew Porter to repeat an earlier claim:

As to the war, there is no division of Sentiments among us in this place [*Harrisburg*], the Federalists are as earnest as the Democrats to carry it on with spirits.<sup>85</sup>

On the whole, only a small, extremely vocal group of Federalists opposed giving any type of support to the war effort. The main body of Federalist criticism seems to have been laid at the Madison Administration's bungling and inept handling of the military affairs. The despondency and despair expressed by some was chiefly generated by American military defeats, and, in the late fall of 1812 and spring of 1813, they were the rule rather than the exception. The spirit of desiring to continue the war was aptly expressed by the Dauphin County politician and future Democratic Congressman, Amos Ellmaker,\* who despite the incompetency of the generals, announced that he felt even more strongly about carrying on the war until victory had been determined.<sup>86</sup> Such sentiment was finally rewarded when in September, 1813, Captain Oliver Perry's hastily built vessels of green wood, sailed by militiamen, canal men and Indian scouts, met and defeated the British squadron, at Put-in-Bay on Lake Erie. The Democrats at last had something to celebrate and they proceeded to make the most of Perry's victory. James Madison considered the accomplishment by the "Hero of Lake Erie" a "brilliant achievement" and viewed the future with strong expectations for American success.<sup>87</sup> A victory celebration held in Philadelphia in late September, 1813, commemorating Perry's victory prompted one Democrat to write that, with the exception of the more extreme Federalist leaders, members of both parties joined in the festivities.<sup>88</sup> Adequate proof of Federalist favor came when a *United States' Gazette* editorial applauded the action on Lake Erie, undoubtedly because Oliver Perry was a Federalist.<sup>89</sup>

The Perry victory coming when it did, a month before the general election, insured Democratic success at the polls. The 1813 election, an odd-year political race with only legislative seats and local posts being contested, promised to find the Federalists waging a bitter struggle for political existence. Perry's convincing defeat of the British fleet forced the Federalists, at least temporarily, to forego the policy of belittling the war effort. As the fall campaign of 1813 began, criticism of heavy war taxation replaced excoriation

\*Ellmaker was elected to the Fourteenth Congress but declined to serve.

of the war effort as the Federalist's principal issue. The *Lancaster Journal* declared that

the direct tax of the County of Lancaster exceeded that of the whole State of Rhode Island, and the whole State of Delaware.<sup>90</sup>

Throughout the campaign the newspaper issued its complaints of exorbitant prices for sugar, tea, coffee and salt, all being laid at the Democratic doorstep.<sup>91</sup> The Lancaster Federalists' new approach was motivated by the recent Elkton affair which had created a fear of threatened British invasion. The imminent danger of British activity took the sting out of the Lancaster Federalists' reprobations and throughout the remainder of the war only moderate criticism was leveled at the Madison government.

A similar spirit existed in Philadelphia where, in the face of threatened British hostilities in the Chesapeake Bay and the seizures of shipping in the Delaware Bay and River, some co-operation existed between the parties.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, the *United States' Gazette* ridiculed the Federalists who aided the Democrats in defending Philadelphia. According to the *Gazette*, no British threat to the city existed; and, if a seige took place, it was the duty of the national administration to protect Philadelphia.<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately for the Federalists, on October 5, 1813, General William Harrison defeated the British and their allies in the Battle of the Thames and recovered Detroit. News of the event reached all parts of Pennsylvania by election day, October 13, 1813, providing the Democrats with added insurance.<sup>94</sup> Under the circumstances the Democratic candidates had a field day throughout the State. The Federalists carried only Delaware, Adams and Lancaster Counties, losing eight seats in the House, for a total representation of only 10 as compared with 85 for the Democrats. They captured only one of the seven contests for the State Senate, leaving them 6 members to 25 for their Democratic opponents.<sup>95</sup>

In Philadelphia the Democrats made a clean sweep of all offices in the city and county. The Federalists made a much poorer showing in 1813 than they had in 1812, the Democratic majority averaging more than double that of the previous year.<sup>96</sup> The Federalists in Pittsburgh, whose hopes had been higher than they had been for some years, did not elect a single candidate in a local or legislative contest. Only in Lancaster, among the State's major urban areas, was the Federalist ticket elected; and in that county the entire slate of candidates succeeded.<sup>97</sup> Once again Lancaster County proved itself to be the bedrock of Pennsylvania Federalism. In the recently elected House of Representatives, 6 of 10 Federalist delegates to that body hailed from the Red Rose County.

The year of war since the reelection of Madison had weakened rather than strengthened the Federalist position in Pennsylvania. After showing signs of revival in the election of 1812 the party's strength in Pennsylvania subsequently declined to an historic low point. With only 10 seats in the House and 6 seats in the Senate the

Federalists could effect little opposition to the program of Governor Simon Snyder. The Federalist party remained without an issue attractive enough to pull votes away from the Democrats. The American military victories in the fall of 1813 deprived the Federalists of an opportunity to score gains at the polls by robbing the party of its most effective political weapon.

According to the 1813 election results, the Federalist party in Pennsylvania once more appeared on the verge of dissolution. However, the war effort which had looked promising in the fall of 1813 had deteriorated rapidly through the spring and summer of 1814. British successes at LaColle, Oswego and Michilimachinac, as well as their advances on New York and the Chesapeake regions did not go unnoticed by Federalists.<sup>98</sup> Thus, there was hope for the party as they took their seats for the legislative session of 1813-1814.

In the new session, politics came to dominate the energies of the legislators. Although giving the war effort substantial support, they seemed to be more concerned with raising their own emoluments, with the lucrative federal patronage in Philadelphia, with the selection of a candidate for Governor, and with the passage of a general banking act.<sup>99</sup> The Federalists in the legislature continued, as they had in the preceding sessions, to oppose measures which appeared to support the war effort. When resolutions were introduced approving the retaliatory seizure of British hostages to offset threatened British actions against naturalized Americans, the Pennsylvania Federalists led by the Lancaster delegation voted not to pass them. The resolutions were approved without difficulty by both Houses of the legislature thereby maintaining continued aid to the Madison administration.<sup>100</sup>

The unanimity of the Federalist delegation was broken by the passage of a bill which called for the State assumption of the direct tax assessed by a recent act of Congress. This measure provided that Pennsylvania would assume her proportion of the debts incurred by the Federal government in waging war against Great Britain. Introduced into the House by the Philadelphia Democrat William J. Duane, Jr., the measure was approved in that body by a resounding 88 to 2 vote. The Federalist Representatives, present for the vote, sided with the majority, enabling Pennsylvania to assume her obligation in financing the war. In the Senate, the measure received the support of 29 of its members, but the steadfast Federalist William Hamilton cast his vote in opposition.<sup>101</sup>

It appears, in view of the worsening military situation in 1814, that the Federalist House members, especially from Lancaster County, increasingly came to support legislation which promoted a more vigorous conduct of the war. Unfortunately, the speeches and voting lists of the *House* and *Senate Journals* for this session of the legislature are fragmentary and inconclusive on this point. However, Jacob Grosh, a Federalist member of both the 1812-1813 and 1813-1814 legislatures answered a personal appeal from Governor Snyder, formed a volunteer company, and joined the war.<sup>102</sup> Even the great

dissenter Senator William Hamilton changed his singular position. Late in September of 1814, after the burning of Washington, the editor left his printing shop in the hands of a subordinate and volunteered in the militia.<sup>103</sup>

Despite such displays of loyalty, the military failure in 1814 provided the moderate Federalists with ample opportunity to demand increased efficiency and determination in the waging of war. A Fourth of July celebration gave the Lancaster Federalists an occasion to excoriate Madison's handling of the faltering war effort. James Buchanan<sup>104</sup> serving as president of the Lancaster Washington Association—a young Federalist organization—delivered the principal address at the Independence Day rally. The future President of the United States lambasted Madison and his administration for bungling the war effort and called on Federalists to renew support by pitching into the fighting to force an honorable peace at the earliest possible moment.<sup>105</sup> Buchanan had privately condemned the government for its mismanagement of the war, but this was his first public expression of such sentiment.<sup>106</sup>

The young Federalists' call for action received its initial test when late in August the British army routed the Americans at Bladensburg and subsequently marched on Washington. In Lancaster, the capture of the Capital and the fear of possible British advances along the shores of the Delaware prompted swift action from both the Federalists and the Democrats. A public meeting was held on August 29, 1814, in order to form volunteer companies to hold the men in readiness for possible action.<sup>107</sup> A group composed of about two dozen of the "most respectable young gentlemen of Lancaster" did not delay for this meeting. Led by Captain Henry Shippen, these young men

mounted their horses, armed with sword, pistols &c., and marched for Baltimore, without waiting for formal orders, to aid in defending that place.<sup>108</sup>

The main Lancaster contingent which eventually went to Baltimore remained there until December, even though the British stayed in that region only a few days.<sup>109</sup> One of the "most respectable young gentlemen" who made the Baltimore sojourn was James Buchanan. While there the future "Sage of Wheatland" contributed little to the military effort, but his venture did perform the service of providing him with excellent campaign material in future elections.

The action of the Lancaster Federalists in joining the war effort was typical of the party throughout the State. Most of the State Federalists had, since the declaration of war in 1812, been willing to give it loyal support, as earlier statements have shown. Only a few intransigents, centered in Philadelphia, displayed an attitude which boded ill for the administration and the nation.

In the midst of the feverish activity occasioned by British movements in the Chesapeake area, the election of 1814 took place. The Federalists found much in their favor, as neither the financial nor

military picture looked bright for Pennsylvania. The Philadelphia Federalists centered their attacks on Governor Snyder and President Madison, assailing the former for failure to supply the troops in the field and the latter for incompetence and ineptness in conducting the war effort. The *United States' Gazette* went so far as to print a memorial which requested that Madison resign.<sup>110</sup> While political feeling ran high in Philadelphia, campaign activity in Lancaster County was minimal. Undoubtedly because many prominent political figures such as Editor Hamilton were off aiding in the war effort, newspaper comments were almost entirely missing. The crisis which had occurred at Baltimore, coming near the time of the fall election, provided the Lancaster Federalists with much the same spirit and unity as the "Elkton Affair" had in the previous year. The Lancaster Federalists expected little opposition from the Democrats in the county.<sup>111</sup>

Federalist optimism reached a high point when in late September they decided to run former State Senator Isaac Wayne for Governor against the incumbent Simon Snyder. Wayne had asked to have his name withdrawn, but the Philadelphia Federalists refused to accede to his request.<sup>112</sup> The results of the election went much as expected. The Federalist Wayne polled only 29,566 votes and carried the City of Philadelphia, as well as the counties of Delaware, Chester, Adams, and Lancaster. The ex-Senator succeeded in the latter county by over 700 votes. On the other hand Snyder received 51,099 and carried the remaining counties for a majority of 20,605 as compared with 24,386 in 1808 and 47,035 in 1811.<sup>113</sup>

The Federalists were returned to power in Philadelphia, making a clean sweep of the city election and most of the joint city-county positions. In Lancaster County the Federalist candidates were swept into all the offices by large majorities. The Federalists even managed to break through in Allegheny County by electing a Congressman. However, this would be the last time for any Federalist success in Western Pennsylvania.<sup>114</sup> Throughout the State as a whole the Democrats suffered setbacks. The Federalists captured five of the nine Senate seats up for election, giving them 10 out of 31; and they elected 24 members to the State House out of a possible 95, a gain of fourteen over the previous election.<sup>115</sup> Federalism had experienced a revival, a resurgence of strength, which marked the high point for the party during the war period.

For the first time since the declaration of war, the "Keystone State" appeared to falter in offering unflagging support to the Madison administration. To be sure, Pennsylvania remained staunchly in the Democratic column; but the State had lost much confidence in the ability of the Administration to conduct the war properly. With the war ending early in 1815, questions concerning the conduct of the war were put to rest; but the Federalist party which had ever so briefly reasserted itself faltered by the roadside. Increasingly after 1815 the Federalists found themselves supporting the conservative members of the Democratic party. While the State Federalist

party after the war suffered an early demise, in certain counties Federalism retained a certain resiliency and survived the "Era of good feeling." By all odds Lancaster County became the leading Federalist area in the State. During the war the leadership of the Federalist party in Pennsylvania had passed into the hands of the Lancaster Federals.

In Lancaster, where peace was jubilantly celebrated in a series of ceremonies which continued during the entire month of February,<sup>116</sup> solidarity among the Federalists marked the political atmosphere. In the elections of 1812, 1813, and 1814 the Democrats had not managed to elect a single candidate. The Lancaster Federalists had compiled a record unequalled in their party throughout the State. While Philadelphia, long Pennsylvania's most publicized Federalist stronghold, had tottered during the war, the Lancaster Federalists had tested their mettle and had withstood the challenge. In 1812, 6 of the 18; in 1813, 6 of the 10; in 1814, 6 of the 24 Federalists in the State House represented Lancaster County. While this statistic is far from conclusive, it goes a long way toward substantiating the claim that, during the War of 1812, Lancaster County was the foundation upon which Pennsylvania Federalism rested.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>What Pennsylvanians meant by the use of the terms Democratic and Republican is not altogether clear. All Jeffersonians in the State considered themselves to be Republicans. However, they also referred to themselves as Democrats or Democratic Republicans. By the War of 1812, it appears that they formed the habit of using Republican when reference was made to State politics. Since this study is basically an analysis of State politics during the War of 1812, the term Democratic will be used throughout the paper so as to avoid confusing the reader.

<sup>2</sup>On May 16, the American forty-four-gun frigate, the *President* overtook the twenty-gun British sloop-of-war *Little Belt* off the Virginia coast. British and American versions differ as to who fired the first volley, but the frigate ripped the sloop apart, killing nine and wounding three of her crew. Federalists throughout the country attacked President Madison as the perpetrator of the deed. For a detailed account see Adams, *History*, VI, pp. 25-45.

<sup>3</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, June 7, 1811.

<sup>4</sup>Adams, *History*, VI, pp. 25-47; *Lancaster Journal*, June 7, 1811.

<sup>5</sup>*Oracle of Dauphin*, June 15, 1811.

<sup>6</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, June 21, 1811.

<sup>7</sup>*Aurora*, May 27, August 8, 1811.

<sup>8</sup>Andrew Gregg to William Jones, June 24, 1811, in Uselma Clarke Smith Collection (Historical Society of Pennsylvania) Hereafter cited as HSP.

<sup>9</sup>Gaillard Hunt, *Writings of James Madison* (New York: G. P. Putnam, Inc., 1908), James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, June 24, 1811, VIII, pp. 158-161.

<sup>10</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 6, 1811.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, September 7, 1811.

<sup>13</sup>Wayland Dunaway, *A History of Pennsylvania* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1935), p. 425; G. L. Heiges, "When Lancaster was Pennsylvania's Capital," *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, LIX (1954), pp. 117-119.

<sup>14</sup>*Democratic Press*, May 20, 1811.

<sup>15</sup>*United States' Gazette*, August 20, 1811; *Democratic Press*, August 14, September 3, 1811.

<sup>16</sup>James Milnor *et al* to William Tilghman, August 24, 1811; William Tilghman to James Milnor *et al*, September 2, 1811, in *Tilghman Correspondence* (HSP).

<sup>17</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 27, October 4, 27, 1811.

<sup>18</sup>*Democratic Press*, October 11, 12, 1811; *Lancaster Journal*, October 11, 1811.

<sup>19</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, October 19, November 16, 1811.

<sup>20</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, October 11, 1811.

<sup>21</sup>Hunt, *Writings of James Madison*, VIII, p. 162.

<sup>22</sup>R. T. Leech to Jonathan Roberts, November 8, 1811, in *Roberts Papers* (HSP).

<sup>23</sup>*Aurora*, November 8, 9, 1811.

<sup>24</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, November 8, 1811.

<sup>25</sup>*United States' Gazette*, December 6, 1811.

<sup>26</sup>*Pittsburgh Gazette*, December 13, 1811.

<sup>27</sup>*Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th Series, IV, 746-749.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 762-763.

<sup>29</sup>*Senate Journal*, 1811-1812, pp. 8-9; *Lancaster Journal*, December 13, 1811.

<sup>30</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, December 13, 1811.

<sup>31</sup>*Senate Journal*, 1811-1812, pp. 42-44.

<sup>32</sup>*House Journal*, 1811-1812, pp. 81, 101, 104-110, 115.

<sup>33</sup>Alex Harris, *A Biographical History of Lancaster County* (Lancaster: Ellias Barr and Co., 1872), pp. 267-268.

<sup>34</sup>*Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1961* (Washington: The United States Governments Printing Office, 1961), p. 1207.

<sup>35</sup>*Annals of Congress*, 12th Congress, 1st session, pp. 374-378, 417, 442-547.

<sup>36</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, March 21, 1812.

<sup>37</sup>*Annals of Congress*, 12th Congress, 1st session, p. 1147.

<sup>38</sup>C. O. Wittlinger, "Early Manufacturing in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1717-1840", *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, LVIII (1954), pp. 153-189; *Ibid.*, LXI-LXII, pp. 81-95.

<sup>39</sup>*Annals of Congress*, 12th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 1638; *Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, June 27, 1812.

<sup>40</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, June 12, 1812.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, June 19, 1812.

<sup>42</sup>*Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd Series, XII, 555.

<sup>43</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, June 19, 1812.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, July 3, 1812; Jonathan Roberts to William Jones, June 7, 1812, in *Roberts Papers* (HSP).

<sup>45</sup>Charles Biddle to Jonathan Roberts, January 27, 1812, in *Roberts Papers* (HSP). Biddle was a leading Federalist politician who served on a Committee of Defense in Philadelphia during the British raids in Delaware Bay and River.

<sup>46</sup>General Andrew Porter to George B. Porter, June 26, 1812, in *Porter Collection* (HSP). George Porter was a student at Judge Reeves Law School in Litchfield, Connecticut.

<sup>47</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, June 26, 1812.

<sup>48</sup>S. E. Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), II, pp. 47-50. The rabid Federalist Jacob Warner had been the Chief Clerk of the State Department under Secretary Pickering. He left office in 1807 out of animosity to Madison, and became the editor of the *Baltimore Federal Republican*.

<sup>49</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, August 14, 28, 1812.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, August 28, 1812.

<sup>51</sup>William Tilghman to Jasper Yeates, August 10, 1812, in Yeates Correspondence (HSP).

<sup>52</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, August 28, 1812; John B. McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1892), III, pp. 557-559. Hull was eventually dismissed from the Army, a dishonored man. He spent the remainder of his life seeking to explain his surrender and persuading people that he had been used by the politicians. At least one Democratic newspaper defended Hull. In October, 1812, the *Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser* in the middle of the 1812 Presidential campaign exonerated Hull on the grounds that the General was inadequately provisioned with men and supplies.

<sup>53</sup>Sanford Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics, 1800-1816* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1952), pp. 256-259.

<sup>54</sup>J. S. Walton, "Nominating Conventions in Pennsylvania", *American Historical Review*, II (1896), pp. 275-276.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>56</sup>*Aurora*, April 8, 1811.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, March 9, 1812.

<sup>58</sup>Jonathan Roberts to Mathew Roberts, January 20, 1812, in Roberts Papers (HSP). Roberts points out the known antipathy of Leib towards Madison; Edward Fox to Jonathan Roberts, June 24, 1812, in Roberts Papers (HSP). Fox believed Leib's comments opposing the declaration of war in June, 1812, had been arranged specifically to allow DeWitt Clinton, in his bid for the presidency, to gain support from Democratic disunity.

<sup>59</sup>James M. Porter to General Andrew Porter, August 8, 1812, in Porter Collection (HSP).

<sup>60</sup>Higginbotham, *Keystone in the Democratic Arch*, pp. 259-260; Walton, "Early Nominating Conventions in Pennsylvania," p. 276.

<sup>61</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 4, 18, 1812.

<sup>62</sup>*United States' Gazette*, April 27, June 5, July 17, September 9, 26, 28, 1812.

<sup>63</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 4, 18, 1812.

<sup>64</sup>Jonathan Roberts to Mathew Roberts, January 20, 1812, in Roberts Papers (HSP).

<sup>65</sup>P. S. Klein, "Memoirs of a Senator from Pennsylvania", *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXII (1938), p. 227.

<sup>66</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, October 17, 1812; *Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, November 21, 1812.

<sup>67</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, October 17, 1812; George B. Porter to General Andrew Porter, November 4, 1812; General Andrew Porter to George B. Porter, October 28, 1812, in Porter Collection (HSP): *Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania . . . [1811-1812]*. (Lancaster, 1812), pp. 127-130. Under an act of Congress passed on December 21, 1811, Pennsylvania was allowed 23 Congressmen, an increase of 5 members. The State Legislature in March, 1813, had restricted the State to take care of the new members.

<sup>68</sup>Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia*, I, p. 557; D. R. Porter to General Andrew Porter, October 24, 1812, in Porter Collection (HSP).

<sup>69</sup>*Pittsburgh Gazette*, October 23, 1812.

<sup>70</sup>*United States' Gazette*, October 8, 1812.

<sup>71</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, November 3, 6, 1812.

<sup>72</sup>Adams, *History*, IV, pp. 412-413.

<sup>73</sup>*Aurora*, October 22, November 4, 1812.

<sup>74</sup>Hunt, *Writings of James Madison*, VIII, p. 223.

<sup>75</sup>*Pennsylvania Archives*, 4th Series, IV, 780-791.

<sup>76</sup>*Senate Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 29-31, 35, 44-49, 76, 79; *House Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 73, 89, 95-97, 120. Unfortunately the *House* and *Senate Journals* are woefully incomplete. In most cases the voting records are scant, with only a partial tabulation given. The publication of individual speeches is the exception rather than the rule. This situation makes it impossible to give a comprehensive analysis of the occurrences in the General Assembly.

<sup>77</sup>*Senate Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 183, 202, 209, 212, 217, 265, 268, 337, 343, 347-348, 413, 414, 417, 549, 563, 579-580, 599; *House Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 459, 490, 493-497, 502, 510, 643-644, 646, 652, 661, 683-684.

<sup>78</sup>*House Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 36-37, 623-624, 634-635, 662; *Senate Journal*, 1812-1813, pp. 539, 547, 554, 558.

<sup>79</sup>James B. Porter to General Andrew Porter, October 6, 1813, in Porter Collection (HSP).

<sup>80</sup>*United States' Gazette*, March 13, 24, April 9, 10, 13, 19, May 4, June 5, 1813. The mediation offer by the Russian emperor, Alexander I, proved futile, but it points out that peace negotiations began almost as soon as the war itself.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, February 12, March 4, 26, April 8, May 1, 4, 5, 7, 21, June 23, 1813. The American Brigadier-General Winchester advanced two columns of troops to Frenchtown on the River Raisin. After dividing his command the General realized that he could not defend both his exposed flank on the north bank of the Maumee and Frenchtown. Unfortunately the pro-English Indians realized Winchester's plight and massacred part of his army.

Sir Alexander Cochrane planned the British operation which had as its goal the destruction of coastal towns and ports on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. The British had as their target in the Chesapeake area the ultimate destruction of Baltimore, and the eventual raiding of Washington and Alexandria.

It was as part of this general mission to destroy cities and ports on the Atlantic coast that the British sacked Hampton, Virginia.

<sup>82</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, May 20, June 17, 1813.

<sup>83</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, June 5, 1813.

<sup>84</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 25, 29, 1812.

<sup>85</sup>General Andrew Porter to George B. Porter, August 17, 1812, in Porter Collection (HSP).

<sup>86</sup>Amos Ellmaker to John Tod, July 18, 1813, in Gratz Collection (HSP).

<sup>87</sup>James Madison to William Jones, September 23, 1813, in Uselma Clarke Smith Collection (HSP).

<sup>88</sup>Samuel Clarke to William Jones, September 25, 1813, in Uselma Clarke Smith Collection (HSP). Clarke was expressly commenting about those Federalist leaders who belonged to the militant Washington Benevolent Societies.

<sup>89</sup>*United States' Gazette*, September 25, 1813.

<sup>90</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 17, 1813.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, September 17, October 8, 29, 1813.

<sup>92</sup>*Aurora*, May 10, 11, June 31, 1813; Emmanuel Eyre to William Jones, May 9, 1813, in Uselma Clarke Smith Collection (HSP). British activities in both the Delaware Bay and River eventually led to the calling of numerous Philadelphia citizen meetings, which were attended by men of both parties. The largest gathering seems to have been held at the Merchants' Coffee House on May 6, 1813. In addition other such defense meetings were held in Southward, the Northern liberties and Delaware County. The purpose of such gatherings appears to have been to prepare the Philadelphia area with some type of local defense, such as the building of small crafts, raising militia and improving the areas fortifications. All were attended with little regard paid to political affiliation.

<sup>93</sup>*United States' Gazette*, July 23, November 18, 1813.

- <sup>94</sup>*Aurora*, October 14, 1813. Probably Philadelphia was the last part of the state to receive news of Harrison's victory. The news of the American success arrived on the day of the general election, October 12, 1813.
- <sup>95</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, October 23, November 20, 1813.
- <sup>96</sup>*Aurora*, October 14, 15, 16, 1813.
- <sup>97</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, October 23, November 20, 1813.
- <sup>98</sup>Adams, *History*, VIII, pp. 25-26, 39-81, 94-97.
- <sup>99</sup>Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch*, p. 284.
- <sup>100</sup>*Senate Journal*, 1813-1814, pp. 54, 97-99, 115, 121; *House Journal*, 1813-1814, pp. 45-46, 77-170.
- <sup>101</sup>*House Journal*, 1812-1814, pp. 10, 37, 51, 55-56, 69; *Senate Journal*, 1813-1814, pp. 14, 34, 38-39, 44.
- <sup>102</sup>Harris, *A Biographical History of Lancaster County*, pp. 242-252.
- <sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 267-268.
- <sup>104</sup>No attempt will be made here to trace the career of Buchanan as a Federalist or his subsequent emergence as a Democrat.
- <sup>105</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, August 26, 1814.
- <sup>106</sup>James Buchanan, Sr. to James Buchanan, Jr. July 26, September 10, 1813, in *Buchanan, Sr. Papers* (Lancaster County Historical Society).
- <sup>107</sup>*Intelligencer and Weekly Advertiser*, September 3, 1814.
- <sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>109</sup>*Ibid.*, December 10, 1814.
- <sup>110</sup>*United States' Gazette*, July 28, 29, 30, August 2, 6, 26, September 20, 23, 28, 29, October 1, 3, 4, 10, 1814.
- <sup>111</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, September 2, September 23, 1814.
- <sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>113</sup>*House Journal*, 1814-1815; pp. 70-71.
- <sup>114</sup>*Lancaster Journal*, October 21, 1814.
- <sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, December 16, 1814.
- <sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, February 24, March 3, 1815.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTOR

G. Terry Madonna is a graduate of Millersville State College where he majored in history, and of the University of Delaware where he received a M.A. in History. He is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the latter institution, and is an instructor in the History Department at Millersville State College.