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SOUTHERN FEDERALISTS AND THE FRENCH CRISIS

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1789 - 1800

A Thesis Submitted to
The Graduate School
Appalachian State University

In Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts
Department of History

by
Timothy H. Silver
//
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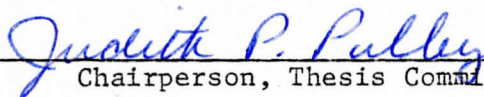
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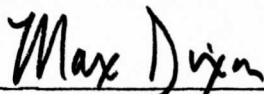
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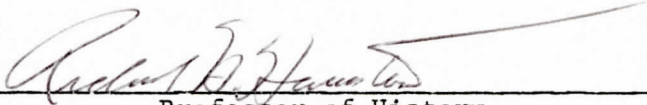
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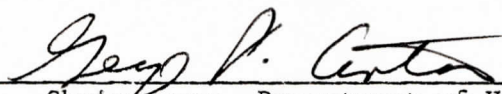
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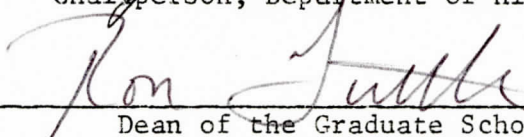
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technical expertise saved time and money and allowed for a polished final copy. In one sense, this is a family project and it is to my parents that this work is dedicated.

"It gave me great pleasure to see that the people of Charleston had roused from their slumbers & discovered their dangers before the Harlot of France had quite shorn their locks and deprived them of all means of resistance."----Jacob Read.

"My own sentiments are, that the French, from having commenced one of the noblest causes which ever presented itself in any country, have lost themselves in the wildest quixotism: my wish is that they may recover their reason, and establish for themselves a good government, leaving other countries to judge for themselves."----Edward Carrington.

"With all my attachment to the cause of the French, let me here avow what I defy the Wourld to deny, that my Love, Veneration, & Duty to my own country was never shaken, by the blaze of French Victories, or any other circumstance on earth."----William Barry Grove.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The year 1799 was a significant one in the political career of William Richardson Davie. Until that year, he had been one of the most important and respected figures in the body politic of his native North Carolina. His most prestigious office was that of governor, a post he acquired in 1798. In 1799, however, Davie stood on the brink of an entirely new lifestyle, one that would take him out of local politics and into the world of international diplomacy. On June 1, 1799, William R. Davie was appointed by John Adams to serve in place of Patrick Henry as a member of a diplomatic contingent which would attempt to resolve almost a decade of conflict between the United States and France.¹

As Davie contemplated this new phase of his career, he must have carefully reconsidered the ties which bound the two nations together. During the quarter century between 1775 and 1799, both had undergone a great deal of political turmoil which had culminated in revolution. During the early part of this period, the United States and France had been linked commercially and militarily. French aid to America during the War of Independence had been a major factor in

¹ John Adams to William Richardson Davie, June 1, 1799, William Richardson Davie Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SHC.)

enabling the young nation to defeat one of the foremost military powers in Europe. After the revolutionary ardor in America cooled with the advent of the United States Constitution, trade with France had intertwined the commercial interests of both countries.

Aside from military and commercial connections, by 1789 the two countries appeared to be bound together ideologically. When the Estates-General convened in that year and set in motion processes that were intended to reform the monarchical, class-structured French political system, France seemed to be well on the way to establishing a society similar to that of the United States. Because of this apparent common ideology, Americans almost without exception supported the French effort.

But from 1792 through 1799, the movement soured with the execution of Louis XVI, the ensuing "Reign of Terror" by the Jacobin faction, the Thermidorean Reaction and the eventual establishment of a government controlled by an executive committee, The Directory.² During this period, France became involved in a series of wars designed to spread her now radical revolutionary ideology throughout Europe. These wars had a profound impact upon American commercial activities as the enemies of France, primarily England, tried to prevent cargoes from reaching France, and the French sought to slow the passage of goods to Britain and her allies. By 1794, both of the warring parties were confiscating American freight bound for Europe. The severe impact of the war upon American shipping was adequately

² Gordon Wright, France In Modern Times (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974), pp. 41-66. See also Crane Brinton, A Decade of Revolution, 1789 - 1799 (New York: Harper, 1934).

summarized by Thomas Blount, a southern merchant and Congressman, when he wrote:

American property wherever it is found on the Ocean becomes prey to the finder. The English take all they find going to France; The French take all they find going to England, Spain, and Holland so that it may, in fact, be said that our trade to Europe is entirely cut off.³

Although Americans had supported the French effort during the early phases of the revolution, the radicalism and attacks upon American shipping during the middle 1790's created a split in popular opinion within the nation. Gradually, United States citizens became polarized into two broad categories, those who supported France and a continuation of close economic and military ties with her government, and those who believed the French cause to be unrestrained and favored an alliance with Britain instead.

As Davie considered the task ahead of him, he was at a loss to explain the major trends of American sentiment surrounding the conflict and may have experienced difficulty in deciding with which faction his own sympathies lay. Finally, he sought the help of his friend, John Steele, in trying to understand the implications of the European turmoil which by 1799 had reached crisis proportions. Davie wrote to Steele asking him to "procure all the publications which in his [Steele's] opinion might contribute towards forming a correct judgement [sic] of the real character and present and future influence of the French Revolution and governments."⁴ Davie believed that this was perhaps the

³Thomas Blount to John Gray Blount, March 7, 1794, in The John Gray Blount Papers, 3 vols., ed. Alice B. Keith (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1959), 2:369.

⁴Davie to John Steele, August 25, 1799, Davie Papers, SHC.

best way in which "to form a just estimate of those men who [governed] the destinies of that unhappy country."⁵

Davie's confusion and indecision over the French crisis is understandable. Even in retrospect, it is difficult to determine the exact nature of the polarization of opinion surrounding the conflict. Traditionally, the historical interpretation of the problem has been that the French Revolution and ensuing European hostilities played salient roles in the formation and solidification of America's first two political parties. It has often been asserted that the Republican party, under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson, supported the French effort, while the Federalist party, under the influence of Alexander Hamilton, rejected the principles of the French Revolution and favored close ties with Britain. If this interpretation can be applied universally to every member of each party, Davie's confusion is uncharacteristic. Since he was a Federalist, he should have immediately rejected the French cause and perhaps declined even to negotiate with its government. Instead he debated over the issue and finally agreed to become a part of the delegation which sought to remedy the French crisis.

The position of William R. Davie illustrates an important issue in the interpretation of American opinion surrounding the French Revolution. Among both Republicans and Federalists, there were politicians who deviated from the positions usually accepted as the standards of the parties. The fact that Davie was a southerner is also crucial, for deviations from the Federalist norm were prominent in the South. Although a significant number of southern Federalists

⁵ Ibid.

strongly opposed the French effort, others were more moderate in their opposition, while still others wavered and were at times inclined to lend mild support to the cause of the French.

At first glance, this diversity of opinion among southern Federalists seems odd. The southern wing of the party was not totally divorced from its New England and Middle State segments. A large number of southerners occupied important political positions during the administrations of Washington and Adams and no doubt were aware of the ideological trends among their fellow party members. Also, most southern Federalists shared the basic elitist values of other Federalists to the extent that one of the party faithful from North Carolina was accused by a political rival of possessing principles that were "all aristocratic."⁶ That Federalist leaders in the middle and northern states respected their southern sympathizers was evidenced by the volume of the correspondence which travelled "by every post" between the regions.⁷ Given these similarities and the closeness of the relationship between southern Federalists and those in other areas, the diversity of opinions within the South seems to be a peculiar and important aspect of the overall Federalist ideology of the 1790's.

The peculiarity of southern Federalist views concerning the French crisis alone justifies a serious consideration of the party's southern affiliates, but there is another, more important reason for focusing upon the reactions of Federalists in the South. Until

⁶ John Steele to Montford Stokes, January 23, 1793, John Steele Papers, SHC.

⁷ John Rutledge to Robert Smith, August 14, 1798, John Rutledge Papers, SHC.

recently, that portion of the party had been almost totally neglected by historians of the early national period. To date there are but two monographs devoted entirely to southern Federalism, Lisle A. Rose's Prologue to Democracy: The Federalists in the South, 1789-1800 and The Southern Federalists 1800-1816 by James H. Broussard. Neither work specifically addresses the French problem. Rose gives several pages to a discussion of the French crisis and the reactions of certain southerners, but fails to make any significant generalizations regarding the attitudes of southern Federalists and does not speculate as to the reasons for the diversity among the party's southern membership. Broussard stresses the importance of foreign policy in the breakup of the party, but concentrates upon the decline of Federalism in the South using only one introductory chapter to describe the party before 1800.

Because of the diversity in southern Federalist opinion regarding France and the lack of serious study of that segment of the party, the purpose of this thesis is to examine and make some judgments concerning the differing attitudes of certain southern Federalists and to offer some possible reasons for the deviations among those politicians. Aside from a general introduction to the topic, this initial chapter is designed to provide some basic information about the methodology and sources of the study and to give a general account of the careers of the leaders who are the focus of the work.

The Methodology of the Study

This thesis centers on the opinions of nine southern Federalists from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The Virginians are John Marshall, Daniel Morgan and Edward Carrington. From North Carolina

William Barry Grove, John Steele, and Samuel Johnston were chosen for the study. The South Carolinians whose attitudes are assessed are John Rutledge, Jr., Ralph Izard, and Jacob Read. The examination of the positions of these men is composed of four steps, each of which constitutes one chapter of the thesis.

A major prerequisite of any study of Federalism is the need to determine whether or not the politicians generally associated with the party were indeed Federalists. During the early and middle 1790's, party affiliations were not always discernable and in the South, the lines may have been even more indistinct. Because of the inherent difficulty in categorizing party membership, Chapter two of the thesis examines the party leanings of each of the nine politicians and their responses to some of the key issues of the decade in order to demonstrate that they can all be placed solidly within the ranks of the Federalist party.

Chapters three, four, and five contain the essence of the thesis. In Chapter three, the specific opinions of each Federalist concerning the French question are carefully sorted and scrutinized to determine whether the politician strongly opposed, moderately opposed, or lent mild support to the French Revolution. During the latter part of the 1790's, southerners were especially concerned about the French problem and their letters of that period provide enough information to facilitate an accurate picture of their views.

After categorizing each of the nine as mildly supportive, moderately opposed, or strongly opposed to the French movement, the thesis proceeds, in Chapter four, to analyze carefully the Federalists

in each category on the basis of some important characteristics such as: wealth and social status, occupation, the overall nature of their Federalism, personal ties to Britain, France, or to the Republican party, and the economic interests of each politician. In the course of this analysis, special attention is given to a search for common characteristics among the members of each category established in chapter three. Through such an assessment, it is possible to reach some conclusions concerning the reasons for the split and to generalize about southern Federalist attitudes during the French crisis. Chapter five concludes the study with some information relevant to the party's break-up, a brief summary of the years after 1800, and some observations regarding the overall nature of southern Federalism. Through the use of this plan of study, the thesis sheds needed light upon southern Federalists, the French crisis, and America's first party system.⁸

Sources for the Study

The published primary materials which were of the most use in compiling the information contained in the thesis were the papers of Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Marshall, John Steele, and James Iredell. These papers contain a number of letters from southern Federalists detailing the political history of the 1790's. Iredell's papers were especially important. A well-respected judge and state politician, he received correspondence from

⁸The conclusions contained in the following pages are based upon the opinions stated in the letters and other writings of the southern Federalists chosen for this particular work. A study of this nature cannot possibly be all inclusive. It does not represent an assessment of the opinions of every southern Federalist. Rather, it is an examination of selected politicians based upon the evidence which was available to the writer.

a number of prominent Federalists including both state and national figures. The papers of Hamilton and Jefferson also figured prominently in the research since most of the Federalists chosen for this study were anxious to make their views known to the national leadership.

Because of the general lack of research concerning southern Federalists, a considerable portion of the information critical to the thesis was found in unpublished manuscripts. Those of prime importance were the papers of John Rutledge, Jr., John Steele, William Richardson Davie, William Barry Grove, and Ernest Haywood housed in the Southern Historical Collection in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the correspondence of Ralph Izard, Jacob Read, and Thomas Pinckney contained in the South Caroliniana Library in Columbia, South Carolina.

In conjunction with the studies of Rose and Broussard, Thomas P. Abernethy's The South in the New Nation 1789-1819 and The Federalist Era: 1789-1801 by John C. Miller provided good background information regarding the South and the nation during the 1790's. Two other works of particular significance were Securing the Revolution by Richard Buel and David Hackett Fischer's The Revolution of American Conservatism. Buel's book was an invaluable aid in understanding the formation of the first party system and afforded an important interpretation of Federalism which can be used to explain the reactions of some southern Federalists. Fischer's volume contains short summaries of the political careers of many southern Federalists and, like Buel's work, centers upon an interpretation which is essential to any study of Southern Federalism.

Several state studies and biographies were also helpful in understanding the specifics of Federalism in the southern states.

Henry M. Wagstaff's Federalism in North Carolina supplied much needed information concerning the party faithful in that state. Norman Risjord's "The Virginia Federalists," published in the Journal of Southern History, and Ulrich B. Phillips' "The South Carolina Federalists," in The American Historical Review, served the same purpose for their respective states. Two biographies of use in compiling important personal data relevant to the South Carolina Federalists were George C. Roger's Evolution of A Federalist, a study of William Loughton Smith, and Joseph W. Cox's Champion of Southern Federalism, a chronicle of the life of Robert Goodloe Harper. These works not only provide information regarding the lives of Smith and Harper, but also contain material pertinent to the careers of Ralph Izard and Jacob Read. For the Virginians, Don Higginbotham's biography of Daniel Morgan and Albert J. Beveridge's four volume work on the life of John Marshall aided in the assessment of those leaders' attitudes and lifestyles.

Aside from these biographies and state studies, the greatest amount of secondary and primary material is to be found in historical journals. Those which contain a great deal of material used in this study are: The Journal of Southern History, The American Historical Review, The North Carolina Historical Review, William and Mary Quarterly, The South Carolina Historical and Geneological Magazine, and The Magazine of American History. These periodicals are depositories for a number of published documents and biographical sketches relevant to the careers of the Federalists selected for the thesis. Without such materials, it would have been impossible to obtain the biographical data needed for the analysis of common characteristics in Chapter four. Titles of the specific articles are listed in the bibliography.

A Brief Introduction to the Political Careers of
the Nine Federalists Used for the Study

Each of the Virginians chosen for this thesis served the Federalist party and the United States government in a different manner. However, although their roles in the affairs of state were diverse, each of the men played an important part in both state and national politics. Edward Carrington occupied a post in the Federalist bureaucracy. Schooled in law and finance, his first major political service came in the Confederation Congress in 1785 and 1786.⁹ When Washington made the appointments for his first administration, Carrington was chosen to be a United States Marshal and later Collector of Internal Revenue in Virginia. He held both positions throughout the 1790's.¹⁰ In this capacity, Carrington was an important participant in the national government and Virginia politics.

Daniel Morgan gained national recognition through his service in the Continental Army. A hero in the defeat of the British forces at the Battle of Cowpens, Morgan managed to rise from the rank of captain to that of brigadier during his stint in the military. After the War for Independence, Morgan became a staunch defender of the Constitution and the policies of George Washington. His support of the administration earned the respect of Federalists throughout the state and in 1797, he was elected to the United States House of Representatives.¹¹

⁹David H. Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 373.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Don Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 189

Morgan served as a member of that body until 1799 and was an avid spokesman for the Federalist cause. After concluding his service in the Congress, Morgan returned to private life until his death in 1802.¹²

Since George Washington is sometimes categorized as the patriarch of Virginia Federalism, perhaps John Marshall could be described as its eldest son and heir apparent. Although best known for his position as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, he was also a solid fixture in Virginia state politics and during the French crisis played a major role as a negotiator for the American government. During the late revolutionary and early constitutional years, Marshall served the state in almost every imaginable way. From 1782 through 1788, he was a member of the Virginia Assembly. From 1782 until 1795, he occupied a seat on the Virginia Council, and in 1788 was a delegate to the state's ratifying convention.¹³

The portion of Marshall's career most critical to American relations with France spanned the years between 1797 and 1801. During that period, he served as a United States Commissioner to France, a congressman, and Secretary of State.¹⁴ It was during this particular phase of his career that Marshall made some of his strongest statements concerning Franco-American relations and seemed especially close to the cause of Federalism. Although he later shied away from partisan politics, John Marshall is still regarded as one of the foremost figures in Virginia Federalism.

¹²Ibid., p. 190.

¹³Fischer, p. 378. See also Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall, 4 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1916-1919), 1: 1-99.

¹⁴Fischer, p. 379.

In contrast to the diversity exhibited by the careers of Carrington, Morgan, and Marshall, the North Carolinians selected for the thesis followed roughly the same path to national prominence. As highly respected "gentlemen" of the state, all three began their political lives on the local level during the early constitutional period and entered national affairs during the administrations of Washington and Adams. The lives of William Barry Grove, John Steele, and Samuel Johnston serve as examples of the course followed by a number of Federalist politicians throughout the South and the nation.

Born in Fayetteville in 1764, William Barry Grove was schooled in law and began his career in state politics. In 1786 and again in 1788 and 1789, Grove represented his region in the North Carolina House of Commons.¹⁵ During the struggle over ratification, Grove was at the forefront of North Carolina politics and while serving in the House of Commons assumed the duties of a delegate to the state conventions in 1788 and 1789.¹⁶

A well-known figure at the state level, Grove soon became a part of the national political scene. In 1791, he was elected to the House of Representatives where he held a seat until 1803.¹⁷ The longevity of his term in Congress made Grove unique among southern Federalists. Although Federalism gained in popularity and a number of

¹⁵Kemp P. Battle, ed., Letters of Nathaniel Macon, John Steele, and William Barry Grove (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 9.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Gilbert L. Lycan, "Alexander Hamilton and the North Carolina Federalists," North Carolina Historical Review XXV (1948): 443.

party adherents were elected to office during the late 1790's, very few survived for any significant period after 1800.¹⁸ The fact that Grove served for six consecutive two year terms is a tribute to his overall popularity among North Carolinians and his high standing within the national leadership.

Like Grove, John Steele also served his state and home town of Salisbury as a member of the House of Commons. His services as a member of that body stretched intermittently from 1787 until 1813.¹⁹ His other important function at the state level was as North Carolina's Indian Commissioner from 1788 until 1790. In this capacity, he sought to protect the state's western lands and to insure the safety of its citizens against Indian attack. Relishing the title of "General," Steele enjoyed this position immensely and believed himself to be an important factor in the defense of the frontiers of his native state.²⁰

The people of North Carolina appreciated Steele's efforts to defend them, and in 1789 he was elected to the House of Representatives where he served two terms until 1793.²¹ When his second term expired, Steele returned to private life and state politics for a brief period but was not forgotten by the national Federalist leadership. In 1796, Washington appointed Steele Comptroller of the United States Treasury.²²

¹⁸Lycan, p. 443.

¹⁹Battle, p. 6.

²⁰Henry M. Wagstaff, ed., The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1924), 1: xxvii.

²¹Ibid., p. xxviii.

²²Ibid., p. xxix.

He maintained this position until 1802 when he again returned to his native state to serve as Boundary Commissioner until 1814.²³ Steele was regarded as "both a politician and a gentleman" by his colleagues and constituents.²⁴

Samuel Johnston began his national political career earlier than did Grove or Steele. After serving as a representative from the Edenton area in the state senate in 1779, Johnston was a member of the Continental Congress between 1780 and 1782.²⁵ During the ratification years, Johnston served as president of the North Carolina conventions. This prestigious position was a sign that Johnston was one of the most highly regarded politicians in the state.²⁶

The respect he earned during the 1780's carried Johnston into a position in the new national government. One of the first two United States Senators from North Carolina, he occupied a seat in the upper chamber from 1789 until 1793.²⁷ In 1793, he returned to private life until 1800 when he became judge of the North Carolina Superior Court. Johnston served as a judge until 1803.²⁸

Because he witnessed many of the early political problems of America, Johnston's comments upon the questions which plagued the First Congress are interesting. But Johnston did not stop or even limit his

²³ Battle, p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Fischer, p. 389.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 390.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 389.

commentary upon the events of the 1790's when he left the Senate. As a private citizen and an important judicial officeholder, he continued to express his feelings about the critical issues of the time, and proved himself to be one of the more outspoken Federalists from North Carolina.

Like Samuel Johnston, Jacob Read and Ralph Izard were integral parts of the politics within their state and within the nation. John Rutledge, Jr., since he was younger than Read and Izard, did not enter the national political arena until the mid 1790's. All three, however, were standard-bearers for the Federalist cause in South Carolina and blatantly voiced their opinions concerning Franco-American relations during the decade of conflict.

The Izard name is one of the oldest in South Carolina. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Izard plantations at Goose Creek were among the best known and most prosperous in the South. The family figured prominently in the political affairs of their locality and a political career came naturally to Ralph Izard. Educated in Britain, he served as American minister to Tuscany during the Revolutionary War and represented South Carolina in the Continental Congress.²⁹

In 1789, Izard was chosen as one of the state's first senators, serving one term until 1795.³⁰ Although his time in the Senate was relatively short, Izard's influence upon South Carolinians in general and Federalist party members in particular did not end when his term expired. Throughout the remainder of the 1790's, until his death in 1804, Izard

²⁹G. E. Manigault, "Ralph Izard the South Carolina Statesman," Magazine of American History 19 (1809): 60.

³⁰Ibid.

the United States House of Representatives as an independent from South Carolina's Orangeburg District.³⁴ In spite of his independent status, Rutledge did not remain in Congress long before he became a member of the Federalist camp. By 1800, Fisher Ames could write that Rutledge understood the Federalist "position and [would] of course make it understood where it ought to be."³⁵

After deciding that his fortunes lay with the Federalists, Rutledge became one of the last bulwarks of Federalism within the national government. His name was so popular among South Carolinians that he was elected to the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Congresses.³⁶ His views on the French problem were known throughout the party and he remained one of its important spokesmen until 1819.³⁷

Although the thesis focuses upon the opinions and attitudes of the Federalists described in this chapter, those nine party members were by no means the only southern Federalists who figured prominently in the American reaction to the events in France. In an effort to lend credibility and clarity to the work, the views of other southerners were examined and are sometimes alluded to in order to illustrate an idea essential to the thought of the primary figures. These other southerners include George Washington, William Richardson Davie, James Iredell, Robert Goodloe Harper, William Loughton Smith, and Charles

³⁴Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge, Jr., Federalist," Journal of Southern History XIII (1947): 186-88.

³⁵Fisher Ames to John Rutledge, Jr., quoted in Cometti, p. 192.

³⁶Cometti, p. 187.

³⁷Ibid., p. 210.

Cotesworth Pinckney. These men were also influential state and national Federalist politicians during the 1790's and their reactions to the French problem help to illuminate southern Federalist attitudes towards the nation. The combination of their opinions and those of the nine men who are the focal point of this study provide information critical in determining southern Federalist reaction to what Davie described as "the present and future influence of the French revolution and governments."³⁸

³⁸Davie to Steele, August 25, 1799, Davie Papers, SHC.

CHAPTER II

EVERY MAN HIS OWN FEDERALIST

Determining the Nature of Party

In 1789 and 1790, a spirit of optimism permeated the American political leadership. In spite of the problems involved in its ratification, the new Constitution promised to preserve the legacy of the War for Independence and create a political order in which reason and justice would guide decision making. Most southern politicians expressed a strong faith in the new system. One remarked that the Constitution would "rescue the nation from the dreadful evil of total anarchy,"¹ while another later commented that the national government had "done more good than any other so circumstanced ever did in the same space of time."²

Indeed, the accomplishments of the first year were impressive. Within only a few months, the governing forces of the new nation cooperated to organize the judiciary and executive branches, establish a system of national revenue, and propose amendments which would become the Bill of Rights.³ These achievements and the seemingly smooth

¹James Iredell to Mrs. Iredell, May 10, 1790, The Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, 2 vols., ed. Griffith J. McRee (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), II: 284.

²Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, October 10, 1793, McRee, II: 402.

³Richard Buel, Securing the Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 1.

transition from a loose confederation to a solid federal government made the year between 1789 and 1790 a time of anticipation. As Gordon Wood noted in his study of the revolutionary period, Americans believed they had "demonstrated to the world how a people could diagnose the ills of its society and work out a peaceable process of cure."⁴

Had the shapers of government policy known what really lay ahead, the optimism would have been tempered with caution and tinged with apprehension. Within five years of its inception, the new government was no longer characterized by cooperation. Instead, factionalism and division came to dominate American politics and eventually two distinct political parties emerged to compete for control of the government. The South did not escape the division and competition. By 1794, the spirit of party was so prevalent among some southerners that Daniel Morgan accused fellow Virginians of possessing a "wicked design" for "anarchy" which would disrupt the republic, and Ralph Izard spoke openly of factions which promoted "scandalous business" and "disagreement."⁵

The reasons for this great split among the leadership of the South and the nation as a whole are complex and have commanded the attention of many historians concentrating upon the early national period. For a time, scholars entertained the notion that the division

⁴Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 614.

⁵Daniel Morgan quoted in Don Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 187. Ralph Izard to Ralph Wormsley, November 9, 1794, Ralph Izard Papers, Box 1, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SCL).

may have occurred as a result of problems created by the ratification struggle, but it is now generally accepted that the first party system did not result from the ratification controversy, but arose instead out of divisions within the political leadership after the institution of the new government.⁶

The first party system was slow in developing. There was evidence of disagreement during the early years of the 1790's, but even as late as 1798, John Rutledge, Jr., could write that "the political lines of demarkation [sic] which separate parties do not extend to South Carolina" and that politicians of that state enjoyed "more liberality than [their] eastern friends."⁷ Because the first political parties arose rather slowly, a particular politician's party leanings were sometimes unclear. Any study of the leadership of the 1790's must begin by firmly establishing the party affiliations of the leaders used in the study. In this case, it is necessary to prove that each of the southerners used to examine Federalist opinion concerning the French Revolution was indeed a member of that faction. In order to make such a determination, it is important to develop some criteria for defining party membership.

Intense study of the important incidents after 1790 has led to a general consensus that two issues, Alexander Hamilton's plan for retiring the national debt and Anglo-American relations which culminated

⁶Buel, p. 1.

⁷John Rutledge, Jr., to Robert Smith, August 14, 1798, John Rutledge Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SHC.)

in the Jay treaty of 1794, were of major import in creating the party alignments of the 1790's.⁸ Both measures created heated controversies which provided political leaders with the opportunity to lend the government unqualified support or to oppose its policies and seek to change them. Reactions to these two issues are often indicative of a politician's party affiliation or can at least illustrate his tendency to side with a particular faction.

Simply stated, the controversy surrounding Hamiltonian fiscal policy centered upon the Secretary's proposal that the national government pay in full all debts owed by the Continental Congress and assume the debts incurred by the individual states during the Revolutionary War. Although Hamilton's plan was in part designed to establish a firm financial base for the new government, it was intended to do more than simply retire the national debt. Hamilton believed that such a policy would securely link the public creditors to the national government insuring it the support of the nation's aristocracy. In a like manner, the assumption of state debts was intended to guarantee that state creditors would also be attached to the federal government. Hamiltonian finance became not only a fiscal policy, but also a measure which would create a strong national government supported by those of wealth and birth.

The Hamiltonian ploy met with stiff opposition from Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. They believed that paying the debt in full would reward certain speculators who had purchased some of the certificates from their original owners at a fraction of their worth. The opposing faction further believed that government assumption of state

⁸Buel, Chapters 2 and 3. See also William Nesbit Chambers, Political Parties in A New Nation, 1776-1809 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 1-74.

debts was unfair to those states which had almost erased the deficits created by the war. But their opposition to Hamilton's proposals ran deeper than a simple aversion to speculators and an attempt to aid states which were financially sound. According to Richard Buel, "they feared that the injustices of the fiscal system would excite violent opposition" among the populace and "prove self-defeating in the end."⁹

In this fashion, Hamilton's plan divided the American political leadership into two camps. One faction, under the leadership of Hamilton, valued the measure as an opportunity to provide the government with aristocratic sources of power and influence. The other, led by Madison and Jefferson, believed that the measure showed little respect for the general public and was unfair to the majority of Americans. Although parties were as yet indistinct, a politician's support of Hamiltonian finance was usually indicative of a Federalist leaning, while opposition suggests that his early sympathies lay with the Republican side.

The problem of Anglo-American relations was also significant in polarizing the political leadership of the United States during the 1790's. When France declared war on Britain in 1793, America found herself torn between the two opposing nations. Treaties made with France during the American Revolution tied the country to that nation, but the need for trade with Britain and a concern for avoiding war with that power made good relations with England advantageous. President Washington's first response to the problem was to declare neutrality, but this policy did not prove effective. Continued British attacks upon American vessels threatened both trade and the nation's overall security. War with

⁹Buel, p. 26.

Britain appeared imminent. In an effort to avert hostilities, Washington appointed John Jay as a special envoy to London to work out the problems and effect a treaty which would end the conflict. The Jay Mission fostered hope among the nation's leaders that war could be averted, but the anticipation turned to frustration and anger when the specifics of the treaty were made public in 1795. The agreement greatly favored Britain and eventually became an important force in shaping the political alignments of the first party system.

The Jay Treaty forced American politicians to take sides in the European conflict. The pro-administration faction, which became the Federalist party, argued that the treaty was the only possible means of avoiding war with Great Britain. They worked to push the measure through the Senate by alleviating two of the articles which were particularly offensive and organized pro-treaty meetings to garner support for the administration. The opposing coalition, eventually the Republicans, characterized the agreement as a complete betrayal of France and as an indication that the national government had adopted a policy which distinctly favored an obvious enemy over a nation which had assisted America in her revolution and which was attempting to create a society similar to that of the United States.

Aside from the basic issue of support for England or France, the Jay Treaty controversy raised an important question regarding the basic nature of American government. As Buel explained it:

Given the character of the European war, those who opposed the treaty felt they had good reason to infer that an administration which preferred this course to pursuing French diplomatic overtures must also prefer monarchy to republicanism. If, as many feared, it was designed to provoke the French, the United

States would have no choice but to ally with Britain, an alliance which would strengthen the monarchical party in America.¹⁰

In contrast, proponents of the treaty believed that if the treaty was not ratified, it would force the United States into an alliance with France. In Federalist eyes, such an alliance was unthinkable. The reign of the Jacobin faction had transformed a republican revolution into a radical and unrestrained movement. Support of such a government could give rise to Jacobin-like organizations within America which could destroy the Constitution and the government. Like Hamiltonian fiscal policy, the controversy over the Jay Treaty was a significant polarizing force in the first party system. It can serve as an important test of party allegiance with support of the agreement indicating Federalism and opposition showing a politician's tendency to lean toward the Republican organization.¹¹

Although these measures are valuable tests of party loyalties throughout the nation, care must be taken when applying them to southerners. Specific conditions in North Carolina and Virginia made assumption vastly unpopular in those states and Jay's Treaty was widely opposed throughout the region. Both Hamiltonian finance and the Jay Treaty can yield important information about the political ideologies of southerners, but reaction to the issues must be viewed in relation to overall state response to the measures. Only when applied in this manner do they become accurate indicators of party affiliation and useful in determining the Federalism of the nine politicians used in this study.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 68.

¹¹Ibid., p. 69.

Because of the inherent difficulties in establishing Federalist party ties for southerners during the early 1790's, it is important to consider other factors which were indicative of party affiliation. The correspondence between southern politicians and prominent national Federalists often reveals the influence of particular leaders such as Hamilton and Washington upon them and can be used to illustrate links to Federalism. Also, criticism of political opponents led many southerners to disclose their own political sympathies. Thirdly, reactions to other volatile issues of the 1790's, particularly Washington's policy of neutrality and the Whiskey Rebellion, can be used to categorize southern leaders as supportive of Federalist policies. A final method of determining their political sympathies is to examine southern correspondence after 1800. When the election of Thomas Jefferson swept a new party into office, most southern leaders were quick to give their opinions of the new administration and in these opinions can be found critical indications of their ties to Federalism.

When these further tests are applied to the nine southerners who are the focal point of the thesis, and their attitudes toward assumption and the Jay Treaty are examined in conjunction with the prevailing opinion in their states, it becomes evident that each man was an important member of the Federalist faction. Although they did not all respond in the same manner to every issue, there can be little doubt that each was sure that his personal sympathies and political ideals were nearest to those of the Federalists. In this way, each politician was, in a sense, his own Federalist and his attitudes must be considered in order to gain a better understanding of the first party system.

The South Carolinians

In 1791, Alexander Hamilton wrote to C. C. Pinckney that he believed "the citizens of South Carolina [would] not be long in discovering that their honor and their interests conspired with their duty to demand a ready acquiescence" in securing the assumption measure within the state.¹² Hamilton's confidence was well-founded. Although South Carolinians may have feared the problems the fiscal policy could create, these fears were exceeded by a strong desire to have the federal government help in strengthening the economy of the state. South Carolina was laboring under a heavy deficit and in face of this problem, all other aspects of the issue became secondary in importance.¹³ Support for Hamiltonian finance was so strong that as early as February of 1790, the state legislature publicly advocated its adoption and James Madison described the state as possessing some of the strongest pro-Hamilton forces in the first Congress.¹⁴

Unlike assumption, the Jay Treaty met with stiff opposition in South Carolina. Article XII of the agreement was the source of much of the discontent. It limited ships trading with the British West Indies to seventy tons, a limit which greatly restricted the state's trade. That restriction coupled with the overall pro-British nature of the agreement, led many South Carolinians to accuse Jay of betraying his

¹² Alexander Hamilton to C. C. Pinckney, August 3, 1791, C. C. Pinckney Papers SCL.

¹³ Ulrich B. Phillips, "The South Carolina Federalists," American Historical Review XIV (1909): 532.

¹⁴ Lisle A. Rose, Prologue to Democracy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 30.

country and in Charleston, John Rutledge, Sr., condemned the treaty in a manner sufficient "to raise the bodies from a nearby graveyard."¹⁵

Given these peculiarities of South Carolina's reaction to the two issues, responses by individual politicians must be considered carefully. Although virtually every would-be Federalist favored assumption, some were opposed to the Jay Treaty and supported it only after they sensed it could weaken the national government. Their initial reactions to Jay's mission must be examined in conjunction with their further efforts on behalf of the treaty. Also, the four other criteria are important determinants for the Federalism of the South Carolinians.

Ralph Izard: The Patriarch

Ralph Izard was at the forefront of the effort to have Hamilton's policies become a part of the nation's financial structure. As early as 1789, he expressed his wish that the newly elected officials "not be wasting time with idle discussions about amendments to the Constitution, but that we go to work immediately about finances and endeavor to extricate ourselves from our present embarrassed and disgraceful situation."¹⁶ Izard viewed government assumption of South Carolina's debt as the only solution to the situation. There is evidence that he was willing to sacrifice almost anything to see the measure adopted, for he is said to have "cared not one whit"¹⁷ what

¹⁵Richard Hayes Barry, Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina (New York: Harper & Row, 1942), p. 356.

¹⁶Ralph Izard to Thomas Jefferson, April 3, 1789, "Letters of Ralph Izard," ed. Worthington C. Ford, South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine II (July 1901): 204.

¹⁷Izard quoted in Rose, pp. 30-31.

compromises had to be made to assure its passage, and he was "fully persuaded that it would be of infinite advantage to the state if the measure should be adopted."¹⁸

Although it is probable that Izard's strong support of Hamiltonian fiscal policy stemmed from his interest in seeing South Carolina's debt eliminated, there can be little doubt that his stand on the measure linked him to the Federalist faction at an early stage of his political career. Financial matters were a "Federalizing agent" in South Carolina and Izard's favorable opinion of Hamilton's plan illustrates that as early as 1790, he was leaning toward the Federalist ideology.¹⁹

Like most South Carolinians, Izard's initial reaction to the Jay Treaty was one of disappointment. Shortly after he learned of the terms of the agreement, he wrote:

I shall hardly be suspected of having any reason to find fault with the measure of Government; but I must confess to you that when I read the Treaty, I was much mortified and disappointed. It seems as if the British Nation have not yet recovered their senses: they should never have proposed such articles as the 12th and in every other part they have been negligent.²⁰

This statement indicates that Izard believed the terms of the agreement to be less than adequate, but was reluctant to blame John Jay for the mission's failure, and instead preferred to blame the treaty on the British.

¹⁸Ralph Izard to Edward Rutledge, December 29, 1789 "South Carolina Federalist Correspondence" ed. Ulrich B. Phillips, American Historical Review XIV (1909): 777-78.

¹⁹Phillips, "The South Carolina Federalists," p. 732.

²⁰Ralph Izard to unknown (probably Jacob Read) July 22, 1795, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

In spite of his initial reaction to Jay's effort, Izard eventually came to favor the pact as a necessary evil. By the time the Senate debated ratification of the Jay Treaty, Izard had given up his seat in the body and returned to South Carolina. Although not directly involved in the debates over the measure, Izard's position was that without the treaty, war with Britain was inevitable.²¹ He feared that if the nation refused alliance with Britain, she would be forced to form one with France. Izard's theory was that Americans, particularly southerners, had grown accustomed to English goods and could never become attached to French imports. Therefore, the treaty was the only means of averting war and maintaining the status quo.²²

In addition to his views concerning the commercial advantages of the treaty, Izard did not care for the opposing faction, particularly Jefferson's supporters in Virginia, using the issue as a means of gaining political power and popular support. He believed that dissent created great problems for the administration and blamed the "distress" upon "some of the members from Virginia."²³ In a number of his letters, he referred to the treaty's detractors as "anarchists" and "disrupters of good government."²⁴ This position of supporting the treaty and criticizing its opposition indicates that Izard finally did take a

²¹G. E. Manigault, "Ralph Izard: The South Carolina Statesman," Magazine of American History 19 (1809): 65

²²Ibid.

²³Ralph Izard to Ralph Wormsley, November 9, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

²⁴Ibid. Also Izard to Mrs. Izard, November 17, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

Federalist stand on the measure. In spite of his initial negative reaction to the agreement, Izard must be regarded as a solid member of the pro-administration faction which became the Federalist party.

After his retirement from the Senate, Izard continued to place the blame for the country's ills upon the Republican party in general and Virginians in particular. He attributed the Whiskey Rebellion to Virginia "democratical societies which promoted [the] scandalous business." He often accused the Virginia Representatives of "not acting in Congress conformably to the opinions of their state."²⁵ In one of his strongest statements against the Republican party, he wrote:

It is extremely to be lamented, but it is certainly true that the distresses which the Government has experienced & the danger to which America has been exposed can principally be attributed to some of the members from Virginia.²⁶

Like his stand on the Jay Treaty, this severe criticism of the opposing faction is a good indication that Izard's sympathies lay with the Federalist faction.

Ralph Izard was also closely affiliated with the national Federalist leadership. Washington greatly respected him and sought his opinions on several issues. G. E. Manigault, a member of the family into which Izard married, wrote that he was "intimate with Washington and much in his company from 1789 until 1795."²⁷ Other South Carolina Federalists such as Jacob Read and Thomas Pinckney held

²⁵Ralph Izard to Gen. Pinckney, November 21, 1794, Izard to Mrs. Izard, November 17, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

²⁶Ralph Izard to Ralph Wormsley, November 9, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

²⁷Manigault, p. 72.

Izard in high esteem and believed him to be a protector of the propertied classes and the interests of the best men of the state.²⁸ This close association with the national leadership and the respect he commanded from his Federalist colleagues are also indicators of Izard's ties to the party.

In his later years, Izard became a severe critic of the republican trends in the government. Always believing that America "tended too much toward democracy," Izard spoke often of the baseness of the masses.²⁹ Until his death, he urged South Carolinians to elect "good men" to the government. Izard often wrote that those of "property and education" were best qualified to serve in the interest of peace and security.³⁰ The election of Jefferson was a keen disappointment to him and as a private citizen he continued to chastise the Virginians. During the latter portion of his life, his role as a critic of the course of the American government made Izard one of the foremost Federalists in the South. He became a type of patriarch and the grand old man of South Carolina Federalism.³¹

Jacob Read: The Radical

David Hackett Fischer's description of Jacob Read as the "Jeffersonian stereotype of an anglo-Federal tinsel aristocrat" is

²⁸ Ibid. Also there are numerous letters among the three.

²⁹ Izard to Jefferson, June 10, 1785, "Letters of Ralph Izard," p. 196.

³⁰ Izard to Gen. Pinckney, January 18, 1795, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

³¹ David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 308-9.

perhaps the best way to characterize Read's relationship to his party.³² Few politicians were ever as comfortable as he with Federalist ideology. Often critical of the administration's detractors and holding adverse opinions of Virginians and Jefferson, Read was Federalist and elitist to the core. He constantly sought patronage because of his status and was very conscious of his position in the South Carolina social system. Elected to national political office because of his status and military service, he could never adjust to the democratic spirit of American politics and eventually gave up his post, prophesying doom for his country.³³

The strongest evidence of Read's Federalism is to be found in his reaction to the Jay Treaty. Although he favored assumption and was Speaker of the South Carolina House when that body publicly endorsed the measure, Read had not yet launched his national political career and seems to have been relatively quiet on the issue. The Jay Treaty controversy, however, struck the nation in the midst of Read's election to the Senate and he lost no time in expressing his feelings on the matter to his contemporaries.

Whereas Izard regarded the treaty as a mistake, but supported it out of necessity, Read appears to have sensed no malevolence in British aims. In a long letter to Izard, Read wrote, "I am convinced that it is the intent of Great Britain to be at peace with this country:

³²Ibid., p. 401.

³³Ibid.

but if they do not see it in the same point of view [as Americans] can we help it?"³⁴

Jacob Read felt that the treaty was essential in the preservation of America's security. To more than one correspondent, he posed the question: "Is not this Treaty better than a war?"³⁵ He sought to garner support for the measure by speaking at meetings and writing circular letters in an effort to aid in its adoption. He became singularly distressed that some political leaders within his own state spoke against the treaty, commenting that such opposition was "to be lamented."³⁶ When the controversy was eventually resolved with the adoption of the agreement, Read gave evidence of his strong support of the Federalist position when he praised Washington for pushing the treaty through the Senate and for solving "the severe crisis." According to Read, the President's firmness "saved our Constitution and Country."³⁷

His radical Federalism was further evidenced by Read's blatant and often severe criticism of the Republican party, Jefferson, and the Virginia representatives serving in the national government. Aside from the usual Federalist characterization of the Republicans as anarchists, Read was one of a small number of radical Federalists who believed there

³⁴ Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, September 14, 1795, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

³⁵ Ibid. This was a favorite expression of Read's.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, May 11, 1796, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

was a danger of the Virginian element dissolving the union by creating a "Southern Republic with Virginia for its head and Jefferson for President."³⁸ Read constantly urged Federalists in the South to use every means available to them to defeat such a plan and to prevent the disruption of all that had been established during the formative years of the government.

Read's radicalism, however, eventually worked to his disadvantage. His bid for re-election in 1800 failed and he was replaced with a Republican party member. After this "retirement," he continued to seek out patronage positions with little success. Read could never really adjust to the egalitarian ideals that dominated United States society after the election of Jefferson. Until the moment of his death in 1816, Read believed that the Jeffersonian faction had destined the country to eventual ruin.³⁹

John Rutledge, Jr.: The Last Hope

At the time the assumption measure was debated in Congress, John Rutledge, Jr., was travelling and being educated in Europe. When Jay was completing his negotiations with Britain, Rutledge was just beginning his political career. These two issues, therefore, supply little evidence of Rutledge's Federalist leanings. In fact, during the early portion of his career, Rutledge's ideology appears to have been decidedly Republican. He opposed the Jay Treaty and in 1796 cast

³⁸Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, June 5, 1798, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

³⁹George C. Rogers, Evolution of a Federalist; William Loughton Smith of Charleston (1785-1812) (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1962), p. 386.

his electoral votes for Thomas Jefferson and C.C. Pinckney. In that same year he was elected to the House as an independent candidate and his uncle, Edward Rutledge, urged him to work in the interest of harmony.⁴⁰

His conversion to Federalism came at some point during the early years of his service in the House, probably around 1797. In 1798, he gave evidence of his new-found party loyalty when he wrote to Robert Smith:

I assure you the greatest pleasure I derive from having been re-elected to Congress, is, because I regard it as evincing, in a majority of my Constituents, an approbation of the measures of the general government [and] an unequivocal manifestation of a highly independent spirit.

If, at the late election, Gentlemen who had supported in Congress the measures of the administration had not been re-elected, France would have been fortified in her opinions of our being a divided people, warring with our Government, so enfeebled by faction as to be easily reduced to colonial dependence.⁴¹

Rutledge's pleasure at his constituents' approval of the government and his denouncement of factionalism suggest that by 1798, he had sided with the administration and the Federalists.

The election of the Speaker of the House in 1799 provided Rutledge with another opportunity to demonstrate his allegiance to Federalism. He wrote that Federalists were divided in their opinions and that the split was particularly prominent among party members from the South and East. When the election threatened to seriously divide the party, Rutledge stated that, "The election puzzled and perplexed

⁴⁰Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge, Jr., Federalist," Journal of Southern History XIII (1947): 187-88.

⁴¹John Rutledge, Jr., to Robert Smith, December 25, 1798, John Rutledge Papers, SHC.

the federal part of the House more than any of the difficulties we have heretofore had to struggle with."⁴² This open reference to his party loyalty is further evidence of his membership in the Federalist party.

By 1800, many Federalist leaders throughout the nation had come to view Rutledge as one of their last surviving colleagues serving in the national government. Thomas Pinckney evidenced this opinion by calling Rutledge "our most trusty outpost who [would] convey us the earliest intelligence of every hostile movement & not suffer us to be surprised in our camp."⁴³ As Fisher Ames commented, Rutledge "understood" the Federalist position and could "make it understood where it ought to be."⁴⁴

In an effort to make the Federalist stand felt, the same man who had voted for Jefferson in 1796, supported Aaron Burr in 1800 strictly on the basis of party expediency and until his defeat in 1802, exerted a great effort in trying to prevent the "democrats" from "undoing the work of the Federalists."⁴⁵ In this manner he became one of the last hopes for Federalism in the South and upheld the party's standards until he was replaced with a Republican party member and, like Izard and Read, retired to private life.

⁴²John Rutledge, Jr., to Robert Smith, December 3, 1799, John Rutledge Papers, SHC.

⁴³Thomas Pinckney to John Rutledge, Jr., September 23, 1800, Thomas Pinckney Papers, SCL.

⁴⁴Fisher Ames quoted in Cometti, p. 192.

⁴⁵Cometti, p. 196.

The North Carolinians

Unlike their South Carolina counterparts, most citizens of North Carolina strongly opposed Hamiltonian finance. Since the state was made up primarily of small farmers, many of its residents believed Hamilton's proposal was geared solely to the needs of the commercial classes and would be of little advantage to North Carolina. Also, North Carolina's debt was not as large as that of South Carolina and the ideas of Jefferson and Madison that the assumption bill was unfair had a tremendous impact upon many state leaders.⁴⁶

Opposition to the Jay Treaty within North Carolina centered around Articles IX and XII. The few prominent merchants abhorred the restrictions on West Indian trade. One Tarboro merchant stated that the "Dam'd Treaty will produce famine, anarchy, and confusion," while another criticized Jay as being "a pusillanimous Wretch," whose treaty was "certainly the most humiliating production that ever went from the pen of a man."⁴⁷ Article IX, which granted certain rights of reciprocal land ownership to British nationals living in the United States, had a special impact upon the state. North Carolina had acquired important British lands during the Revolutionary War and feared the treaty might give Englishmen the right to reclaim some of the state's

⁴⁶ Gilbert L. Lycan, "Alexander Hamilton and the North Carolina Federalists," North Carolina Historical Review XXV (1948): 450.

⁴⁷ George Ogg to John Gray Blount, September 7, 1795, John Gray Blount Papers vol. 2, ed. Alice Barnwell Keith, (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1959), p. 589, and Thomas Blount to John Gray Blount, November 5, 1794, Blount Papers, vol. 2, p. 454.

territory. This facet of the agreement, coupled with the infamous Article XII, made the treaty exceedingly unpopular among Federalists and Republicans alike.⁴⁸

In spite of the overall negative reaction to both assumption and the Jay Treaty in North Carolina, these determinants are of some value in linking John Steele, William Barry Grove, and Samuel Johnston to the Federalist party. Although all three opposed both measures, when considered carefully, their responses provide clues to their Federalism. When several of the other criteria are considered in addition to the two major tests, it is possible to prove that each was a Federalist.

John Steele: Moderate Friend of Federalism

John Steele's initial reaction to Hamiltonian finance was one of disappointment and apprehension. Fearing speculative gain, he was quick to warn his constituents that by 1792 all state paper would be valuable and that they should not release it "without a fair and full equivalent."⁴⁹ In his warning he stated that the assumption bill proved "what can be effected by perserverence [sic]," and that the measure "deserved the appellation [sic] of obstinacy."⁵⁰ Always believing that the United States should follow a more conservative financial policy, in 1792 he lamented the country's "evil list of expenditures" and

⁴⁸Lycan, p. 458.

⁴⁹John Steele, Circular Letter to all Counties of the Yadkin Division, February 7, 1792, John Steele Papers, SHC.

⁵⁰John Steele to William Barry Grove, July 27, 1790, The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols., ed. Henry M. Wagstaff (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1924), 1:74.

expressed his desire to "put the shears to the Sec'y of the Treasury." ⁵¹

Although he feared the effects of speculation and gross expenditures upon the finances of North Carolina, a closer examination of Steele's reaction to the policy illustrates that he also dreaded the problems Hamilton's efforts could create for the administration's supporters within the state. In one statement illustrative of this apprehension Steele wrote, "This is a thing that would not Encrease [sic] the friends of the Government in North Carolina, if publicly known, and indeed is not a little regretted among some good Federalists here."⁵² This open reference to his party and his fear for its survival is good evidence that even though, like many of his constituents, he opposed Hamilton's proposals, he still considered himself to be a supporter of the national government and one of the state's early Federalists.

Steele's fear for the survival of the Federalist faction may have played an important role in his non-reaction to the Jay Treaty. Seemingly quiet on the issue, he was probably reluctant to voice a pro-administration opinion in the face of the violent reaction the treaty produced within his state. ⁵³ There is, however, another, more personal, reason for Steele's lack of response. Between 1795 and 1796, he was in the process of attempting to acquire the post of national Comptroller of the Treasury. If he was reluctant to support the treaty, Steele probably did not make his views known, fearing they might cost him the chance for the appointment. Indeed, his neutral stand was perhaps the

⁵¹ John Steele to John Haywood, December 5, 1791, Haywood Papers, SHC.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Rose, p. 118.

best he could have made, for in 1796 Washington gave him the post and he held it until 1802.⁵⁴

The strongest evidence of Steele's Federalism lies in his association with national Federalist leaders. Washington, in his letter appointing Steele Comptroller, expressed his "special Trust and Confidence in the Integrity, Diligence, and Ability of John Steele."⁵⁵

Prior to this appointment, Hamilton had expressed his confidence in the North Carolinian and often "opened himself to [Steele] in frankness."⁵⁶

In 1793, Hamilton stood to lose an important political ally when Steele decided to retire from the House. In an effort to change Steele's decision, Hamilton wrote:

You give me pain by telling me that you have declined serving in the House of Representatives after the third of March next and that it is doubtful whether you will attend the next sessions.

I anxiously hope that you will find it convenient to attend and that you will change your resolution as to not serving in a future House. The ensuing session will be an interesting one and the next Congress will either anchor the Government in safety or set it afloat. My apprehension is excited when I see so many valuable members dropping off. The House will, I fear, lose more of its talent than it can spare.⁵⁷

Hamilton's confidence in Steele was well-founded. That Steele respected, revered, and was close to the Secretary was evidenced in a letter written to Hamilton in 1793, when he revealed that he had "often said, on proper occasions, that the friends of neutrality and peace would

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ George Washington to John Steele, July 1, 1796, Steele Papers, p. 143.

⁵⁶ Alexander Hamilton to John Steele, October 15, 1792, Steele Papers, SHC.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

find in the Secretary of the Treasury an able and zealous friend."⁵⁸

Steele also took it upon himself to inform Hamilton that:

In short, the best men of this country rely chiefly upon your talents and disposition to avoid the rocks which lie upon the right hand and upon the left, ready to dash our young government to pieces upon the least unskillful pilotage.⁵⁹

The pro-Hamilton, Federalist leanings illustrated by these remarks are supported by John Steele's contemporaries. His political opponents tried to use his ties to the national leadership against Steele by conducting a campaign of slander against both him and his party. The campaign was begun by Montford Stokes, who characterized Steele's principles as "aristocratical" and Steele himself as the "devoted _____ of Mr. Hamilton."⁶⁰ Although Steele was outraged at this statement, his association with the Federalist party was common knowledge among prominent North Carolinians. According to Joseph McDowell, Steele was "considered by a great many members from the Southern States and by those from Pennsylvania & Virginia in particular to have joined the aristocratical party."⁶¹ McDowell further stated that at first Steele was strongly opposed to the Federalist faction, but had since "advocated their Characters and Course more thoroughly than [he] had at first opposed it."⁶² These comments

⁵⁸John Steele to Alexander Hamilton, April 30, 1793, Steele Papers, SHC.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰John Steele to Montford Stokes, January 23, 1793, Steele Papers, SHC.

⁶¹Joseph McDowell to John Steele, January 12, 1795, Steele Papers, 1: 131.

⁶²Ibid.

by Steele's colleagues, his fear of the effect of Hamiltonian finance upon the party, his appointment to national public office by Washington, and his close ties to Hamilton clearly reflect the political ideology of John Steele and prove him to be an important North Carolina Federalist. Although not a radical Federalist, there can be little doubt that Steele's sympathies and friendship extended to the party.

William Barry Grove: Defender of
the Administration

Like John Steele, William Barry Grove feared the impact of speculators upon North Carolina. He remarked that many North Carolinians were "pillaged of their Certifes [sic]," and did not have the advantage of understanding their "increased value."⁶³ He did not fault the national government for passing the bill, but believed it to be negligent in publicizing the matter. According to Grove, the manner in which assumption was carried out had led North Carolinians to "in some measure abhor the Government."⁶⁴ He, like Steele, lamented his state's dissatisfaction with the general government and stated that "Mr. Hamilton thinks as I do on this subject and expresses his real concern."⁶⁵ Even though he disliked the speculation the assumption bill created, Grove's concern that his state not disassociate itself from the federal

⁶³William Barry Grove to James Hogg, April 20, 1792, "Letters of William Barry Grove," in Henry M. Wagstaff, Federalism in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1910), p. 48.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

government and his early reference to Hamilton's sentiments indicate that he leaned toward Federalism at an early date.

His support of the national government at an early stage of its existence set the tone for the rest of Grove's political career. He took a solid stand in favor of the policies of neutrality and moderation in relations with Britain. He was the only North Carolinian and one of only four southerners in the House of Representatives to vote for appropriating the funds needed to put the Jay Treaty into effect.⁶⁶ This was indeed a solid vote of confidence in the national government since it occurred at a time when North Carolina opinion was hostile to the administration.

Grove was proud of his continued support of the measures of the national government and in commenting on his service he wrote in 1798:

I can look back with pleasure to every Vote I gave from the days of Genet to the present moment, and console myself that those votes have been in support of our own Govert. and genuine principles of Neutrality that was adopted.

Even in 1794, when British Depred. had agitated and inflamed all our minds, I had the good fortune to be on the side of Moderation and Negociation [sic], tho' it was then called a Pausillanimous [sic] measure.⁶⁷

This unqualified support of the administration and government policy and his vote in favor of the Jay Treaty place Grove within the ranks of the Federalists.

⁶⁶Kemp P. Battle, ed., Letters of Nathaniel Macon, John Steele, and William Barry Grove (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 11.

⁶⁷William Barry Grove to James Hogg, March 23, 1798, Battle, p. 74.

Samuel Johnston: Federalist Against Faction

Samuel Johnston was more severe in his initial critique of Hamiltonian finance than were Steele and Grove. He feared that the measure would only create economic chaos and be of little benefit to the state. In one of his stronger statements on the issue, Johnston detailed his position to James Iredell in the following manner:

I am of the opinion that if Congress adopts the measure [assumption] one of two evils will necessarily ensue, either they will not be able to comply with their engagements, or in order to enable them to comply, they will be reduced to the necessity of levying taxes which will be oppressive to the people and injure the Government in their opinion. If our members come forward in time, I have hopes that the assumption of state debts will not take place.⁶⁸

In spite of his fierce opposition, however, Johnston eventually came to favor the measure. After seeing the measure's success, he characterized the financial success of the new nation as unequaled by "any country in so short a space as three years."⁶⁹ By 1792, his opinion of Alexander Hamilton had become so favorable that Johnston called the Secretary "the second hope of the United States."⁷⁰ This change in Johnston's attitude indicates that although he was hesitant to support the assumption bill, by 1792, he had become impressed with the plan and was leaning toward the Hamiltonian camp.

Johnston's support of the government continued to mount during the early 1790's. When the Whiskey Rebellion threatened Washington's administration, Johnston was proud that it could be suppressed "in a

⁶⁸Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, April 6, 1790, McRee, II: 286.

⁶⁹Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, May 10, 1792, McRee, II: 356.

⁷⁰Ibid.

manner highly honorable to Government,"⁷¹ and described the instigators of the revolt as "snarling curs who have not spirit enough to bite, but excite others to bite."⁷² This obviously Federalist approach to the problem of sectionalism is further evidence of Johnston's affinity for the party's ideals.

His growing Federalist ties led him to take a moderate stand on the Jay Treaty. Like other North Carolinians, he deplored Articles IX and XII and confessed that the treaty had "lessened [his] opinion of Mr. Jay's abilities as a negotiator."⁷³ But although displeased with the terms of the agreement, Johnston was far more concerned that the treaty not create a faction which would oppose the national government. In his words:

The whole continent appears to be highly enraged against Mr. Jay and his Treaty. 'Tis a pity that there is seldom so much pains taken to conciliate the minds of the multitude as is taken to inflame them. Unfortunately, it is much easier to fire a town than to extinguish the flames. Nothing seems so much to contribute to the happiness of some people as to see everyone distressed and discontented with the state of public affairs.⁷⁴

Johnston considered the treaty to be a mistake, but favored its passage above disunity. He worked to organize pro-treaty meetings and urged his colleagues to support the measure. By the time the treaty passed in

⁷¹Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, November 26, 1794, McRee, II: 430.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, August 1, 1795, McRee, II: 450.

⁷⁴Johnston to Iredell, August 15, 1795, McRee, II: 453.

1795, Johnston was a devoted Federalist and staunch defender of the administration against factionalism.

The Virginians

Virginia's reaction to Hamiltonian fiscal policy closely paralleled that of North Carolina. In Virginia, by 1790, the supply of currency was so low that one merchant described money as "very scarce."⁷⁵ Speculation by northern financiers only added to the problem. Government securities were often used as a medium of exchange and speculators were, in effect, taking money out of circulation by buying up the certificates in large quantities. Perhaps under some influence of the state's native sons, Jefferson and Madison, many Virginians were strongly inclined to condemn the measure.

As was the case in North Carolina, Virginia's debt was not extremely high and the dominant public attitude toward assumption was that states should be given credit for the debts they had already retired. This opinion added to the spirit of distrust for Hamilton's policies. By December of 1790, the national policy had been condemned by the state's General Assembly and as late as 1792, there were still serious problems in enforcing the excise taxes needed for the application of Hamilton's plan.⁷⁶ Because of the overall negative response of most of the state's politicians, a favorable attitude toward the measure was a strong indication of a leader's allegiance to the Hamiltonian faction.

⁷⁵ George Nicolson to Thomas Blount, March 22, 1790, Blount Papers, p. 31.

⁷⁶ Rose, p. 32.

The Jay Treaty was also roundly condemned in Virginia. In commercial towns and even into the countryside opposition to the agreement ran high. Although it received some support in the western part of the state, overall it was looked upon as a betrayal and a serious blunder. In spite of this opposition, however, the Jay Treaty controversy can be useful in determining the political leanings of some Virginia leaders. Once the administration made its position on the treaty clear, several Federalists began to support the agreement out of a sense of duty to Washington and the new government. Their willingness to take a pro-administration stand on the volatile treaty issue was one intimation that they favored the policies of the government over the anti-administration views promoted by the Republicans. A politician's willingness to organize and write letters in support of the Jay Treaty often indicated that he was at least linked to the Federalist coalition.

As is the case with the South and North Carolina political figures, other methods of determining party ties are also important. Virginians' criticism of the opposing faction and their efforts to keep the party going after 1800 can also be interpreted as indicators of Federalism. These factors, coupled with their responses to the two key issues of the period, can help to establish that Daniel Morgan, Edward Carrington, and John Marshall were all important cogs in the Federalist machinery of Virginia and the nation.

Daniel Morgan: Soldier in the War on Dissent

Perhaps the best manner in which to describe Daniel Morgan is to state that he was a soldier who never lost his zeal for his cause.

After fighting doggedly for the establishment of a new government, Morgan did everything in his power to assure the new structure's success. He became a hard-line defender of the Constitution, Washington, and the Adams administration. Morgan was one of the few Virginia Federalists who, despite regional and sectional pressures, espoused a distinct Federalist line on almost every important issue.

Although he may not have understood them in great detail, Morgan believed passage of Hamilton's policies to be far better than the unrest created by the opposing Republican faction. After the party, led by Madison and Jefferson, had clearly indicated its position on the issue, Morgan accused it of possessing a "wicked design for anarchy" within the new nation and urged his western colleagues to support the measure.⁷⁷ While it is true that Morgan's native region of western Virginia was more supportive of Hamilton's proposals than other areas of the state, it is probable that Morgan's support was based upon a fierce personal loyalty to Washington and the desire to see the government preserved.⁷⁸ His loyalty and ardor on behalf of the Constitution quickly linked Morgan to the cause of Federalism.

His tie with the party was sealed with the outbreak of the Whiskey Rebellion shortly after Hamilton's policies were put into practice. The revolt infuriated Morgan and when he was ordered by Hamilton to raise a militia to combat the insurgents, Morgan responded quickly. Believing the rebels to be "the greatest enemies we have in America," he criticized Virginians for not readily taking arms and

⁷⁷ Daniel Morgan quoted in Higginbotham, p. 187.

⁷⁸ Higginbotham, p. 187.

expressed his disgust that there were those who seemed "uneasy about quelling this riot" and who "wished to throw cold water" on his expedition.⁷⁹ When Washington decided to use force against the revolt, Morgan became one of the leaders of the government forces and a prime factor in their success.⁸⁰

In spite of his zeal in defending his government, Morgan's actions after the revolt had been squelched were geared to make the insurrectionists friends of the government. In his words, the first duty of the United States was "to make these people our friends, if we could do so without lessening the dignity of government, which in my opinion ought to be supported at any risk."⁸¹ His willingness to battle the government's detractors, but then work to make them support the federal structure, was illustrative of Morgan's staunch nationalism and linked him to the pro-administration party.

The Jay Treaty issue must have greatly distressed Daniel Morgan, for it is the only one on which he so much as wavered slightly from the Federalist position. But even though he may have stumbled, he did not fall from the Federalist ranks. After expressing his displeasure with the treaty, Morgan capitulated when he found that it was to be promoted by the administration. According to Morgan, when he learned that "the old horse [Washington]" supported the agreement, he "shut [his] pan."⁸² He began to campaign vigorously in favor of the measure, holding

⁷⁹Daniel Morgan quoted in North Callahan, Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), pp. 278-79.

⁸⁰Callahan, pp. 282-84.

⁸¹Morgan quoted in Callahan, p. 286.

⁸²Morgan quoted in Higginbotham, p. 189.

meetings in western Virginia to promote it and writing to other Federalists of his success in these endeavors.⁸³ In one letter, he informed Washington that "the most respectable men in the district" solidly favored the treaty's adoption.⁸⁴ By the time the controversy had cooled, Morgan had become firm in his support of the Federalist cause.

Elected to Congress in 1797, Morgan seldom spoke in that body, but was a strong supporter of President Adams. He voted for a bill allowing Adams to strengthen the federal militia and against a measure which forced the President to make known to the House his instructions to the envoys to France.⁸⁵ If he was reluctant to speak in the House, that quality did not extend to his personal correspondence. During the middle and late 1790's, he launched a bitter crusade against the Republican party. He wrote that they prevented a government "under which we could live free, happy, and respectable" and accused them of "wishing to destroy everything that was acquired by the ardent struggle" of the War for Independence.⁸⁶ In one tirade to a friend named Riggs, Morgan stated, "the Democrats are a parsell [sic] of egg-sucking dogs."⁸⁷ These strong statements against the Jeffersonian party serve as a final indication of Morgan's support of the government and his Federalism.

⁸³Rose, p. 122.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Callahan, p. 289.

⁸⁶Morgan quoted in Callahan, pp. 290-91.

⁸⁷Ibid.

Edward Carrington: Ally of Hamilton

Hamiltonian fiscal policy very nearly bound Edward Carrington to the Jeffersonian faction. His opinion reflected the widespread discontent the issue aroused in the state when he categorized the proposal as "iniquitous" unless "each state was considered a creditor for so much of its debts as it had already redeemed."⁸⁸ Carrington quickly came to favor the proposals of Jefferson and Madison that allowances be made for those states which had paid a large portion of their debt. His ties to Madison were so well-established that Madison was able to secure for Carrington the post of United States Marshal.⁸⁹

Almost before the alliance was sealed, however, a split developed between Madison and Carrington. When Madison proposed a discrimination in the payment of the debt to limit the profit of speculators, Carrington was quick to divorce himself from his new-found colleagues. Believing that discrimination would seriously "injure the public credit which [was] the most important consideration of all," he came to favor adoption of Hamilton's policies as the best means of securing a sound financial base for the new nation.⁹⁰ In conjunction with his new stand, Carrington sought a new source of patronage and found a more than willing provider in the person of Alexander Hamilton. In April of 1791, at Hamilton's urging, Washington appointed Carrington to the post of Supervisor of

⁸⁸Edward Carrington to James Madison, March 27, 1790, quoted in Rose, p. 11.

⁸⁹Rose, p. 34.

⁹⁰Edward Carrington to James Madison, March 2, 1791, quoted in Rose, p. 41.

Revenue for Virginia and the administration found a long-time friend who would advance its cause in that state.⁹¹

Unlike his alliance with Madison, Carrington's attachment to Hamilton was close and lasting so that he became one of the Secretary's most trusted correspondents. Hamilton was persuaded that he and Carrington possessed a "political creed [that was] the same on two essential points, 1st the necessity of union to the respectability and happiness of this country and 2 the necessity of an efficient general government to maintain that union."⁹² Hamilton's sentiments were well-founded, for Carrington described his own political ideology as centering upon "the public good" and professed "to feel a strong attachment" to the founder of the Federalist interest.⁹³ Hamilton often looked to Carrington to provide him with information concerning public opinion in Virginia and as a source to whom he could relate his most sincere feelings on sensitive topics.⁹⁴

Once linked to Hamilton and his cause, Carrington never strayed far from the Federalist camp. In 1793, he voiced his positive opinion of Washington's policy of neutrality, stating that trade should be "open to all countries and U.S. citizens free to visit all ports."⁹⁵ Those who wished to favor France he categorized as "hotheads who are

⁹¹Rose, p. 41.

⁹²Alexander Hamilton to Edward Carrington, May 26, 1792, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, 24 vols., ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966) XI: 426.

⁹³Edward Carrington to Alexander Hamilton, April 25, 1794, Hamilton Papers XV: 51.

⁹⁴Hamilton to Carrington, Hamilton Papers, XI: 427.

⁹⁵Carrington to Hamilton, Hamilton Papers XIV: 351-52.

few and contemptible [sic]."⁹⁶ When the results of Jay's mission were made public, Carrington, like Morgan, wavered at first, but when he saw the disruption the controversy created, he came to favor its adoption. Clearly evincing his Federalist stand, Carrington wrote:

There was never a crisis at which the activity of the Friends of Government was more urgently called for. Some of us here [Virginia] have endeavored to make this impression in different parts of the country. The events of a few days will show how successfully.⁹⁷

Carrington's "endeavors" on behalf of the treaty were mainly efforts at organization which attempted to rally public support for the measure. His efforts, combined with those of other Virginia Federalists, appear to have had some impact, as favorable public opinion increased after 1795.⁹⁸

His support of the Jay Treaty locked Carrington into Federalism. In 1795, he was offered the post of Comptroller of the Treasury (which eventually was given to John Steele) and described the proposition as "flattering evidence of [his] merit."⁹⁹ Indeed, his service to the party was meritorious. Always solid in his allegiance, until his death Carrington espoused the ideals of Federalism while bitterly denouncing those of the Jeffersonian faction. He was, as Hamilton wrote, a man whose worth had been proven from "trial of him in different public situations" and one about whom it was "impossible to entertain a doubt."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Carrington to George Washington, April 27, 1796, quoted in Rose, p. 133.

⁹⁸Rose, p. 135.

⁹⁹Carrington to Hamilton, February 7, 1795, Hamilton Papers XV: 102.

¹⁰⁰Hamilton to Washington, January 26, 1795, Hamilton Papers XVIII: 194-95.

John Marshall: From Nationalist to Federalist

Long before John Marshall could be identified as a Federalist, he was recognized by many Virginians as one of the state's foremost nationalists. Although not violently opposed to state governments, Marshall believed that hope for a solid, respected nation hinged on the creation of a centralized state. This nationalism governed almost every phase of his political career and his responses to the issues of assumption, neutrality, and the Jay Treaty all stemmed from his basic concern for a strong federal government. His eventual bond to Federalism came about as the result of an increasing fear that Republican efforts could break down the central government. He allied with the Federalists in order to preserve the national institutions he considered to be the best solution to the problem of creating a strong American state.

Marshall's reaction to Hamilton's proposals was typical of his early nationalism. According to Marshall, the opposition to the measure was the result of "the jealousy with which the local sovereignties contemplated the powers exercised by the federal legislature."¹⁰¹ He praised the work of the First Congress and the early Federalists when he wrote some years later that:

The party denominated federal [was made up of] steadfast friends of the constitution, and were sincerely desirous of supporting a system they had themselves introduced, and on the preservation of which, in full health and vigour [sic], they firmly believed the happiness of their fellow citizens, and the respectability of the nation greatly depended. With perserving [sic] labour [sic], guided by no inconsiderable portion of virtue and intelligence, were the objects in a great degree accomplished.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹John Marshall, The Life of George Washington, 5 vols., (London: Richard Phillips, 1807), 5: 267.

¹⁰²Ibid.

This later esteem for the work of the Federalists is evidence that while Marshall probably supported the assumption measure because of his nationalism, he was leaning toward Federalism.

Like Daniel Morgan, Marshall continued to stand by the national government and thereby the cause of the Federalists. When war broke out between Britain and France in 1793, Marshall took it upon himself to defend neutrality. Writing as Aristides, he struck back at those who accused the President of abandoning the cause of the French and supporting Britain. In the words of Aristides, "The proclamation of the President of the United States, then declaring our neutrality, discloses no enmity to France, and must be admitted to have been a wise and proper measure."¹⁰³ In relating his own sentiments concerning the struggle and its effects upon the administration, Marshall wrote, "Altho' then, I am by no means satisfied with the conduct of Britain, but feel resentment at the ill disposition manifested by that nation towards us, I can discover no cause for transferring that resentment to our own government."¹⁰⁴

Naturally, Marshall's defense of national policy and his desire for tranquility in government led him to support the Jay Treaty. When Jay's efforts were condemned as unconstitutional in Virginia, Marshall again became a standard-bearer for the administration. Like Morgan and Carrington, he organized pro-treaty meetings in an effort to stem the rising opposition to the measure.¹⁰⁵ Until the controversy subsided,

¹⁰³John Marshall to Augustine Davis, October 16, 1793, The Papers of John Marshall, 2 vols., ed. Charles Cullen and Herbert A. Johnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 2: 228.

¹⁰⁴John Marshall to Augustine Davis, November 13, 1793, Marshall Papers, 2: 234.

¹⁰⁵Rose, p. 120.

Marshall spared no effort in trying to save the government the "embarrassment [sic]" created by the opposition to Jay's negotiations.¹⁰⁶

After his defense of the treaty, Marshall became a respected and loyal Federalist, serving as a congressman and as one of Adams' commissioners to France.¹⁰⁷ After 1800, he did his best to keep the party alive. In a series of letters to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Marshall gave clear indications of his support of the party.

When Jefferson was elected in 1800, Marshall wrote to Pinckney stating, "in the chagrin which I experienced under our late defeat I had drawn much consolation from the opinion that the federalists throughout the continent had been faithful to themselves & to each other."¹⁰⁸ In 1802, Marshall hoped that the party could still exert some force in Virginia. He informed Pinckney that the Virginia wing of the organization "was stationary" and that the congressional elections would "be very warmly contested in five or six districts, & federalism will, I am inclined to think, prevail in three of them."¹⁰⁹

By 1808, however, Marshall had almost given up hope that Virginia would ever again be dominated by his party. In September of that year he confided to Pinckney that:

Virginia remains devoted to the present system of measures. In some parts of the state an impression has been made, but it is very partial. We may have three federal members in the next Congress; possibly four; But at the Presidential election nothing can be done. In our general ticket the voice of the minority is lost.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶Ibid. ¹⁰⁷Fischer, p. 411.

¹⁰⁸John Marshall to C.C. Pinckney, October 10, 1800, "John Marshall on the French Revolution and on American Politics," Jack L. Cross, ed., William and Mary Quarterly XII (1955): 642.

¹⁰⁹Marshall to Pinckney, November 21, 1802, Cross, p. 646.

¹¹⁰Marshall to Pinckney, September 21, 1808, Cross, p. 648.

Marshall's stands on assumption, neutrality, the Jay Treaty, and his efforts to keep the Federalist party alive after 1800 show that he began as a nationalist, but quickly realized that the Federalist party could best promote his views. Although it has been stated that Marshall often shied away from partisan politics, his attitudes throughout the 1790's, and his opinions after 1800 reveal that like the other eight politicians, he was his own Federalist, sympathetic to the party and its ideology.

CHAPTER III

SOUTHERN FEDERALISTS AND THE FRENCH CRISIS:

OPPOSITION, MODERATION, SUPPORT

There were several issues, both foreign and domestic, which helped to divide American political opinion during the 1790's, but there can be little doubt that the most important question of the decade was created by the French Revolution, its ensuing wars, and the role of the United States in those conflicts.¹ While Republican attitudes concerning the French question have been interpreted as supportive of France, in general, Federalists have been characterized as staunch opponents of both the French Revolution and an American alliance with that power. John C. Miller wrote that, "In Federalist eyes, there was no more affinity between [America and France] than between virtue and vice " and William Nesbit Chambers stated that Federalists, above all else, feared a "French faction which would revolutionize the American system of government."² Though such views of Federalist opinion concerning the French problem hold true for some of the party's adherents, it is difficult to apply such general statements to southern Federalists.

¹As noted in Chapter II, the controversy surrounding the Jay Treaty helped to define party membership. In "forcing" politicians to take sides in the European conflict, the French Revolution was perhaps the major force in solidifying party allegiance.

²John C. Miller, The Federalist Era (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), p. 126 and William Nesbit Chambers, Political Parties in a New Nation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 110.

As was the case with the other major political questions of the 1790's, southern Federalist reaction to the French crisis was varied. Like most Americans, southern Federalists changed their opinions of France as the events of the decade put an increasing strain upon Franco-American relations. John Rutledge, Jr., who in 1790 regarded the French Revolution as having "for its object the happiness of three and twenty million people," by 1798 had come to fear the effects of the "new-fangled French philosophy of liberty and equality."³ Such change in the opinions of the southerners makes it impossible to apply universally theories like those of Miller and Chambers.

In order better to understand the nature of southern Federalist reaction to the French Revolution and crisis, it is first necessary to examine the overall change in American response to the issue and to view the specific opinions of the southern wing of the party in conjunction with the attitudes of the remainder of the country. After such an examination, it is possible to conclude that among the nine Federalists used in this study there was a considerable diversity of opinion concerning France. Ralph Izard, Jacob Read, and Daniel Morgan strongly opposed the revolution and an alliance with France; John Steele, John Rutledge, Jr., Edward Carrington, and Samuel Johnston were more moderate in their opposition; and John Marshall and William Barry Grove were inclined to support France throughout the 1790's. This diversification illustrates that all southern Federalists did not, as some historians have insisted, totally oppose France and look with disfavor upon close American relations with the nation.

³ John Rutledge, Jr., quoted in Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge Jr., Federalist," Journal of Southern History XIII (1947):187, 193.

The General Pattern of Response

From its outbreak in 1789 until 1792, the French Revolution received the approval of most Americans.⁴ In attempting to overthrow a timeworn, monarchical political structure, France seemed to be following the pattern established by the United States during the War for Independence. As Miller wrote, Americans "were too close to their own revolution not to feel strongly toward a people struggling against despotism."⁵ The country was also tied to France because of the aid the nation provided during the American conflict. Treaties signed during the Revolutionary War had created a sturdy alliance between the two powers. Given the similarities between the movements and the links between America and France, it was altogether fitting that the nation's citizens favor the French effort.

In spite of the common ties, however, American enthusiasm for the French Revolution was relatively short-lived. In 1792 and 1793, opinion began to diversify primarily as the result of two issues, the execution of Louis XVI and the appointment of Citizen Edmond Genet as a minister of France to the United States. Although the execution of their king paved the way for the French to declare themselves a Republic, the act alarmed some conservative Americans. It was evidence that the movement had turned aggressive and that France no longer wished only to rid herself of despotism, but desired instead to create a radically new political order which would disregard tradition and established European ideas of government. When the French began a series of wars designed to

⁴Miller, p. 126.

⁵Ibid.

spread this radical ideology throughout Europe, some Americans became concerned about the path the movement was taking.⁶

Citizen Edmond Genet's mission to the United States in 1793 only heightened the apprehension of the conservatives. Violently republican in his attitudes, Genet sought to persuade America to provide military aid to his nation and to support her war efforts. If France was to be successful, such aid was sorely needed. At first, Genet was warmly received. Many of the country's citizens still approved of the French effort and greeted its representative with enthusiasm. Journeying from Charleston to Philadelphia, the French minister was impressed with the general public's affection for his nation.⁷

But Genet was not so warmly received by the Washington administration. Secretary of War Knox refused to loan him cannon for use in the West Indies and Hamilton declined to give Genet the financial assistance he requested. Still Genet persisted in his plan. He found a source of support in Thomas Jefferson and, believing that the American people were firmly on the side of the French, Genet began to enlist American sailors in privateering ventures against British merchants, an act which directly violated Washington's neutrality proclamation.⁸ Genet's defiance of the national government enraged the administration. Even Jefferson came to regard Genet as a liability who could provoke a war which could destroy the United States.⁹ The government requested

⁶James H. Broussard, The Southern Federalists 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 11.

⁷Alexander De Conde, Entangling Alliance (Durham: Duke University Press, 1958), pp. 298-99.

⁸Ibid., p. 300.

⁹Ibid.

Genet's recall. He was replaced and although he eventually found political asylum in America, the lasting effect of his mission was further to divide opinion on the French cause. Although a great many Americans remained firm in their devotion to France, some saw in Genet clear evidence that the French were unrestrained and volatile.

As serious as they were, however, the execution of Louis XVI and the Genet episode were only the prelude to the major split in overall opinion created by the Jay Treaty in 1794 and 1795. More than any other single incident, this agreement polarized Americans into two factions, one favoring the maintenance of close ties with France and the other promoting an alliance with her arch enemy, Britain. When the pro-British treaty was ratified by the Senate and supported by the House of Representatives, the United States citizenry had not only wavered in its unequivocal support of France but had also been divided into two opposing political parties. (See Chapter II).

Ironically, the passage of the Jay Treaty eventually worked to increase anti-French opinion within the United States. Viewed by the French as an indication that American sympathies lay with Britain, France stepped up her attacks upon American commerce. Not only did Americans become concerned with the losses in trade which resulted from the attacks, but they also came to regard the continued interference as an insult to the national honor.¹⁰ During 1796 and 1797, a significant portion of the citizenry began to call for war with France.

¹⁰ Broussard, p. 12.

The war fever intensified during 1797 and 1798. In an effort to remedy the problems between the United States and France, President Adams appointed a delegation consisting of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, John Marshall, and Elbridge Gerry to negotiate with the Directory. When the French government refused to receive Pinckney and later demanded bribes for negotiating privileges in the famous XYZ affair, anti-French sentiment reached its peak. Pinckney and Marshall returned home, while Gerry remained for some time in France. By the time Pinckney and Marshall returned, a majority of Americans favored war with France and preparations for armed conflict were underway throughout the nation.¹¹

Much to the chagrin of those Americans who were calling for war, Adams made one final gesture for peace with France in 1799 by appointing a new delegation of negotiators to work out a peace with the new head of France, Napoleon Bonaparte. This final effort was successful, and by 1800 a peaceful settlement had been negotiated. Although Adams' effort alienated many of his own Federalist party and contributed to his defeat at the hands of Thomas Jefferson, these final negotiations cooled the growing war fever and at least for a time remedied the difficulties between the United States and France.¹²

In this manner, American opinion concerning the French Revolution went from unqualified support to a call for war which finally cooled with the mission of 1799. Southern Federalists were not isolated from the major trends of American thought concerning the French crisis. Regardless of their own positions as strong opponents,

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

¹² Ibid., p. 15.

moderate opponents, or supporters of France and the revolution, all became increasingly anti-French as the nation appeared to be a threat to American security during the late 1790's. However, although they all experienced and were part of the general pattern of American opinion, there are several major characteristics which distinguish the differing attitudes of the southern Federalists.

Federalists Strongly Opposed to France

In tracing the reactions of Ralph Izard, Jacob Read, and Daniel Morgan regarding the French crisis, there are four basic traits which set their opinions apart from other southern Federalists and Americans in general. These specific patterns in their thought make it possible to categorize the three as strongly opposed to the French Revolution and the nation's war efforts. First, each of the three was quick to voice his opposition to the French upheaval. By 1793, only a short time after the news of the execution of Louis XVI had reached America and when the Genet affair was in its initial stages, each of them was already expressing dislike of the French and apprehension at the impact of their effort upon the United States. This early opposition, occurring at a period when general attitudes concerning the French were still very much in favor of the revolution, helps to illustrate that Izard, Read, and Morgan possessed a deep-seeded aversion to France.

Secondly, each of the three appears to have centered his disapproval upon the basic ideology of the revolution. Their reactions indicate that they believed that the doctrines of the French were totally unrestrained and would eventually result in a government controlled by the baser elements of society. While other Americans,

including other southern Federalists, perceived the French Revolution as a movement intended to reform the nation's monarchical society, Izard, Read, and Morgan feared it could destroy the existing social order and replace it with a government based upon complete equality which would finally result in total anarchy.

Thirdly, the three were among the strongest supporters of the Jay Treaty. Although, to some extent, this support was based upon a belief that the treaty was the only solution to the commercial crisis, it also centered upon a belief that an alliance with the stable British nation was preferable to one with the unsteady French nation. Since other Americans believed the Jay Treaty to be a betrayal of France, the staunch support Izard, Read and Morgan gave to the agreement is also evidence of their distrust of the nation.

Finally, these three Federalists were among the first and most zealous of those Americans who called for war with France during 1797, 1798, and 1799. While others did not really experience the acute war fever until after the XYZ affair and continued to hold high hopes for the success of the diplomatic missions, those strongly opposed to France urged military preparedness at an early date, helped in the preparations for the defense of their own states, and stood ready to support an armed conflict with the French. The radical nature of their call for war is still further evidence of their overall rejection of the French Revolution and close ties with the country.

Ralph Izard

As the patriarch of South Carolina Federalism, Ralph Izard was among the first in that state to find fault with the French Revolution

and to express concern about its possible effects upon American security. In 1793, he attempted to alert James Bayard of Delaware to the impending danger when he informed Bayard that, "In Europe, by the last accounts, the calamities [of the French wars] appear to be spreading in every direction. It will be very fortunate for us if we can avoid them."¹³ In the same year he expressed to Thomas Pinckney his fear that the French movement was "tending to make Mankind of all descriptions unhappy."¹⁴ These strong statements by Izard in 1793 illustrate that at the time American public opinion was solidly behind France, or just beginning to diversify, Izard's attitudes were already formed and he, even at that early stage, possessed an intense fear of the impact of the events in France.

Genet's mission only heightened Izard's sense of impending danger from the French. He expressed some concern about the French radical's impact in August of 1793, stating that he had heard "some very curious accounts respecting Citizen Genet."¹⁵ By 1794, he became blatant in his criticism of the French minister, accusing him of being a promoter of the Democratic Clubs which Izard believed only created problems for the national government.¹⁶ He even attributed the Whiskey Rebellion to Genet, remarking that "Mr. Genet, & his offspring , the

¹³Ralph Izard to James Bayard, February 22, 1793, Ralph Izard Papers, Box 1, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SCL.)

¹⁴Izard to Thomas Pinckney, August 12, 1793, quoted in Lisle Rose, Prologue to Democracy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), pp. 109-10.

¹⁵Ralph Izard to James Bayard, February 22, 1793, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

¹⁶Ibid.

Democratical Societies, have certainly by their Lucubrations, promoted this scandalous business, & the expense which is very great must be borne by the public."¹⁷ After the climax of the Genet affair, Izard was more apprehensive than ever that the French would drag the United States into a war. To one correspondent, using one of his favorite phrases, he reiterated his belief that America would be caught up "in the calamities of war" which had gripped Europe.¹⁸ In this fashion, Genet's mission helped to solidify Izard's distrust and dislike of France.

Even though he spoke often of his fear of the "calamities of war," Izard's primary objection to the turmoil in France centered upon the radical ideology espoused by the movement's leaders. Izard revealed his rejection of democratic dogma to his friend Thomas Pinckney when he wrote, "Doctrines are propagated & attempted to be established in that country which I believe to be erroneous [and] destructive of all good government."¹⁹ As a member of the South Carolina aristocracy and political elite, it was natural for Izard to find fault with France's libertarian ideals and this opposition to the basic political theory of the French also set Izard apart as an important opponent of France.

As shown in chapter two, Izard lent strong support to the Jay Treaty, believing that it was necessary in order to avoid war with Britain and favoring it over a commercial treaty with France. In November of 1794, prior to the publication of Jay's agreement, Izard clearly expressed his preference for commercial ties with Britain and

¹⁷Ralph Izard to Ralph Wormsley, December 7, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

¹⁸Ralph Izard to Jacob Read, May 25, 1795, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

¹⁹Izard to Thomas Pinckney, August 12, 1793, quoted in Rose, p. 109.

his fears of what a war with that power could do to his native state and to the South.

A war with these [Britain and her allies] would have been extremely distressing to all America, & particularly so to South Carolina. If we were engaged in a war, the price of our produce would be reduced, our Commerce obstructed, our Taxes increased, & that part of our Revenue which arises from imports in great measure destroyed. These are great evils, but still there are greater which probably would be experienced by the Southern States.²⁰

His distrust of France and its democratic ideology, coupled with his desire to see the United States tied to Britain, had by 1795 made Izard aware that war with the French was a real possibility. The hostile French reaction to the Jay Treaty only increased his fears, so that Izard become one of the leading proponents of military preparedness.²¹ He admired the British military and wished to see the United States establish a comparable fighting machine.²² He was also concerned that his plantations be protected and that the people of South Carolina take measures to assure that a French attack could be repelled. Although by the late 1790's Izard had retired from public office, he still kept abreast of national affairs and could not sit idly by and watch his country become embroiled in "the calamities of war." As one of the elder South Carolina Federalists, Izard shared in the efforts to prepare his state for what he feared was an imminent conflict with a nation he detested.²³

²⁰Ralph Izard to Mathias Hutchinson, November 20, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

²¹G.E. Manigault, "Ralph Izard the South Carolina Statesman," Magazine of American History 19 (1809): 71.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

Jacob Read

Although Jacob Read did not begin his national political career until 1795, his adverse views of the French and their revolution were well-known before he took his Senate seat. According to David Hackett Fischer, Read was "best known for the intensity of his hostility to France," a prejudice which surfaced at least as early as 1794.²⁴ In the summer of that year, Read, at the time Speaker of the South Carolina House of Representatives, became involved in a running editorial controversy with the publishers of the South Carolina Gazette. Simply defined, the controversy centered around Read's claim that a Dutch ship had been attacked by a French vessel whose crew, according to Read, "were a lawless band of pirates."²⁵ When the editors called Read "a scoundrel and a liar," challenges were issued and a duel appeared to be in the offing.²⁶ However, the challenges were eventually withdrawn and the battle was confined to the public press.²⁷ Although the argument was settled peaceably, this violent reaction to an alleged attack by a French ship stands as early evidence of Read's hatred of that nation and his attachment to Britain and her allies.²⁸

Read's abhorrence of France continued to pervade his politics throughout the decade. Like Izard, he opposed the ideology of the

²⁴David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 406.

²⁵Jacob Read quoted in John Harold Wolfe, Jeffersonian Democracy In South Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 78.

²⁶Wolfe, p. 78.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

French Revolution and, as illustrated by his battle with the South Carolina Gazette, wished to see the United States tied to Britain.²⁹ In conjunction with this view, Read was one of the few southern Federalists who supported the Jay Treaty seemingly without reservation. Believing it was "the intent of Great Britain to be at peace with this country," and stating that opposition to Jay's effort was "to be lamented," Read used every means at his disposal to work for the ratification of the agreement. His unqualified support of the controversial measure is a further indication of Read's support of Britain and dislike of France.³⁰

When the French rebuked the treaty as a betrayal of America's former alliances, Read, like Izard, was prepared to go to war with the country. Tallyrand's attempted bribery during the XYZ affair added fuel to Read's stand. During 1798 and 1799, he was among the most adamant of those promoting an armed conflict with France. He was "very disapproving of the actions of the French Directory" and referred to Tallyrand as a "flimsy whip."³¹

Read held little hope for a diplomatic solution to the crisis. Instead, he favored a quick withdrawal of all American negotiators. When he learned that Tallyrand had persuaded Elbridge Gerry to remain in France, he chastised the Frenchman for using flattery to detain the minister and then commented, "Mr. Gerry remains...I wish we had our full

²⁹Fischer, p. 401.

³⁰Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, September 14, 1795, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

³¹Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, August 3, 1798, Izard Papers, Box 2, SCL.

powers out of his hands & that the Directory would add that orangoutang [sic] to their collection of natural oddities."³²

By August of 1798, Read was not only advocating, but expecting war with France. As a Senator, he constantly urged preparedness.³³ In March of 1799, he warned Governor Jackson of Georgia to be on the alert for any indications of a French attack, compelling him to "take such Measures as [would] secure the State over which you so worthily preside & defeat the domestic plan of our artful foes."³⁴ He further warned that, "Those who will contemplate the Infinity of the French Art of Intrigue & the address with which they carry their projects into execution will not suffer themselves to be misled."³⁵

More as a result of the overall war fever than of Read's efforts, South Carolinians and the citizens of Charleston in particular began to take extensive steps to defend the area by creating a Charleston navy yard and marine hospital to aid the state should war ensue. The action greatly pleased Read and he remarked:

It gave me great pleasure to see that the people of Charleston had roused from their slumbers & discovered the dangers before the Harlot of France had (to borrow Mr. Jefferson's metaphor), quite shorn their locks & deprived them of all means of resistance.³⁶

The rabid nature of Read's demand for war and military preparedness is another important revelation of his violently anti-French sentiments.

³²Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, June 5, 1798, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

³³Jacob Read to Jas. Jackson of Georgia, March 23, 1799, Jacob Read Papers, SCL.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Jacob Read to Ralph Izard, June 15, 1798, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

Daniel Morgan

As a soldier of the Revolutionary War and an avid defender of the Constitution and President Washington, Daniel Morgan despised any problem which could disrupt the national government. In his eyes, the French Revolution was just such a problem and, like Izard and Read, he was quick to voice his disapproval of the upheaval and those Americans who supported the French effort. In 1794, using one of his favorite phrases, Morgan accused them of possessing a "wicked design" for "anarchy" and stated that Washington's policy of neutrality was the best answer to the crisis.³⁷ According to Don Higginbotham, Morgan's most recent biographer, Morgan quickly aligned himself with those who "feared that the French example might bring democratic excesses to the United States."³⁸ This belief that the ideology espoused by the French naturally engendered faction made Morgan particularly fearful of the democratic clubs. Morgan stated that he deplored these "different self-created societies" and those who were members of or encouraged them were "very wrong and ought to be checked."³⁹

Since a major portion of his opposition centered upon a belief that the radical democracy of the French was a corrupting force within America, Morgan eventually came to believe that the United States should ally herself with Britain instead of France. Although he at first was not sure of his stand on the Jay Treaty, in time he became one of the

³⁷Daniel Morgan quoted in Don Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 187.

³⁸Higginbotham, p. 187.

³⁹Morgan quoted in Higginbotham, p. 204.

agreement's strongest defenders (see chapter two). In fact, indirectly, it was the Jay Treaty controversy which convinced Morgan to campaign for the House of Representatives in 1797.

When he learned that Robert Rutherford, the representative from Morgan's district, had voted against the appropriation measure needed to put the treaty into effect, Morgan became infuriated and decided to challenge Rutherford for the congressional seat.⁴⁰ During the campaign, when he was told that the French had considerable influence upon American politics, Morgan exclaimed, "My God, Can it be possible?"⁴¹ In his effort to unseat Rutherford, Morgan defended Britain and chastized the French for being "imperious and oppressive."⁴² His disavowal of France and approval of Britain, which was so strong that it induced him to run for political office while in his sixties, is conclusive proof that Morgan, in a manner similar to Izard and Read, distrusted and abhorred the instability in France.

Morgan began his service in Congress at a time when pro-war sentiment was beginning to take hold throughout America. He lent support to almost every measure which promised to aid the country and its preparations for armed conflict. He voted in favor of a number of congressional bills which provided for a navy department and a provisional army of 10,000 troops. He also lent strong support to measures which authorized the capture of French ships, suspended commercial relations

⁴⁰North Callahan, Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 288.

⁴¹Daniel Morgan quoted in Callahan, p. 287.

⁴²Ibid., p. 289 and Higginbotham, p. 205.

with that country, and did away with the Revolutionary War treaties which had bound the United States to France. Ever the soldier, Morgan was one of those who rejected negotiation in favor of military readiness.⁴³

Poor health forced Morgan to return to Virginia in 1799, where he remained until his death in 1802. Yet, even though he was too sick to run again for Congress, Morgan could not let the issues of the French crisis and the disruption it had created rest. In a letter to his constituents, he urged his supporters to "Rouse yourselves" in order to keep the Francophiles from gaining control.⁴⁴ Witnessing the popularity of Deism among some of the revolution's supporters, he took up his pen to defend his own Congregationalist beliefs and to refute the ideals of the Deists.⁴⁵ Until the moment of his death, Morgan remained fearful that the United States would be torn apart by faction, and believing that the French were to blame for much of the disorder, continued to despise the nation.

Federalists Moderately Opposed to France

Just as there are certain characteristics which distinguish Izard, Read, and Morgan as severe critics of France, so there are definite traits which are indicative of moderate opposition. While those radically opposed to the nation and her revolutionary movement were quick to voice their opinions against France, the moderates were inclined to hold out hope that the excesses of the revolution could be corrected and that the French could stabilize their government. Only

⁴³Callahan, p. 291.

⁴⁴Morgan quoted in Higginbotham, p. 208.

⁴⁵Callahan, pp. 292-93.

during the undeclared war, in the latter years of the decade, did moderate Federalists express opinions which can be construed as totally anti-French. Although they, like Americans in general, came to favor an armed conflict, their hesitancy in arriving at this point of view helps to mark them as more temperate than some of their southern Federalist colleagues.

Perhaps the reason for their reluctance to oppose the French cause was couched in their belief that the ideology of the movement was sound. Unlike the strong opposition, the moderates' quarrel with the upheaval centered upon its excesses and the revolution's possible impact upon American security. Up until the late 1790's, most appear to have believed that the intentions of the movement were in line with the natural rights of man and the aims of their own revolution. This adherence to the validity of the doctrines espoused by the French also helps to distinguish those southern Federalists moderately opposed to the French Revolution.

With one possible exception, the moderates' reactions to the Jay Treaty were more temperate than those of the Federalists strongly opposed to France. Although, as shown in chapter two, the economic peculiarities of the South and individual states undoubtedly affected their reactions, their reluctance to lend unqualified support to the agreement is also indicative of a lingering attachment to the French cause.

Eventually, however, even the moderate southern Federalists were forced to abandon their support of the French. After the XYZ episode, most not only advocated, but expected war between France and the United States. But even though they supported military preparedness,

they did not discourage negotiation, believing that there was some hope for success even after the failure of the Pinckney mission. Some even held out hope for the commission appointed by Adams in 1799. This hope, along with the lingering affinity for France characteristic of the moderate southern Federalists, helps to distinguish John Steele, John Rutledge, Jr., Samuel Johnston, and Edward Carrington from those strongly opposed to or supportive of France.

John Steele

In 1792, John Steele expressed to his friend Joseph Winston his preference that the United States keep herself apart from foreign affairs. In describing his beliefs, Steele wrote:

Gouverneur Morris of New York is appointed to reside at Paris, and Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina at London in the style of ministers plenipotentiary of the United States. It is my opinion that we ought to have as little to do as possible in foreign politics and on that account I am afraid these embassies will produce more evil than good.⁴⁶

This statement by Steele is significant, for this attitude appears to have governed his reactions to foreign problems throughout the decade. Although he believed in the revolutionary ideology surrounding the French upheaval, Steele's fear of foreign entanglements became the overriding force in his temperate views concerning the nation.

As early as 1790, Steele gave an indication of his approval of the "French enthusiasm for liberty," but his approbation became tinged with caution during Genet's visit.⁴⁷ Though Steele described Genet as

⁴⁶ John Steele to Joseph Winston, January 15, 1792, John Steele Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SHC.)

⁴⁷ John Steele to Joseph Winston, June 20, 1790, The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols., ed. Henry M. Wagstaff (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1924), 1: 66.

possessing a "good nature" and stated that the minister received "affectionate treatment" in the South, Steele added that he was fearful of Genet's system, which was, according to Steele, designed "to laugh us into war if he can."⁴⁸

The same type of reasoning characterized Steele's reaction, or lack of one, to the Jay Treaty. As illustrated in chapter two, Steele probably opposed the agreement, but was reluctant to speak out against it for fear it would cost him an appointment in the national government. Since he feared alliances and foreign entanglements of any sort, he probably did not favor the Jay Treaty, but he was not sufficiently adherent to the French cause to put aside his devotion to the national government and publicly reject Jay's agreement.

As the demand for war mounted throughout the nation, North Carolina quickly became caught up in the military preparedness of the day. During the flurry of war preparations, Steele, too, came to advocate war; but even in so doing, he alluded to his previous belief in the ideology of the French Revolution. To another trusted friend Steele wrote:

Public opinion in the United States can now no longer remain suspended with respect to the views of the French Republic.

Many among us, have contributed (no doubt from the best motives) to delude others; but henceforth we may hope for Union, and that sort of energy that the world expects from a brave, victorious and a high toned nation when driven to extremity by the oppressions of an unprincipled and incidious [sic] enemy.⁴⁹

⁴⁸John Steele to Alexander Hamilton, April 30, 1793, Steele Papers, SHC.

⁴⁹John Steele to Edward Jones, March 7, 1798, Steele Papers, 1: 155-56.

In 1799, when Adams appointed the new commission to France, moderation again characterized Steele's attitude. Although he confessed that he did not expect the new envoys to accomplish a great deal, Steele believed the mission would "serve to show our passion for humility and submission."⁵⁰ This reaction, in conjunction with his attitudes concerning Genet, the Jay Treaty, and military preparedness, illustrates that John Steele was indeed moderate in his views surrounding France and the French Revolution. He feared the consequences of a foreign war, but Steele was not an avid critic of the upheaval and even during the latter part of the decade held out some hope for a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

John Rutledge, Jr.

During the early part of his life, John Rutledge, Jr., came in close contact with the French Revolution. From 1787 until 1790, his travels in Europe enabled him to witness firsthand the early phases of the upheaval. His close association with the movement gave Rutledge a favorable opinion of the French effort and he was moved to remark that the cause had "for its object the happiness of three and twenty million people." This early affection for France persisted and, even after the death of Louis XVI and the Genet episode, one of Rutledge's contemporaries could still comment that Rutledge "wishes well to the French & their cause."⁵¹

⁵⁰John Steele to James Iredell, August 5, 1799, The Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, 2 vols., ed. Griffith J. McRee (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), II: 580.

⁵¹Charles Cotesworth Pinckney quoted in Cometti, p. 190.

In 1795, Rutledge opposed the Jay Treaty. To some extent, he was probably influenced by the attitudes of his father, who, although a Federalist, was a staunch opponent of the agreement. However, given his early affinity for the French, it is also probable that the younger Rutledge opposed Jay's effort out of his allegiance to the French cause. This lingering attachment to the revolution and its dogma and his opposition to the Jay Treaty are enough to make one wonder if Rutledge was, in fact, a Federalist, let alone a moderate opponent of the French. However, as indicated in chapter two, between 1796 and 1797 he became solidly tied to Federalism and during the latter years of the decade came to favor war with the country to which he had formerly been so attached.

His new enmity for France came to the fore only when the United States had been pushed to the brink of humiliation by the French government. Just before the XYZ affair became public, Rutledge wrote to Robert Smith stating:

Matters have become serious in the extreme between this country and France, and unless some change shall shortly take place in the councils of the latter, war will be inevitable. We have strong reason for believing that a great project is now carrying on, by the French, to take a great portion of our western country.⁵²

After the XYZ episode, Rutledge became more pronounced in his feelings concerning war with France. He was quoted by one publication as stating that America could be expected to fight "a war of extermination, or of vigor beyond the law."⁵³

⁵² John Rutledge, Jr., to Robert Smith, April 4, 1798, John Rutledge Papers, SHC.

⁵³ Rutledge quoted in Cometti, p. 190.

When Adams reopened the negotiations in 1799, Rutledge was critical of the President's action. Serving upon a committee appointed to draft a reply to Adams's proclamation, Rutledge stated that it was impossible for Federalists "to unite in an unequivocal commendation of a message of a very equivocal nature."⁵⁴ Yet, when Rutledge's comments regarding the new mission are considered carefully, it becomes evident that his main objection to the new effort centered around a concern for the division it could and did create among the members of his own party. According to Rutledge, "Though I never was in love with the mission, I always feared more mischief from the schism which it threatened to create in the federal interest than from any other cause."⁵⁵ He must have held out some hope for the success of the new commissioners for in 1799 to Robert Smith, a trusted correspondent, he expressed regret that "neither ministers nor secretaries could speak one word of French," and remarked that it was his "hope however [that] they will not approach the Directory like [this name is illegible] and associates: Silent all three went in; about, all three turned & silent came out."⁵⁶

Thus John Rutledge, Jr., like John Steele, can be classified as a moderate opponent of the French Revolution. He initially embraced the movement's ideology and continued to believe in the revolution's doctrines as late as 1795. He favored war only when the United States

⁵⁴Rutledge quoted in Cometti, p. 188.

⁵⁵John Rutledge, Jr., to Robert Smith, December 7, 1799, John Rutledge Papers, SHC.

⁵⁶Ibid.

had been insulted and rebuffed by French actions and held out a significant hope that even the final mission could succeed in bringing about an end to the hostilities between the two powers.

Samuel Johnston

In 1790 Samuel Johnston revealed his desire to see the French cause succeed when he wrote to James Iredell recounting a visit Johnston had made to the residence of then Vice President John Adams.

I visited the Vice President today at his seat in the country: among other things I asked him what he thought of the affairs of France: he thought they would end in a civil war, which would, probably, be of long continuance: though he gave some reasons in support of his opinion, which appeared plausible, I hope he is mistaken.⁵⁷

Even after the execution of the king and Genet's visit, Johnston held on to his hope for the eventual success of the French movement toward liberty. He felt that the excesses of the upheaval were largely attributable to certain radicals and, after the death of Robespierre, believed the French could still bring order out of the chaos. In November of 1794, he wrote, "I am glad to see the Convention putting off that sanguinary spirit; which has so long disgraced them, and assuming a more humane disposition since the fall of that monster Robespierre."⁵⁸

Like Steele and Rutledge, Johnston opposed the Jay Treaty, believing it to be a "hasty performance."⁵⁹ While it is true that he

⁵⁷Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, January 30, 1790, McRee, II: 278.

⁵⁸Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, November 26, 1794, McRee, II: 430.

⁵⁹Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, August 1, 1795, McRee, II: 450. See also chapter two for a more detailed account of Johnston's reaction to the Jay Treaty controversy.

deplored its being used to detract from the national government, Johnston's opposition probably stemmed in part from his partiality to France.

As French reaction to the treaty mounted and hostilities between America and that nation increased during 1796 and 1797, Johnston slowly came to favor closer ties with Britain. In 1797, he expressed his concern that the British remain strong and supportive of the United States and her commercial interests when he remarked that he was "very much concerned for the situation in which the British nation appears to be placed as it is of importance to the American commerce that the British should support a considerable degree of respectability".⁶⁰

The rebuffs issued to the Pinckney mission and the XYZ controversy turned Johnston even further away from France. In commenting upon the matter he asked rhetorically, "Can anything be more contemptible [sic] than the French Minister's letter to our Envoys?"⁶¹ The insults issued by the French so alienated Johnston that he was in favor of immediately severing all diplomatic relations with the nation. He wished to have Gerry recalled "before he has the opportunity of doing anything injurious [sic] to his country or disgraceful to himself."⁶² By 1799, the man who had, only four years earlier, held hope for France's future, had come to distrust the nation and was very apprehensive of its possible

⁶⁰Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, July 5, 1797, McRee, II: 515.

⁶¹Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, July 5, 1798, McRee, II: 531.

⁶²Ibid.

impact upon his own country. In February of that year, Johnston wrote:

I fear the rascally Government of France will continue the war till no power in Europe will possess a ship of the line but Great Britain. Were the French only to suffer, it would be of little moment. They will deserve it for their unpardonable and unparalleled insolence. I have somewhere seen it remarked that 'Fortune is not only blind herself, but also renders blind all those whom she embraces.' This is the only way to account for the conduct of the French Directory to America.⁶³

Given this now strong aversion to France, it would seem natural for Johnston to have disdained any further attempts to settle the controversy. But in 1799, when Adams made his final attempt at a settlement, Johnston, in keeping with his moderate opposition, chose not to criticize the President. According to Johnston:

It appears to me very extraordinary that the President should at this time appoint Ministers to treat with the French Republic, unless he has better grounds for it [than were generally known]. At the same time, I cannot presume to censure Presidential measures, as it is not probable that the public are in possession of the whole of his information.⁶⁴

Johnston apparently did not reveal whether or not he held any prospect for the delegation's success, but his refusal to openly criticize Adams is indicative of his moderation.

Edward Carrington

At first glance, Edward Carrington's attitudes toward France appear to be closer to those of Izard, Read, and Morgan than to those of the moderates. In 1793, he stated that he had "no doubt, that the sense of this Country [the U.S.] is for a perfect neutrality, if it can possibly be had."⁶⁵ During the latter 1790's, although occupied with

⁶³Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, February 1, 1799, McRee, II: 544.

⁶⁴Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, March 23, 1799, McRee, II: 550.

⁶⁵Edward Carrington to Alexander Hamilton, April 26, 1793, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, 24 vols., ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), XIV: 346-47.

financial matters, Carrington was one of those Federalists who demanded war and called for military preparedness.⁶⁶ When Washington was commissioned to head up the army created to defend the country against the French threat, he appointed Carrington Quarter Master General of the troops, believing that Carrington would accept the post even though "there was not time sufficient to consult [him]!"⁶⁷ Washington's confidence in Carrington was well-founded. Carrington wrote back informing Washington that he was willing and perhaps even eager to serve in the position.⁶⁸ His approval of the neutrality policy and his willingness to serve in the army are indicative of Carrington's allegiance to the administration and also suggest a strong distrust of the French nation.

However, when examined in more detail, Carrington's opinions reveal that despite his approval of the war measures of the late 1790's, he believed that the basic ideology of the French Revolution was sound and wished to see the movement succeed. Regarding the dogma of the French, Carrington wrote:

My own sentiments are in favor of such reforms in most of the Governments in Europe, & indeed the World, as will give to the human race the most Free Governments it can enjoy. The French had commenced one of the noblest causes [which] ever presented itself in any country.⁶⁹

⁶⁶Edward Carrington favored war with France to the extent that he later accepted an appointment from Washington to serve as Quarter Master General of the Army during the height of the French Crisis.

⁶⁷George Washington to Edward Carrington, July 15, 1798, The Writings of George Washington, 36 vols., ed. John C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1941) XXXIV: 340.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Edward Carrington to Alexander Hamilton, April 26, 1793, Hamilton Papers, XIV: 347.

These statements, written even after the execution of the king, are a strong indication that Carrington, like John Steele, John Rutledge, Jr., and Samuel Johnston, favored the ideology of the French and must be classified as a moderate.

His disapproval, like that of most of the moderates, centered upon the movement's excesses. Although he could write after Louis XVI's death that he favored the revolutionary doctrines and their spread throughout Europe, he still believed that the French had lost themselves in the chaos of the period and had forgotten their original intentions. Characterizing the execution of the king as "an horrible transgression" and "a truly sorrowful event,"⁷⁰ Carrington further commented, "My own sentiments are, that the French have lost themselves in the wildest quixotism: my wish is that they may recover their reason, and establish for themselves a good government leaving other Countries to judge for themselves."⁷¹ This positive opinion of the aims of the French Revolution, which appears to have vanished in the late 1790's, makes it impossible to rank Carrington with the strong opposition.

A final piece of evidence indicative of Carrington's moderation is his response to the Jay Treaty. Although, like many of the Federalist party faithful, he eventually came to favor the treaty over the disruption it created, Carrington, in a manner similar to Steele and Johnston, wavered in his reaction and for a time was unsure whether or not he should support the agreement. Shortly after the treaty was made public, Thomas Jefferson wrote that "not even Carrington undertook to defend it."⁷²

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Thomas Jefferson quoted in Rose, p. 120.

This hesitancy was probably due to a reluctance to support Britain over France, and coupled with his favorable conception of the French dogma, must rank Carrington as only a moderate opponent of France.

Federalists Mildly Supportive of France

Like the moderate Federalists, John Marshall and William Barry Grove also believed in the validity of the French ideals concerning liberty and equality. However, there is one important trait which distinguishes the supporters. Overall, they held on to their beliefs longer than did the moderates. From 1797 until 1800, they continued to express a deep sympathy for the French and their efforts to create a new government.

Secondly, the supporters of France, although they favored the Jay Treaty out of necessity, did not express the blatant pro-British sentiments so typical of the strong opponents and were inclined to lend more support to France after the treaty than did the moderates.

Because they believed that the ideology of the movement was sound and supported France throughout most of the 1790's, Marshall and Grove favored continued negotiations with France in an effort to work out the problems between the United States and that nation through diplomacy. Although during the latter part of the decade their hope for peace faded, for the most part they were glad the dispute could be worked out without bloodshed.

Their lingering support of France placed Marshall and Grove in a rather delicate position during the years between 1796 and 1799. While the rest of the nation called for war, their affinity for France persisted and in an effort to show that their beliefs did not jeopardize

their attachments to the United States, Grove and Marshall sometimes made strong statements praising America and her stand in the French crisis. At times, these statements appear to reveal an attitude very similar to that of the moderates. When examined closely, however, the statements are indicative of the Federalists' desire to maintain their pro-French stance while keeping their nationalism and attachment to the United States intact.

John Marshall

The first clear evidence of John Marshall's partiality to France is to be found in his writings under the name of Aristides published in 1793. As mentioned in chapter two, the main purpose of Marshall's effort was the defense of Washington's policy of neutrality. Writing as Aristides, Marshall announced:

If there be among us men who are enemies of the French revolution, or, who are friends of monarchy, I know them not. If I might judge from the extent of my own information, I should disbelieve [such an] assertion.⁷³

He further remarked that "This heavy charge of systematic enmity to France stands totally unsupported, and must be considered a mere creature of the imagination."⁷⁴

Since he was a strong nationalist and often adamant in his defense of Washington, Marshall's remarks might be interpreted as a further defense of the administration and as an effort to mollify a pro-French public. There are, however, other indications that Marshall

⁷³John Marshall to Augustine Davis, September 8, 1793, The Papers of John Marshall, 2 vols., ed. Charles T. Cullen, Herbert A. Johnson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 2: 203.

⁷⁴John Marshall to Augustine Davis, October 16, 1793, Marshall Papers, 2: 228.

strongly identified with the French ideology. In an autobiographical sketch written almost forty years after the resolution of the French problem, Marshall noted that many political leaders "were all strongly attached to France--scarcely any man more than myself. I sincerely believed human liberty to depend in a great measure upon the success of the French Revolution."⁷⁵

Although he disapproved of the actions of Genet, Marshall's opinion of the minister did not reflect a lack of sympathy for France. Instead, it centered on a concern for the preservation of the national government and the desire to keep it free from foreign influence. Again writing as Aristides, Marshall elucidated his opinion by stating, "It has now become necessary for us to say that however devoted we may be to France, we cannot permit her to interfere in our internal government."⁷⁶

Marshall's desire to preserve the solidarity of the national government led him to support the Jay Treaty but there are strong indications that, like his condemnation of Genet, his support of the agreement reflected no increased enmity toward France. In his biography of George Washington, Marshall described the division created by Jay's effort in the following manner.

It was obvious that, unless this temper [opposition to the treaty] could be checked, it would soon become so extensive, and would arrive at such a point of fury, as to threaten dangerous consequences. It was obviously necessary [for Washington] to attempt a diminution of its actions by rendering its exertions hopeless,

⁷⁵John Marshall, An Autobiographical Sketch, ed. John Stokes Adams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), pp. 3-4.

⁷⁶John Marshall to Augustine Davis, September 8, 1793, Marshall Papers, 2: 206.

and by giving to the treaty the weight of his character and influence, or determine ultimately to yield to it.⁷⁷

Being a strong nationalist, when Washington lent the treaty his support, Marshall almost had to follow suit. Therefore, his defense of the treaty appears to have been less an approbation of Britain than a safeguard for United States security.

The strongest indications of Marshall's support of France are to be found in his letters to the Secretary of State during his service as a member of the French Commission appointed by Adams in 1797. By 1797, war fever was taking hold among both the strong opponents and the moderates and his very willingness to serve is somewhat indicative of Marshall's lingering affinity for France. During his stay in France, Marshall continued to be supportive of the nation. In September of 1797 he wrote:

The course of this wonderful people sets at defiance all human calculation. Any other nation which could practice & quietly submit to such total subversion of principles, would be considered as prepared for & on the eve of experiencing a military despotism. For the sake of human happiness I hope this will not be the case in France.⁷⁸

His lingering hope for the success of the French which, according to this passage, continued into late 1797 is a strong indicator of Marshall's support.

He further revealed his pro-French sentiment and his belief in the goals of the French when he commented:

However gloomy the present aspect of things may be it is yet possible that French liberty may survive the shock it has sustained

⁷⁷John Marshall, The Life of George Washington, 5 vols. (New York: AMS Press, 1969), 5:533.

⁷⁸John Marshall to the Secretary of State, September 9, 1797, "John Marshall on the French Revolution and on American Politics," ed. Jack L. Cross, William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, XII (1955): 636.

& which seems to have paralyzed it for the moment. The peculiar genius of the people, the immense extent, force & population of the country admit of its extricating itself from difficulties under which republicanism in any other nation would sink in despair, and its friends would abandon it as a phantom they had pursued in vain. While there remains a hope, philanthropy will cherish it.⁷⁹

Indicating that he was impressed with the allegiance of the French to their nation, Marshall remarked:

The internal commotions of France produce no external weakness, no diminution of exertion against her enemies. Parties ready to devour each other unite in fighting the battles of their country. In this they display real patriotism.⁸⁰

In spite of his support of France, however, Marshall, like most other Americans, eventually came to believe the movement had surpassed all the limits of moderation and reason. But even in one of Marshall's most anti-French statements, there remained a flicker of hope that the nation could still survive. To the Secretary of State, he wrote:

The constitution of France may survive this wound, but the constitution of no other nation on earth could survive it.

These excesses cannot have been necessary. A wanton contempt of rules so essential to the very being of a republic could not have been exhibited by men who wish'd to preserve it.⁸¹

Since he was a member of the delegation insulted by Tallyrand, the XYZ affair had a great impact upon John Marshall. For a time, he too believed war with the nation to be inevitable. Despite his growing disapproval of the actions of the French government, however, Marshall, in retrospect, was complimentary of Adams' final effort at a diplomatic solution. Some years after the resolution of the French crisis, Marshall

⁷⁹ Marshall to the Secretary of State, September 15, 1797, Cross, p. 638.

⁸⁰ Marshall to the Secretary of State, September 9, 1795, Cross, p. 635.

⁸¹ Marshall to the Secretary of State, September 15, 1797, Cross, p. 638.

stated that the 1799 mission came about because Adams was "truly solicitous to restore the harmony and good understanding with [America's] ancient ally, which the United States had labored so incessantly to preserve."⁸² In his biography of Washington, Marshall lamented that the first president did "not live to witness the restoration of peace to his country."⁸³

Jack L. Cross, in editing a series of Marshall's letters for William and Mary Quarterly, characterized John Marshall as being "anxious not to prejudice and not to interfere in" French affairs. However, according to Cross, Marshall was "finally unable to resist condemning the breakdown of authority and the failure to preserve the individual."⁸⁴ Cross's explanation has merit. Although Marshall came to look with disfavor upon the excesses of the French, his enduring belief in the doctrines of their movement and his faith in the efforts at negotiation must rank him as a supporter of France and her revolution.

William Barry Grove

Like John Marshall, William Barry Grove expressed a favorable opinion of the French Revolution even in the face of the excesses of the Jacobins and the repercussions of the Genet incident. In 1794, he wrote to his trusted friend and correspondent James Hogg remarking, "Their [the French] want of moderation is to be lamented, but their Valour & Courage surmount everything, their determination to be free

⁸² John Marshall, Life of Washington, 5: 651.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Cross, p. 631.

will baffle all attempts to the contrary."⁸⁵ This attitude seems to have dominated Grove's thinking throughout the 1790's. During the latter years of the decade, he eventually arrived at a less favorable opinion of France, but even during the undeclared war, he maintained a measure of faith in the ability of the nation to establish a stable government.

Since Grove was one of only four southern Congressmen to vote for the appropriations necessary for putting the Jay Treaty into effect, his position regarding that agreement would seem to indicate a preference for Britain. But, like Marshall and some of the moderates, Grove's support of Jay's effort stemmed from his concern for maintaining the security of the United States. Grove was pleased that, in the midst of the controversy, he was "on the side of Moderation and Negotiation [sic]."⁸⁶ Commenting upon his sentiments toward Britain he wrote:

I confess myself chagrined at the appearance of the unfriendly dispositions manifested by Spain and Britain towards my country, yet I can not think of doing by way of experiment to injure them, what I feel conscious might injure the commercial and agricultural interests of America, at least for a time.⁸⁷

Given this attitude, it was consistent with Grove's allegiance to his country to vote in favor of the agreement in order to preserve the commercial interests of the United States.

⁸⁵William Barry Grove to James Hogg, January 23, 1794, Letters of Nathaniel Macon, John Steele, and William Barry Grove, ed. Kemp P. Battle (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 100.

⁸⁶William Barry Grove to James Hogg, March 23, 1798, "Letters of William Barry Grove," in Henry M. Wagstaff, Federalism in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), p. 74.

⁸⁷William Barry Grove to James Hogg, January 23, 1794, Battle, p. 99.

As the difficulties between America and France neared the volatile stage during the half decade after the Jay Treaty, Grove's support of France began to waver. His praise of the French came to be mingled with strong affirmations of his patriotism and attachment to his own country. The following statement, written in 1797, is typical of Grove's sentiments during the latter 1790's.

While we rejoice at the prospect of a great Nation [France] obtaining national liberty, we ought not to forget the Duty & respect we owe to our own rights and country. [The conduct of the French government] has placed us in a disagreeable and delicate situation.⁸⁸

Grove hoped Pinckney's mission would be able to extract the United States from the difficulty, commenting that he was "anxious to hear from him [Pinckney]" and that his "hopes and expectations for favorable information [were] in proportion to the high opinion [he] entertained of [Pinckney's] patriotism."⁸⁹ Grove's hopes were shattered by the XYZ episode and he, like Marshall, became more disapproving of France, but continued to support both that nation and his own country. Even as the United States prepared for war with France, Grove wrote of his "enthusiasm at the blaze of the [French] successes" and although he had to admit that "Ambition, avarice & Bloody Revenge [seemed to be] the order of the Day among the rulers of France," Grove valiantly attempted to maintain his position of loyalty to both nations.⁹⁰ Finally,

⁸⁸William Barry Grove to James Hogg, June 24, 1797, Wagstaff, p. 61.

⁸⁹William Barry Grove to William Harrington, February 26, 1797, Harrington Papers, SHC.

⁹⁰William Barry Grove to James Hogg, March 23, 1798, Wagstaff, p. 74.

in 1798, in an effort to make his feelings clear, he asserted:

With all my attachment to the cause of the French, let me here avow what I defy the Wourld [sic] to deny, that my Love, Veneration, & Duty to my own country was never shaken, by the blaze of French Victories, or any other circumstance on earth.⁹¹

Gilbert Lycan wrote that Grove was "pro-French in sentiment" yet hoped that neither France nor Great Britain would threaten the United States.⁹² Perhaps this statement explains Grove's tightrope tactics between the two nations during the undeclared war. However, regardless of his motives, his continued support of France and his lingering affinity for the nation's successes rank William Barry Grove among those southern Federalists who lent support to the French effort.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Gilbert L. Lycan, "Alexander Hamilton and the North Carolina Federalists," North Carolina Historical Review XXV (1948): 458.

CHAPTER IV

SOME REASONS FOR THE SPLIT

A close examination of southern Federalist opinion reveals that the political leadership of America did not always divide along party lines when reacting to the French crisis, but the three-way split within the southern wing of Federalism poses a fundamental question. If party membership did not create a unanimous response, what factors did influence southern Federalist views of France? Attempting to answer this question is more difficult than categorizing the opinions of southern politicians. Their ideas were affected by many factors and forces. Yet, in spite of the difficulty, the very nature of the division invites investigation and speculation.

One of the better methods through which to understand the reasons for the differences among southern Federalists is to search the lives and careers of the members of each category for common characteristics and to speculate as to the effects of these traits upon their opinions of the French Revolution. There are many characteristics which could be explored, but the most important determinants shaping southern Federalist opinion were genealogical background and social status, support of other Federalist policies, ties to Britain or to the Republican party, and each man's particular economic and occupational interests. Careful study of these forces reveals that there were distinguishable patterns among the members of each category and that

there are some generalizations which can be drawn concerning southern Federalist reaction during the French crisis.

The Strong Opposition: Aristocracy, Planter
Interests, Staunch Federalism,
British Ties, And A Soldier

Jacob Read, Ralph Izard, and Daniel Morgan, when grouped together as strong opponents of the French Revolution, represent a curious combination of southern extremes. While Izard and Read were planters and members of well-established families, Daniel Morgan was a backwoods rifleman and wagoner, whose parentage remains uncertain and who spent most of his life in and around Winchester in western Virginia.¹ In spite of these differences, however, the three shared more than a common hatred of France. Izard and Read were near the top of their social structure and fearful for the preservation of their wealth and status. They were Federalists who espoused a strict party line on almost every major issue of the 1790's and had some personal ties to Britain.

Daniel Morgan, while he cannot be compared to Izard and Read on the basis of his social status, did exhibit attitudes similar to theirs and was also a hard-line Federalist. For Morgan, however, these positions were the result of his service in the Continental Army which imbued him with an uncompromising patriotism and allegiance to the national government and fostered his aristocratic values.

¹Don Higginbotham, Daniel Morgan, Revolutionary Rifleman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 1.

The Impact of Social Prominence
and Aristocratic Values

Social prominence is an ambiguous phrase. Sociologists, psychologists, and economists as well as historians have sought to establish a suitable definition for the terms. One definition which lends itself to the study of the first party system is that developed by Paul Goodman, a historian who has done important work concerning the characteristics of the congressmen of the 1790's. According to Goodman, a politician of the period can be considered socially prominent "if at least during the immediately preceding generation [his family] had achieved distinction in terms of wealth, learning, professional accomplishments, or political importance."² Using Goodman's definition, it is possible to conclude that Ralph Izard and Jacob Read were among the most prominent of the southern Federalists.

Ralph Izard's family was one of the oldest in South Carolina, reportedly settling in the Goose Creek section of the colony during the reign of Queen Anne. As successful cultivators of rice and indigo, the Izards were among the wealthiest of the South Carolina planters.³ By the time Ralph Izard, a member of the third generation, assumed control of the family lands, he "was the richest planter of his day." By 1801, he controlled five plantations encompassing some 4,319 acres of land.⁴ According to George C. Rogers, biographer of William Loughton Smith,

²Paul Goodman, "Social Status of Party Leadership: The House of Representatives, 1797-1804," William and Mary Quarterly XXV (1968): 474.

³G.E. Manigault, "Ralph Izard the South Carolina Statesman," Magazine of American History 19 (1809): 60.

⁴George C. Rogers, Evolution of a Federalist, William Loughton Smith of Charleston (1758-1812) (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1962), p. 401.

there was no doubt that his wealth distinguished Izard so that he "was proclaimed by all to be the leader of [his] Goose Creek world."⁵

Jacob Read was also a member of the upper echelons of South Carolina society. A well-trained lawyer, Read was highly regarded in his native region of Christ Church Parish, South Carolina, and his place within the high aristocracy was guaranteed by his ownership of Hobcaw, a sizeable plantation he inherited from his maternal grandfather.⁶ Read eventually acquired enough assets to enable him to spend his summers in Rhode Island and his winters at Hobcaw or in Charleston.⁷ He moved easily within political circles and his service in the South Carolina House of Representatives is further evidence of the respect he commanded from his peers. On the basis of Goodman's definition, both Read and Izard must be considered to have been socially prominent and solid members of the high aristocracy of their native state.

Their social standing imbued Izard and Read with certain values which contributed to their rejection of the ideology of the French Revolution. As the movement advanced, the upper classes were ridiculed and during the reign of the Jacobins, aristocrats had their property confiscated or were executed.⁸ Perhaps fearing the same sort of activity in the United States, the two South Carolinians denounced the ideology of the French in an effort to maintain their places at the pinnacle of the social structure.

⁵Ibid.

⁶David H. Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 401.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Gordon Wright, France In Modern Times (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1974), pp. 52-66.

Their responses to the Whiskey Rebellion and other movements which began among the masses of Americans indicate that Izard and Read feared unrestrained democracy. Izard commented that the Whiskey Rebellion "might have been fatal to the government of the country if the wisdom & uncommon exertion of the President had not suppressed it."⁹ He further remarked that if such democratic ideals "gained ascendancy in Congress, the Govt. must be brought into contempt if not ruin."¹⁰ As noted in chapter two, Read feared that the democratic beliefs of Jefferson and his Republican followers might lead to the breakup of the union and the creation of a separate republic within Virginia structured along the lines of radical democracy.¹¹ Given these notions of the problems which could result from radically democratic dogma, it was natural for Izard and Read to reject the ideology of the French.

There is some evidence to indicate that attitudes similar to those of Izard and Read were common among planters of the eighteenth century. One study which bears out this idea was done by Rhys Isaac. Isaac's research centered upon the Virginia gentry and its reaction to the Parson's Cause movement of the middle 1700's. According to Isaac, the Virginia gentry, including the state's great planters, feared the Parson's Cause not because it threatened the authority of the Anglican

⁹Ralph Izard to Ralph Wormsley, December 7, 1794, Ralph Izard Papers, Box 1, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SCL.)

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹See chapter two for Read's comments on the possibility of "a Southern Republic with Virginia for its head and Jefferson for President."

Church, but because it threatened to disrupt the social structure of Virginia and could endanger their positions as aristocrats.¹² Isaac's study indicates that the planters of the South may have been concerned about any issue which could jeopardize the security they enjoyed or which could provide the lower classes with more power. The French Revolution with its democratic doctrines was just such a movement and the opposition of the planters was probably a natural outgrowth of their desire to preserve the status quo and thereby their place within the framework of society.

Democratic ideals not only threatened the social status of Izard and Read, but also posed serious problems for them as politicians. Both believed that the aristocracy should exert a controlling influence within the political arena. Izard often stressed the need for South Carolina to send "men of property & education" to the national government.¹³ Read believed that his status should guarantee him a place in the government regardless of which faction controlled the Congress and the Presidency. Even after the election of 1800, he so badgered the Republican leadership for an appointment that one observer remarked that Read "amuses the gentlemen with his wonderful pomposity."¹⁴ Izard and Read could scarcely help but notice that the revolutionary

¹²Rhys Isaac, "Religion and Authority: Problems of the Anglican Establishment in Virginia in the Era of the Great Awakening and the Parson's Cause," in Essays in Politics and Social Development: Colonial America, ed. Stanley N. Kuntz (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1976), p. 382.

¹³See chapter two.

¹⁴Margaret Manigault to Alice Izard, February 19, 1809, quoted in Rogers, p. 386.

governments of France were fast deposing the aristocracy from its favored political position and their violent reaction against the French probably stemmed from a fear that such ideas could prompt the lower classes of America to demand a similar change in the nation's political institutions.

The Menace of "the Copper Coloured Gentry:"
Planter Interests and Fears
Of a Slave Revolt

As serious as they were, the threats posed by the French Revolution to their social status were not the only severe problems the movement presented for the planters. As relations between France and the United States became increasingly strained during the undeclared war, some southerners began to link the fear of a French attack to the possibility of a slave rebellion. To a great degree, the fears of a revolt stemmed from a slave uprising which occurred earlier in the decade in the West Indies. Whites who escaped that region told horrendous tales of executions and bloodshed which struck terror in the hearts of the planters. According to Joseph W. Cox, biographer of Robert Goodloe Harper, the revolts in the West Indies were "to the southern mind of the 1790's what Nat Turner's Rebellion and John Brown's Raid were to a later generation."¹⁵ According to popular theories of the day, the French would use the West Indies as a base from which to launch an attack upon the South. Using covert tactics, the French army would then incite and arouse the slaves of the region to rise up and join

¹⁵Joseph W. Cox, Champion of Southern Federalism; Robert Goodloe Harper of South Carolina (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972), p. 125.

them in a war against the white plantation owners.¹⁶ This theory and the horror stories told of the West Indian uprisings were enough to make Izard and Read paranoid.

As early as 1793, Ralph Izard warned that "South Carolina would be one of the first victims to the principles contained in the Rights of Man, which are applicable, without distinction to persons of all Colors."¹⁷ The owner of some 500 slaves, Izard expressed even more concern in 1794 when he noted:

By a Decree of the Convention of France, all the slaves in their colonies are emancipated. A joint war with France, under the present circumstances, would occasion a prodigious number of the lower order Frenchmen to come to this country, who would fraternize with our Democratical Clubs & introduce the same horrid tragedies [sic] among our Negroes, which have been so fatally exhibited in the French Islands. Are the inhabitants of South Carolina ignorant of these things; or is it the will of God that the Proprietors of Negroes should themselves be the agents of destroying that species of property? The approbation of measures [the ideology of the French] which would inevitably lead to those consequences & the malevolence which the friends of Peace have experienced, cast a gloomy doubt upon that subject.¹⁸

Jacob Read shared Izard's apprehensions, often warning that the South was "the real object of their [the French] attack."¹⁹ By 1799, Read had come to believe that the region had already been infiltrated by agents of France whose mission it was to incite the slaves. In

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ralph Izard to Thomas Pinckney, August 12, 1793, quoted in Lisle Rose, Prologue to Democracy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 110.

¹⁸Ralph Izard to Mathias Hutchinson, November 20, 1794, Ralph Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

¹⁹Jacob Read to Jas. Jackson Esqu., Governor of Georgia, March 23, 1799, Jacob Read Papers, SCL.

March of that year, he sent the following message to the governor of Georgia.

There is every reason to believe that the plan in so far as the Emissaries were to Act is now actually carrying into effect-- and who can tell but that the copper coloured [sic] Gentry lately taken out of the ship at Charles Ton may be a part of the agents to be employed in the Nefarious Scheme of arousing the slaves.²⁰

Such a statement is typical of Read's attitude. Throughout the 1790's, he often wrote of "the revolt of the slaves on which the success of the [French] expedition so much depended."²¹ Opinions such as these are clear evidence that in addition to opposing the French Revolution as a threat to their social and political status, Izard and Read viewed it as a threat to their plantation lifestyle.

An Extension of Staunch Federalism

As explained in chapter two, Izard and Read were arch Federalists who adhered to the party's stance on almost every important issue of the decade. They were quick to support Hamiltonian finance and the Jay Treaty. They were vehement in their criticism of the Whiskey Rebellion and the opposing Republican faction. It is likely that this high degree of Federalism played an important role in fostering their opinions of the French Revolution.

According to Richard Buel, in his work Securing the Revolution, a particular Federalist's opposition to the French effort was often directly proportionate to his reaction to other issues of the 1790's, particularly Hamiltonian finance and the Jay Treaty.²² Since Izard and

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Richard Buel, Securing the Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), chapter 2.

Read embraced the orthodox Federalist position on those issues, their rejection of the French was simply an extension of their hard-line Federalism. If Buel's thesis is accepted, it is possible to conclude that Izard and Read are representative of a southern faction whose reactions to the French crisis closely paralleled those of the northern Federalists.

As solid party members, the two southerners were never reluctant to link the Republicans with the worst aspects of the French movement characterizing the opposition as "anarchists" and "jacobins."²³ Izard adequately summarized what they believed to be the link between party affiliation and the French crisis when he wrote sarcastically:

How much trouble have our patriots [Republicans] given us! I am convinced that the present conduct of France is entirely owing to them. The Directory would never have found fault with the British treaty [Jay's] had they not been invited to do so by the ingenuity of these Gentlemen.²⁴

Tied to the Federalist party during the earliest stages of its development, the two strictly adhered to its position during the French turmoil.

The British Influence

There are indications that ties to Britain and things British also had a significant impact upon the opinions of Izard and Read. As a member of one of South Carolina's most aristocratic families, Izard received the best possible education and during the eighteenth century such an education was to be acquired in Britain. According to G. E. Manigault, Izard was sent "to one of the celebrated public schools in

²³ These are terms often used by Federalists, including Izard and Read, to describe the pro-French Republican party.

²⁴ Ralph Izard to Jacob Read, May 25, 1798, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

England, either Harrow or Hackney, and his education was completed at the University of Cambridge."²⁵ It is probable that Izard became attached to the English educational system and perhaps to the country itself. Manigault relates that he acquired a fair amount of expertise in several definitely British and European activities, including cricket and tennis.²⁶

His attachment to Britain lingered throughout Izard's life. He later owned his own house in London and enrolled his son in the British educational system. As Manigault wrote, Izard remained, "much impressed with the greater opportunities in the former country for a thoroughly military education."²⁷

Considering his affinity for Britain, it is scarcely any wonder Izard preferred Jay's agreement to no treaty at all and could comment that a war with Britain would be "extremely distressing to all America."²⁸ It is reasonable to speculate that Izard's respect for the orderly British system resulted in part from his belief in the role of the aristocracy in government. He probably admired the English system of patronage and the conservative nature of the British government. Perhaps such admiration only added to his dislike of the disruptive French movement.

Read shared Izard's affinity for Britain and, as was the case with his responses to most other issues, his pro-British sentiments surfaced in a volatile manner. Read completed his legal training at Gray's Inn

²⁵ Manigault, p. 60.

²⁶ Ibid. ²⁷ Ibid., p. 71.

²⁸ Ralph Izard to Mathias Hutchinson, November 11, 1794, Izard Papers, Box 1, SCL.

in London and gained a great deal of respect for English law.²⁹ His defense of English shipping during his 1794 battle with the editors of the Gazette probably stemmed from his British legal education.

As demonstrated in chapter three, his allegiance to Britain grew stronger and his opposition to France more vehement as the decade progressed. According to David Hackett Fischer, Read took bribes from the British in return for arousing public sentiment against the French and defending the English.³⁰ Like Izard, Read must have been influenced by an affinity for Britain.

Daniel Morgan: the Soldier as Aristocrat

Prior to the Revolutionary War, Daniel Morgan was not wealthy, nor did he come from a distinguished family background. When he came to Winchester in 1753, he "spoke awkwardly and wore simple homespuns."³¹ According to one observer, he was "so poor" that he had scarcely any personal belongings.³² Morgan made his living as an independent wagoner, saving his salary until he was eventually able to establish his own hauling business.³³ The War for Independence gave Morgan a new career and a new social position. After achieving the rank of brigadier and fame as the hero of the Battle of Cowpens, he acquired new prestige and respect. As Higginbotham wrote, Daniel Morgan began to change his

²⁹Fischer, p. 401.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Higginbotham, p. 1.

³²Benjamin Berry quoted in Higginbotham, p. 1.

³³Higginbotham, pp. 2-3.

lifestyle from that of "backwoods pugilist" to one more suited to a "military hero."³⁴ He speculated in land and invested in various other enterprises. Eventually, he built his own estate, Saratoga, furnishing it in a manner suitable to his growing aristocratic tastes.³⁵ Morgan sought to control his backwoods temper, using the advice of a certain Reverend Charles Mynn Thurston in an effort to curb his zeal for brawling.³⁶

Morgan's social standing was never comparable to that of the planters, but he shared their fears of the masses. He was eager to help quell the Whiskey Rebellion, calling its leaders "the worst enemies we have in America" (See Chapter II). In 1797 he bragged that his candidacy for Congress involved "no popular [sic] motive."³⁷ In conjunction with his fears of the masses, Morgan favored a strong and unchallenged national government. He quickly linked the Republican faction with disruption because they possessed a "wicked design for anarchy." Morgan never believed himself to be a part of a political party even though he adhered to a strict Federalist stance on every issue of importance. He believed the Federalists to be "the government" of the nation he fought to establish and his distinct party line was the result of his unyielding loyalty to the nation he had helped to create.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 174-175.

³⁵According to Higginbotham, Morgan furnished his new home with "seven feather beds, three carpets, seven mirrors, two tea tables, twelve mahogany chairs, a sideboard, and a desk" all appropriate for a man of his position.

³⁶Higginbotham, p. 172.

³⁷Daniel Morgan quoted in North Callahan, Daniel Morgan, Ranger of the Revolution (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1961), p. 287.

Morgan became what Fischer described as a "self-made frontier Federalist," vehement in his support of both the party and the government.³⁸

Because Morgan's acquired status imbued him with a strong allegiance to the national government and fostered a fear of the masses, his rejection of the French Revolution can be attributed to a desire to preserve the status quo and to make safe the institutions of the United States. He opposed the movement's ideology because the "self-created societies" within America which supported the French could be disruptive of the federal government. He defended the Jay Treaty because the "old horse [Washington]" believed in the agreement.³⁹ Even though he was not a planter, Morgan feared a possible slave revolt as still another source of chaos. According to Higginbotham, Morgan sternly "announced that those who excited disorder, black or white were 'very wrong and ought to be checked'."⁴⁰

Morgan's strong sense of order eventually caused him to attempt to destroy the opponents of the national government. As commander of the Virginia militia during Adams' administration, Morgan urged the officers under his command to organize "regular patrols throughout their districts." Although Morgan's reasons for establishing these patrols remains unclear, Higginbotham speculated that Morgan "meant to frighten the Virginia Republicans who were in sympathy with the French Revolution into ceasing

³⁸Fischer, p. 376.

³⁹See the explanation of Morgan's defense of the Jay Treaty detailed in chapter two.

⁴⁰Morgan, quoted in Higginbotham, p. 204.

their attacks against the Adams administration.⁴¹ It is not known whether the patrols were ever organized or whether they did take action against the Republicans, but Morgan's willingness to use military tactics to secure the government against those supportive of the French is indicative of his belief in the disruptive nature of the nation's revolution.

Daniel Morgan's background and economic interests contrasted sharply with those of Ralph Izard and Jacob Read, but his service in the military eventually led him to acquire their values. While the strong opponents of France were indeed a combination of southern extremes, all three were concerned for the preservation of their status or that of the government. These shared aristocratic, nationalistic ideals make it possible to lump them together as southerners who were overly apprehensive of the French upheaval.

The Moderate Opposition: A Lesser Elite,
Temperate Federalism, Ties To The
Republicans And To France

If those southern Federalists strongly opposed to the French Revolution can be described as a mixture of southern extremes, those moderately opposed to the movement can be characterized as a loose collection of second-level aristocrats. With one exception, none of the four ever approached the social prominence of Izard and Read. They did not depend upon the plantation for their economic well-being. Instead, they functioned as lawyers, country merchants, and gentlemen farmers. Each was securely linked to the Federalist party, but their Federalism was of a different sort than that of Izard, Read, and Morgan. During the 1790's, the moderates did not always respond in a decidedly

⁴¹Ibid.

Federalist manner to every major issue and their Federalism took on a temperate tone. Finally, whereas most of the staunch opponents of France were in some way affiliated with Britain, at least two and possibly three of the moderates were influenced by the Republican party and one had distinct ties to France. For John Steele, Edward Carrington, Samuel Johnston, and John Rutledge, Jr., these characteristics had a much greater impact on their attitudes toward France than did their affiliation with the Federalist party.

A Lesser Elite

Like all political leaders of the early republic, the four southerners grouped together as moderate opponents of the French Revolution were well-to-do and respected members of their states and localities. But even though they cannot be considered members of the lower class, most never approached the status enjoyed by Izard and Read. Using Goodman's definition of social prominence, it is possible to conclude that Johnston, Steele, and Carrington acquired their social prominence and did not come from family backgrounds as well-established as those of Izard and Read. Only John Rutledge, Jr., came from a distinguished family and his social status appears to have been less of an influence upon his attitudes toward France than his economic interests and ties to the Republican party.

John Steele's family probably migrated to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. Settling in the Salisbury area, his parents became tavern-keepers. When Steele's father died in 1773, his mother pursued that occupation for the remainder of her life.⁴² According to Henry M. Wagstaff,

⁴²Henry M. Wagstaff, ed. The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1924), 1: xxv.

the editor of the Steele Papers, this "frontier environment plus the quickening influence of the Revolution" made for "an early maturity in John Steele."⁴³ Wagstaff contends that it was this maturity which earned Steele a start in the local politics of the Salisbury region.

Steele's education differed from that of Read and Izard. Although he spent some years at Clio's Nursery and at an English academy, Steele was a product of the lower schools.⁴⁴ Eventually he established himself as a country merchant and gentleman farmer, drawing a portion of his income from a cotton crop and partly from supplying other citizens of the Salisbury area with important manufactured articles. Steele eventually became a "man of some substance," but he achieved this status largely on his own merits. Although tavern-keepers occupied an important place in the social structure of the 1790's, Steele's family background was not comparable to that of the South Carolina planters and he was a self-made member of the aristocracy.⁴⁵

To some extent, Samuel Johnston's background paralleled that of John Steele. Johnston's family also immigrated to North Carolina, coming to the colony from Dundee, Scotland.⁴⁶ His family background was more prominent than Steele's, since Johnston's uncle Gabriel was at one time governor of the North Carolina colony.⁴⁷ However, in other areas, the careers of Johnston and Steele were remarkably similar.

⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Fischer, p. 390.

⁴⁵Wagstaff, Steele Papers, p. xxvii.

⁴⁶Fischer, pp. 389-90.

⁴⁷Dictionary of American Biography, 3rd ed., s.v. "Johnston, Samuel," by J.G. de R. Hamilton.

Johnston was educated in the lower schools, first in New Haven, Connecticut, and later in Edenton, North Carolina. He pursued a legal career, eventually creating a sound law practice and settling in "a beautiful home on Albermarle Sound" near Edenton.⁴⁸ The success of his practice earned Johnston the respect of his peers and helped to launch his political career. Although he came from a fairly solid family, Johnston appears to have acquired a significant degree of prominence after establishing himself as an attorney. Rather than simply maintaining the position into which he was born, Johnston earned his position and this characteristic sets him apart from Izard and Read.

According to Lisle Rose, Edward Carrington was a member of Virginia's lower gentry.⁴⁹ His parents, while probably not exceedingly poor, did not enjoy a position at the top of the social ladder.⁵⁰ Edward did not receive an elitist education and like Steele and Johnston was trained in domestic lower schools. During the Revolutionary War, he served as a lieutenant in the Continental Army and during the early years of the American republic made his living as a lawyer, banker, and gentleman farmer residing in Richmond.⁵¹

There is evidence that Carrington was aware of the gap that existed between his status and that of the high aristocracy. Rose wrote that Carrington "openly copied the great planters' style of living and their elitist ideals."⁵² This imitation of the upper classes is an important indication that like Steele and Johnston, Carrington achieved his social prominence largely upon his own merits without the benefit of

⁴⁸Ibid. ⁴⁹Rose, p. 73. ⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Fischer, p. 373. ⁵²Rose, p. 73.

an aristocratic family heritage. Perhaps his efforts at imitation were the outgrowth of a continuing struggle to mold his lifestyle around his newly-acquired semi-aristocratic status.

John Rutledge, Jr.'s social prominence was significantly different from that of the other three. He came from a family of private wealth which was well-entrenched in politics. His father, John Rutledge, was one of the wealthiest and most highly-regarded Charleston lawyers and his uncle was at one time governor of South Carolina.⁵³ Rather than achieving prominence upon his own merits and earning a place in the political world, Rutledge succeeded in public service largely as a result of his name and social standing.

According to Elizabeth Cometti, "it was taken for granted that young John should follow a public career and no expense was spared in affording him the necessary preparation."⁵⁴ From 1787 until 1790, he travelled in Europe where he received a decidedly elitist education. Upon his return home, he married an heiress, was elected to the United States House of Representatives, and finally established himself as an important South Carolina planter. His background contrasted sharply with the other moderates, but his status was the exception rather than the rule.⁵⁵

Because, with the exception of Rutledge, the moderate opponents of France were not firmly entrenched within the loftier echelons of the social structure, they were less fearful of the doctrines of the French than were Izard, Read, and Morgan. Some of the statements credited to

⁵³Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge, Jr., Federalist," Journal Of Southern History XIII (1947): 186.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 187. ⁵⁵Ibid.

the three indicate an almost ambivalent attitude toward the masses. Samuel Johnston detested "men without reading, experience, or principle," but also commented that "the people themselves" were best suited to place a "check on the representatives of the people in a democracy."⁵⁶ Edward Carrington, after attributing Shays' Rebellion to "the genuine baseness of the people," later remarked that "the great body of the people desire[d] nothing that [would] interrupt the freedom, peace, and happiness they enjoy[ed] under the Constitution."⁵⁷ Perhaps John Steele adequately summarized their opinions when he stressed the fact that liberal changes in government were sometimes good, "but should at all times be made with caution" and be brought about through the use of "Reason and experience" which were "our safest--indeed our only safe guides in those regions where hazard necessarily attends every step."⁵⁸

These statements provide at least some indication that those southern Federalists who were more moderate in their opposition to the French Revolution possessed a more positive view of democratic government than did some other members of that wing of the party. Perhaps they realized that without a democratic government, their own advancement would have been hindered, if not entirely prohibited. Such a realization could have rendered them more sympathetic to France and her efforts to create a government which would allow for increased social mobility.

⁵⁶Samuel Johnston to James Iredell, December 21, 1780, The Life and Correspondence of James Iredell, 2 vols., ed. Griffith J. McRee, I: 481. Johnston to Iredell, McRee II: 244.

⁵⁷Edward Carrington, quoted in Rose, p. 73. Carrington to Hamilton, April 26, 1793, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, 24 vols., ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), XIV: 346.

⁵⁸John Steele to Joseph Pearson, December 6, 1804, Steele Papers, 1: 442.

Because of their more temperate ideas toward social change and due to the fact that most were not dependent upon the plantation as a primary source of income, the moderates were apprehensive, but not terrified at the possibility of a slave revolt. Steele corresponded with William Barry Grove concerning a French ship supposedly manned by Negroes, but the only one highly vocal on the subject was John Rutledge, Jr. While in Congress, Rutledge "saw in every petition in behalf of Negroes an attempt to incite the slaves to the enormities engendered by the French Revolution, particularly in the West Indies."⁵⁹

Rutledge's opinions during his congressional service are directly attributable to his occupation as a planter. By that time, he had established himself as an important plantation owner and was the only one with planter interests comparable to those of Read and Izard. Rutledge feared a slave uprising because it threatened his livelihood and since the other three were lawyers, country merchants, and gentlemen farmers, they were concerned about an upheaval, but their solicitude did not reach paranoic proportions.

The French Revolution may have been viewed as an aid to at least one of the moderates. Country merchants like John Steele may have seen revolutionary France as an important check on the British. During the early and middle 1790's, British vessels often harassed American shipping, attacks which were for some southerners an indication of a "malevolent British plot to subvert the commercial and political independence of her former colonies."⁶⁰ Country merchants were dependent upon American overseas trade to supply them with the goods demanded by

⁵⁹Cometti, p. 193.

⁶⁰Rose, p. 109.

their customers. They may have believed that the French war against Britain could limit the British attacks and in that manner insure that American trade continued and that supplies of goods to the interior would flow uninterrupted.

Temperate Federalism

The moderation which dominated their attitudes toward social change was also evident in the moderates' responses to distinctly "Federalist" policies. As noted in chapter two, Carrington initially disapproved of Hamiltonian finance, calling it "iniquitous." There is also evidence to indicate that he was at first opposed to the Jay Treaty. In a like manner, John Steele feared the effects of assumption and chose not to voice his negative opinion of the treaty for fear that it could cost him a government appointment. Samuel Johnston was against Hamiltonian fiscal policy because he believed it would engender heavy taxes and although he did not appreciate the division Jay's mission created, he continued to believe the agreement to be a mistake.

Their reactions to these issues indicate that moderation was an important aspect of their opinions regarding the most significant issues of the day. Their views of the French Revolution may have been an outgrowth of the moderates' overall temperance. Such an assertion lends further credence to the arguments of Richard Buel regarding a high degree of correlation between the nature of a politician's Federalism and the fierceness of his reaction to the French problem. While each of the strong opponents of the French movement was decidedly Federalist in his reactions to assumption and the Jay Treaty, the moderates deviated

from the Federalist camp on those questions and continued the pattern with a more favorable opinion of France.

Links to the Republican Faction

While the views of Izard and Read regarding France stemmed at least in part from an attachment to Britain, most of the moderates evidenced no such ties. Instead, two and possibly three were linked at different stages of their careers to the opposing Jeffersonian faction, ties which had a significant impact upon their reactions during the French crisis.

As noted in chapter two, Edward Carrington, because of his opposition to Hamiltonian finance, formed a political alliance with James Madison. His political leanings so closely aligned him with Madison that Madison secured for Carrington the post of United States Marshal. Carrington later divorced himself from the Jeffersonians becoming a Federalist and a close associate of Hamilton. Because he came to be so closely associated with Hamilton, it is difficult to speculate about the impact of Carrington's early Republican politics upon his reaction to the French Revolution. During the latter portion of the decade, Carrington was as vocal as any of the Federalists in his condemnation of the Republicans and more than willing for the United States to engage the French nation in armed conflict. There is little hard evidence to indicate that Carrington's early attachment to the Republican faction significantly influenced his later opinions.

However, in spite of the lack of evidence, Carrington's affiliation with Madison should be noted as a possible influence upon his reaction to the French Revolution. His early ties to the Republicans

may have engendered in Carrington a respect for some of the party's ideals. Virginia was the home state of Thomas Jefferson and Carrington's belief in the ideology of the French movement could have been influenced by his state's premier Republican. While such a notion must be classified as pure speculation, it is important to note that in conjunction with his moderate Federalism, Carrington was at one time allied with the opposing faction and his allegiance to Madison could have had some impact upon his opinions.

For John Steele, there are clearer indications that his links to the Republican party had an impact upon his reactions during the French crisis. He was more tolerant and less inclined to condemn the opposition than were some other Southern Federalists and was one of the few members of his party who was able to maintain an appointed position after 1800. After that year, he refused to contribute to Federalist journals and often corresponded with members of the Republican camp.⁶¹

It can be argued that Steele pursued a middle path in order to retain his post as Comptroller of the Treasury, but Steele's comments regarding Jefferson do not lend validity to such a theory. To John Haywood in 1802, he remarked that "Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Adams have both suffered so much by the licentiousness of the press that I should be extremely sorry to contribute material which might increase it."⁶² That Jefferson was pleased with Steele's performance as Comptroller and affectionately disposed toward him was evidenced by the following

⁶¹Fischer, p. 390.

⁶²John Steele to John Haywood, December 24, 1802, The Haywood Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (All further references to this collection are abbreviated as SHC.)

passage written by the President when he learned of Steele's resignation from the post in 1802.

Although in a former letter I expressed to you without disguise the satisfaction which your conduct in office since my coming into the administration has given me, yet I repeat it here with pleasure and testify to you that setting just value on the able services you rendered the public in the discharge of your official duties, I should have seen your continuance in office with real pleasure and satisfaction: and I pray you to be assured that in the state of retirement you have preferred, you have my prayers for your happiness and prosperity and my esteem & high consideration.⁶³

As David Hackett Fischer wrote, Steele's ability to retain his position after 1800 appears to have been a consequence rather than a cause of his reluctance to engage in partisan politics and openly to criticize the Republicans.⁶⁴

Given Steele's attachment to Jefferson, it is possible to attribute his moderate reaction to the French upheaval to his ties to the Republicans. According to Wagstaff, there was always a "tacit assumption by Jefferson of his [Steele's] political support."⁶⁵ There must have been some basis for Jefferson's belief. It seems likely that the respect Steele showed for the new president could help to explain his stance on the French Revolution and his temperate reactions during the decade of conflict.

There is also a substantial amount of evidence to indicate that John Rutledge Jr.'s early support of the French ideology stemmed from his relationship with Jefferson and his party. As noted earlier, Rutledge's actions during the early portion of his career were more Republican than

⁶³Thomas Jefferson to John Steele, December 10, 1802, Steele Papers, 1: 338.

⁶⁴Fischer, p. 390.

⁶⁵Wagstaff, Steele Papers, 1: xxvii.

Federalist. He opposed the Jay Treaty and as a presidential elector in 1796, cast his votes for Jefferson and Pinckney. But Rutledge's attachment to Jefferson and his party went deeper than approval of the Republican position on some major issues. From 1787 until 1790, the young Rutledge travelled in Europe and was received by several American dignitaries in France and Britain. Among those receiving the young South Carolinian was Jefferson, who at that time was the American minister to France.⁶⁶

Rutledge was impressed by the great statesman and became his friend and correspondent. It was while Rutledge was in France and in relatively close contact with Jefferson that he characterized the revolution as a cause which had "for its object the happiness of three and twenty million people." It is reasonable to assume that his association with Jefferson and his initial approval of the movement made Rutledge reluctant to criticize the actions of Genet or the execution of Louis XVI. Perhaps he wished Adams' 1799 mission success because he retained some measure of respect for the opinions he had nurtured in his youth. According to Cometti, Rutledge's friendship with Jefferson was "of particular significance" in his political career and his support of Republican measures was the direct result of "his former pleasant associations with Jefferson."⁶⁷

In one sense, Rutledge's friendship with Jefferson appears to have been one of the most significant determinants in his attitudes toward France. Of the moderates, only Rutledge can be compared to Read and Izard on the basis of social prominence and planter interests. Unlike Johnston, Carrington, and Steele, he was born into the high

⁶⁶Cometti, p. 187.

⁶⁷Ibid.

aristocracy and was dependent upon the plantation. Had he not travelled in France or been associated with Jefferson, perhaps he would have reacted to the French Revolution in a manner similar to the other high aristocrats and planters. Instead, as a young man, he struck up a friendship with a Republican statesman which left a lasting imprint upon his political career.

With this assessment of some of the important characteristics of Steele, Johnston, Carrington, and Rutledge, it is possible to conclude that with one exception, they were not members of the high aristocracy, but men who had achieved their status upon their own merits. As lawyers, country merchants, and farmers, they were not overly concerned about a slave revolt and one may have viewed the French Revolution as a boon to his business. All four were not only moderately opposed to France, but also moderate Federalists and their reactions during the crisis were probably extensions of their temperance. Finally, while France's strong opponents were in some manner linked to Great Britain, at least two and possibly three of the moderates were at some time associated with the Republican party and its pro-French ideology.

John Marshall and William Barry Grove: Self-Made
Politicians, Commercial Interests,
Still More Moderate Federalism

Like those southern Federalists classified as opponents of France, John Marshall and William Barry Grove shared some important traits which affected their opinions of the French Revolution. Both men were self-made politicians who worked their way into the political leadership of the 1790's. Marshall was the product of a western Virginia frontier family and Grove achieved prominence through his law practice.

Secondly, both Grove and Marshall resided in towns which were important commercial centers. Both believed the British to be the most serious threat to American trade and viewed the French as a possible check upon the British harassment of United States shipping. It is also possible to conclude that their commercial interests played a role in determining their attitudes.

Finally, the two were even more moderate in their Federalism than were Carrington, Steele, Rutledge, and Johnston. Each shied away from Federalist journals and steered a middle path between the two opposing factions. Using Buel's thesis, it is evident that they were still more temperate Federalists, with even more positive opinions of the French Revolution.

Self-Made Politicians and Acquired Political Office

Information regarding William Barry Grove's family background is scanty, but the available data indicates that Grove may have inherited some wealth, but rose to prominence because of his status as a lawyer. According to Kemp P. Battle, Grove's stepfather left his son a colonial mansion in Fayetteville and a small plantation known as Hollybrook. In spite of this inheritance, however, Grove's family does not appear to have been a part of the high aristocracy. He received his education in the local schools, chose law as a profession, and eventually set up a practice in Fayetteville. He began his political career as a representative to the North Carolina House of Commons in 1786.⁶⁸ Although

⁶⁸Kemp P. Battle, ed., Letters of Nathaniel Macon, John Steele, and William Barry Grove (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 9.

Kemp P. Battle notes that Grove's style of living "showed that he must have had income other than the receipts of his profession and his per Diem as a Representative," he appears to have entered politics on the basis of his legal training and the status it afforded rather than as a direct result of his family background.⁶⁹

John Marshall's parents are best described as western Virginia frontier people who worked to achieve the prominence they eventually enjoyed and who educated their son so that he acquired political office. Marshall assessed his father's wealth and social standing when he wrote, "My father had scarcely any fortune, and had received a very limited education;--but was a man to whom nature had been bountiful, and who had assiduously improved her gifts."⁷⁰ Marshall's description is accurate. His father Thomas was a land surveyor in Fauquier County in western Virginia, who married a member of one of the state's prominent families and eventually became the sheriff of his home county.⁷¹ According to Albert J. Beveridge, Marshall was born into a family in which "husband and wife were seized of a passion for self-improvement as well as a determination to better their circumstances."⁷²

Unlike Grove, Marshall did not have the benefit of local grammar schools. His education was provided by his own family and several tutors. Marshall's father must have had the most important role in young John's

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 10.

⁷⁰John Marshall, An Autobiographical Sketch, ed. John Stokes Adams (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1937), pp. 3-4.

⁷¹Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall, 4 vols., (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916), 1: 29.

⁷²Ibid.

education. Some years later, in his Autobiographical Sketch, Marshall wrote:

My father superintended the English part of my education, and to his care I am indebted for anything valuable which I may have acquired in my youth. He was my only intelligent companion; and was both a watchfull [sic] parent and an affectionate friend.⁷³

At age eighteen, Marshall joined the Continental Army in which he attained the rank of captain. After his stint in the military, he took up residence in Richmond where he practiced law and began his political career as a member of the Virginia Assembly and later the Virginia Council.⁷⁴ His background and entrance into politics are indicative of a man who had to work at gaining his place in the political arena.

Using Goodman's definition, one can conclude that Marshall and Grove did not come from family backgrounds which were highly elitist and aristocratic. While both men were born into stable environments where their parents possessed some social status, their family ties were not a boon to their political careers. Like the moderates, they were forced to attain the respect of their peers largely on the basis of their own accomplishments.

Their achieved status affected Marshall and Grove in a manner similar to the way in which it affected the moderates by making them more sympathetic to the democratic dogma of the French. However, Grove and Marshall were decidedly more democratic in their opinions of the French and of politics in general than were Carrington, Johnston, Steele, and Rutledge. In letters to his trusted friend James Hogg, Grove often

⁷³Marshall, Autobiographical Sketch, p. 4.

⁷⁴Fischer, p. 380.

used phrases such as "national liberty" to describe the French movement and "valour [sic] and courage" to characterize the French people.⁷⁵

John Marshall was possessed of an even stronger belief in personal liberty which affected his reactions during the French crisis. In his Autobiographical Sketch, Marshall noted that his political opinions during the 1790's were "tinged [with] wild and enthusiastic democracy."⁷⁶ Perhaps it was that enthusiasm which led him to believe that "human liberty [depended] in a great measure on the success of the French Revolution."⁷⁷ Since this statement was written many years after the resolution of the French problem at a time when Marshall was politically secure, it should stand as a true representation of his beliefs. As a member of the lower part of the Virginia social structure, he could easily identify with the French upheaval and it is conceivable that his attitudes and to a lesser extent Grove's, were the result of their acquired social status.

The Impact of Commercial Interests

The primary occupation of both Grove and Marshall was the law, but Marshall can also be classified as a gentleman farmer and Grove as a plantation owner. Both were engaged in agricultural pursuits, but only Grove voiced significant concern over the possibility of a slave rebellion. In 1799, commenting upon a report of a French ship supposedly manned by Negroes, Grove wrote:

We are becoming anxious in this quarter to know something more of the French armed Brig said to be taken by a letter of marque

⁷⁵See Grove's comments to Hogg in chapter three.

⁷⁶Marshall, Autobiographical Sketch, p. 10. ⁷⁷Ibid.

[privateering] which arrived loaded with muskets etc. & manned with negroes & mulattoes bound for Georgia, having one letter for a man of consequence in that state.⁷⁸

While he was obviously concerned about the possibility of a slave revolt which would aid the French, there are no indications that Grove's apprehensions ever approached the paranoia exhibited by the large planters.

Although attorneys and engaged in agriculture, both men were affected by their attachment to the commercial interests of Virginia and North Carolina. Grove lived the majority of his life in Fayetteville, describing his place of residence as "a commercial town, where many British Merchants resided before the War [for Independence]."⁷⁹ Grove often voted for measures which would benefit the mercantilists. While in the House of Representatives, he opposed bills to levy duties on tobacco and sugar, voted for the establishment of a naval department, and favored appropriating the funds necessary for the completion of three United States frigates.⁸⁰ This record indicates that Grove desired to see American trade protected and the seas secured. It is also significant that one of Grove's closest friends and his most trusted correspondent was James Hogg, a prominent Fayetteville merchant. His friendship with Hogg is further evidence that Grove, while himself not a merchant, was linked to those who made their living through commerce.

The Richmond to which John Marshall came after the Revolutionary War was also a town which thrived on trade. According to Samuel Mordecai,

⁷⁸William Barry Grove to John Steele, June 7, 1799, Steele Papers, 2: 169.

⁷⁹William Barry Grove to Thomas Jefferson, April 12, 1792, "Unpublished Letters of North Carolinians to Thomas Jefferson," ed. Elizabeth McPherson, North Carolina Historical Review XII (1935): 262.

⁸⁰Battle, p. 9.

in his history of Richmond published in 1860, the city was one of the major commercial centers of Virginia. It provided an outlet for "deer and bear skins, furs, ginseng, snake root" and other commodities brought from the western part of the state. In Richmond, as in Fayetteville, British merchants "had the monopoly of trade" and "consumed the substance of all that came within their grasp."⁸¹

When the British harassment of American shipping began in the early 1790's, merchant communities such as Fayetteville and Richmond were among the areas hardest hit by the interruption of trade. The attacks coupled with the domination of trade by British merchants served to make the majority of citizens, both Federalists and Republicans, violently anti-English.⁸² When the French began their wars of revolution throughout Europe, coastal merchants as well as inland and country traders in the South hoped the French forces could provide an important check upon the British and perhaps limit their impact on American commerce. Such reactions were especially prominent in and around Charleston where one Federalist merchant remarked that it was his wish that France bring Britain "to her senses."⁸³

Although Grove and Marshall were not merchants, they could not have been immune to the attitudes and opinions of the southern commercial interests. As representatives and members of mercantile environments,

⁸¹Samuel Mordecai, Richmond in By-Gone Days (Richmond: Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1860), pp. 38-39.

⁸²Rose, p. 109.

⁸³Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Thomas Pinckney, March 29, 1794, quoted in Rose, p. 108.

they must have shared in the belief that the French wars could eventually help American trade. This notion was probably one of the key reasons they continued to lend support to the French nation even after the revolution turned violent and appeared to be unrestrained.

An Almost Non-Partisan Federalism

If those southern Federalists opposed to the French Revolution can be characterized as staunch Federalists and the moderates as temperate Federalists, then Grove and Marshall must be described as party members who adhered to an even less distinct Federalist ideology and who, at times, appeared to be almost non-partisan politicians. At first glance, such an assessment seems odd. Both were among the strongest defenders of the Jay Treaty and both feared the effects of political division upon the security of the United States. However, an examination of other aspects of their careers indicates that there were some differences between the Federalism of Marshall and Grove and that of the other seven southern Federalists.

Marshall seldom attended Federalist meetings commenting to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney that he wished to remain "absolutely withdrawn from the busy circles in which politics are discussed."⁸⁴ He was not inclined to contribute to Federalist journals because he did not like his opinions "appearing in print."⁸⁵ In 1800, although he had "insuperable objections" to Jefferson, Marshall refused to support Aaron Burr.⁸⁶ In 1794, when

⁸⁴John Marshall to C.C. Pinckney, September 21, 1808, "John Marshall on the French Revolution and on American Politics," ed. Jack L. Cross, William and Mary Quarterly XII (1955): 648.

⁸⁵Marshall quoted in Fischer, p. 381 ⁸⁶Ibid.

Jefferson resigned from the cabinet and some hard-line southern Federalists were blaming the problems of the nation upon the "members from Virginia," Grove remarked that Jefferson was "no anarchy man--no Demagogue of the mob--But he is for a plain Government and Adminisn. [sic] agreeably to the Principles and form of our Political association and Republican form of Government."⁸⁷

This non-partisan Federalism appears to have been of great advantage to the two. Both were among the few Federalists who continued to serve in the national government after 1800. Grove served in the Congress until 1803 and Marshall occupied a post as a Supreme Court justice until his death in 1835. In order to be elected after 1800, Grove would of necessity have been more moderate in his opinions. Marshall, although appointed to his post by John Adams, faced the prospect of impeachment under several Republican administrations. Their longevity in office is further evidence of their less radical Federalism.

Given the nature of their Federalist ideology, the opinions and political careers of Grove and Marshall bear out the ideas of Richard Buel. As "softer" Federalists, the two lent support to France as an extension of their almost non-partisan beliefs. Their views became decidedly anti-French only after general public opinion had turned against the revolution. Marshall and Grove were at the top of a well-defined scale which has as its base hard-line Federalists vehement in their opposition to the movement followed by temperate Federalists more moderate in their attitudes.

⁸⁷William Barry Grove to James Hogg, April 3, 1794, Battle, p. 94.

With the completion of this assessment of some of the reasons for the split among southern Federalists on the French issue, it is evident that the most important factors in determining their opinions were social status, occupation, ties to Britain or to the Republican party, and the overall nature of each politician's Federalism. A southern Federalist who strongly opposed the French Revolution was likely to be a planter with a well-established family background and some personal ties to Britain; or as in the case of Daniel Morgan, he may have been a military hero who became so imbued with the national government that he supported it against all threats.

Those southern Federalists more moderate in their opinions were possessed of a more temperate Federalism. They were members of solid families, but not of the high aristocracy. More than likely they made their living as lawyers, gentlemen farmers, small planters, or country merchants. Some had definite ties to the Republican party.

Finally southern Federalists supportive of the French may have had a background similar to the moderates or have come from even less aristocratic roots. They often were linked to merchants or represented commercial regions. Their Federalism was of an even milder strain than that of the moderates and they held political office after 1800.

CHAPTER V

SOME CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON SOUTHERN FEDERALISM

The Decline of the Party

Whether they were merchants, planters, gentlemen farmers, or lawyers, Federalists south of the Potomac shared one important trait. Each was a member of a coalition destined for extinction. With Jefferson's victory in the election of 1800, the Republican party established itself as the dominant force in American politics, a position it would not relinquish for a quarter century. The decline of Federalism during the 1800's was, at least in some measure, triggered by the resolution of the French crisis.

In 1797 and 1798, southern Federalists enjoyed unprecedented popularity. The growing hostilities between the United States and France and the rebuffs issued by the French government during the XYZ affair made the nation extremely unpopular with the American public. War with the French appeared imminent and the Federalist insistence upon military preparedness garnered much support in the South and elsewhere. The congressional election of 1798 brought "new power" to the Federalists and they sought to use their strength to solidify their hold upon the national government and to step up their campaign against France.¹

¹Lisle A. Rose, Prologue to Democracy (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), p. 166.

At the core of the party's effort to solidify its hold on the government were several measures passed in 1798. One provided for the creation of a provisional army, while the others, collectively known as the Alien and Sedition Acts, barred foreigners from governmental office and provided for the punishment of anyone critical of the administration's policies. On the surface, the measures seemed harmless enough. An army was needed during the height of the war fever and the suppression of dissent might also be necessary for a nation on the verge of armed conflict. For the Federalists, however, each measure had another purpose. A provisional army would not only help to secure the nation against France, but could also be used to keep the masses in check. It could effectively prevent revolts similar to the Whiskey Rebellion from threatening the national government. The Alien and Sedition Acts could easily be turned on the opposing Republican faction and help to insure the longevity of the Federalists. Conceived as aids to party strength, both the army and the Acts soon caused severe problems for the Federalist coalition.²

To protest the laws, Jefferson and Madison turned to the state legislatures. In Virginia and Kentucky, resolutions were passed declaring the Alien and Sedition Acts unconstitutional.³ Although appeals to other states for similar condemnations were not successful, the efforts of the Republicans aroused public opinion against the policies. The citizenry became even further agitated in 1799 when Adams' final efforts at conciliation brought about a peaceful adjustment to the

²Alexander DeConde, The Quasi-War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 194-96.

³Ibid.

hostilities between the United States and France. In the new atmosphere of tranquility, the Federalist war program was attacked as "expensive, oppressive, and unnecessary."⁴

The new peace compounded Federalist problems by creating a split in the party's leadership. Certain "High Federalists" with attitudes similar to those of Ralph Izard and Jacob Read, had opposed Adams efforts at negotiation, believing military preparedness and even war to be policies which would provide for the security of the country and keep the party in power. More moderate "Adams Federalists," many of whom shared ideals comparable to those of southerners sympathetic to the French movement, believed the president's policy to be sound and had hoped for the success of the mission. As the election of 1800 approached, the High Federalists, under the leadership of Alexander Hamilton, sought to unseat Adams by promoting Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina for the Presidency.⁵

Pinckney's candidacy divided the Federalists, but in the South his impact was less than Hamilton intended. Pinckney drew significant support in his native state, but most southern Federalists viewed the election of 1800 as a contest between the incumbent and his Republican challenger. Edward Carrington described the southern situation to Hamilton in the following manner: "there is less of Pinckney than you would imagine. The Mass of sentiment seems to be divided between Adams

⁴James H. Broussard, The Southern Federalists 1800-1816 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), p. 17.

⁵Ibid.

and Jefferson."⁶ As the conflict took shape, most southern Federalists defended the war program of the Adams administration. Federalist newspapers in the region described the provisional army as "merely a few soldiers necessary for the defense against French insult and attack." The Alien and Sedition Acts they passed off as policies essential to the preservation of the government and measures which would limit the "blatant lie maliciously spread."⁷

However, a large segment of the general public remained unconvinced of the validity of the army and the Acts. The peace and the split within their ranks were disastrous for the Federalists. Jefferson ascended to the Presidency and the southern wing of the party suffered important setbacks. Jacob Read lost his Senate seat to the Republican John C. Calhoun and John Marshall, appointed by Adams as Secretary of State, was replaced in the House by a member of the Jeffersonian party.⁸

At first, the new president seemed willing to pursue a moderate course in his appointments and Federalists hoped they would not be totally barred from office. It soon became apparent, however, that Jefferson's primary goal was the creation of a firm Republican majority. Kept from appointed positions by what William Barry Grove described as Jefferson's "machiavellian policy to get at the head of American affairs," the southern Federalists were forced to assume the role of an opposing faction and began to fade from American politics.⁹

⁶Edward Carrington to Alexander Hamilton, August 30, 1800, quoted in Broussard, p. 19.

⁷Broussard, p. 19. ⁸Rose, p. 282.

⁹William Barry Grove to James Hogg, March 14, 1801, "Letters of William Barry Grove," in Henry M. Wagstaff, Federalism in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 100.

For the next sixteen years, the party took issue with virtually every Republican policy. From 1801 until 1804, they opposed Jefferson's effort to defeat the Barbary pirates. In 1805, Federalists in the South and throughout the nation protested his attempts to acquire western Florida. When the Napoleonic wars again created turmoil between Britain and France, the Federalists reaffirmed their belief in an alliance with the English. When, in 1807, Jefferson placed his famous embargo upon all foreign trade, the southern Federalists were quick to criticize the economic effects of Jefferson's policy. During Madison's administration, they maintained their pro-British stand and by the time war broke out in 1812, they had written and voted so consistently against war that their patriotism was suspect. After the Hartford Convention in 1815, Federalism became associated with treason and in the South, it was soon a forgotten ideology swept aside by the peace with England and the coming of Monroe's Era of Good Feeling.¹⁰

For most of the southern Federalists used in this study, the end came much sooner. Shortly after Jefferson's election, Edward Carrington lost his position as U.S. Marshal and Collector of Revenue. John Steele resigned his post as Comptroller of the Treasury in 1802, the same year in which Rutledge lost his seat in the House of Representatives.¹¹ William Barry Grove was defeated in 1803, leaving John Marshall, in his

¹⁰The premier work concerning the Federalist party in the South after 1800 is James H. Broussard's The Southern Federalists 1800-1816. His book details the breakup of the party and its role as an opposing faction. This brief summary of the Federalists' reactions after 1800 was taken from chapters six through ten.

¹¹It is important to note that John Steele resigned against Jefferson's wishes. Nevertheless, his retirement was based upon the belief that his party had no future.

position on the Supreme Court, as the only one of the nine to survive in the national government for any significant length of time. As their party declined, the southerners mourned its loss of power and issued prophecies of doom for the nation. In 1805, Steele referred to the Federalists as "having been."¹² Marshall lamented that the "voice of the minority is lost."¹³ William R. Davie, who in 1799 helped to negotiate the peace which sealed the fate of his party, commented that the future of the nation was so dark that it "would never again see one clear day: and the highest graduation of our happiness will be marked by the observation: 'there are flying clouds.'"¹⁴

A Party Based On Nationalism

The dissimilarities evident in the attitudes of the southern Federalists and the relatively short life of the faction poses some important questions regarding the basic nature of Federalism in the South. Were the southerners members of a true political party which espoused a distinct ideology? Did that ideology bind them to other Federalists? What forces drove southern politicians into the Federalist camp? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to examine the opinions of several historians who have attempted to explain the nature of Federalism in the South and in the nation as a whole. Through

¹²John Steele to Nathaniel Macon, January 17, 1805, The Papers of John Steele, 2 vols., ed. Henry M. Wagstaff (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1924), 1: 445.

¹³John Marshall to C.C. Pinckney, September 21, 1808, "John Marshall on the French Revolution and on American Politics," ed. Jack L. Cross, William and Mary Quarterly XII (1955): 648.

¹⁴William R. Davie to John Steele, January 7, 1802, Letters of Nathaniel Macon, John Steele, and William Barry Grove, ed. Kemp P. Battle (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1902), p. 50.

an application of their opinions to the nine leaders from Virginia and the Carolinas, it is possible to gain some understanding of the overall nature of southern Federalism.

According to William Nesbit Chambers, there are four characteristics which distinguish a true political party. They are: 1) structure, defined as "a pattern of stable connections or relations between leaders at the center of government and lesser leaders"; 2) function, "nominating candidates in the electoral arena"; 3) stability and support coming from a "wide range of groups" and 4) "a distinguishable set of perspectives or ideology with emotional overtones."¹⁵ Chambers' criteria are useful in establishing the southern Federalists as members of a true political party.

The differences between the opinions of the southerners and those generally ascribed to the national Federalist leadership seem to indicate that the Federalists as a whole and particularly the southern wing lacked structure. However, in spite of the differences, the southern Federalists were closely associated with party members at "the center of government." Federalists in all three states corresponded frequently with Hamilton and Washington, looking to them for guidance when responding to issues of major consequence. Daniel Morgan was interested to know "the old horse's" views on the Jay Treaty, and John Steele, one of the moderate southerners, relied upon Hamilton's "skillful pilotage" to guide the "young government." While their responses to key issues may have been determined in part by state and local considerations, southern Federalists were keenly aware that the backbone of their order was the national leadership.

¹⁵William Nesbit Chambers, Political Parties in a New Nation 1776-1809 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 44-48, passim.

The concept of party function is more elusive. Before 1800, nearly all Federalists rejected the practices of campaigning and electioneering.¹⁶ Even so, they were most concerned that their candidates be chosen to serve in the national government. Thomas Pinckney promoted the young Rutledge as "a good Federalist."¹⁷ Ralph Izard constantly urged his constituents to elect "good men" to national office. In appointing John Steele, Washington was careful to note that Steele exhibited "the Integrity" the president deemed necessary for governmental service. Throughout the 1790's, southern Federalists appear to have had at least some idea of what made a "Federalist" candidate and worked to see that such men occupied places in what Chambers described as "the electoral arena."

Chambers' third characteristic easily applies to the southern order. Gentlemen farmers, lawyers, planters, merchants, and soldiers were all part of the coalition. It drew its membership from a variety of geographic regions stretching from western Virginia to the South Carolina lowcountry. Southern Federalism attracted politicians of all ages, including retired military heroes like Daniel Morgan and young aristocrats such as John Rutledge, Jr., and William Barry Grove. The most obvious trait of the faction was diversity. Its support did indeed come from a "wide range of groups."

¹⁶This is pointed out by David Hackett Fischer in The Revolution of American Conservatism. Fischer's ideas are explored later in this chapter.

¹⁷Thomas Pinckney, quoted in Elizabeth Cometti, "John Rutledge, Jr., Federalist," Journal of Southern History, XIII (1947): 188.

Although important in establishing the base of support for the faction, the heterogeneity of the southern Federalists creates a problem in defining their ideology. Chambers argues that Federalists throughout the nation developed an emotional set of beliefs in 1793 and 1794 when they undertook the defense of Washington's neutrality policy and the Jay Treaty.¹⁸ Such a notion is not easily applied to the more diverse southern wing. A significant number of the party's southern adherents at first opposed the Jay Treaty. Even their reactions to the larger French question were not uniform. What then was the southern Federalist ideology?

In his study of Massachusetts Federalism, James M. Banner concluded that regardless of their positions in the social structure, Federalists in that state all exhibited a strong belief in the need for order within society.¹⁹ Southern Federalists expressed a similar need. Izard and Read liked the orderly structure of the plantation and wished to preserve the status quo with a government controlled by the aristocracy. Daniel Morgan was almost paranoid in his fears of movements such as the Whiskey Rebellion which could disrupt the order established after the Revolutionary War. Moderate southern Federalists such as John Steele feared the assumption bill could destroy the early credibility of the new government and disliked the factionalism created by the debate over the Jay Treaty. Even John Marshall, while supportive of the French Revolution, was quick to take up his pen as Aristides to defend and promote order within Washington's administration.

¹⁸Chambers, p. 47.

¹⁹James M. Banner, To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), p. 132.

This inherent desire for stability in society and government made the southern Federalist ideology one of flagrant nationalism and concern for the federal institutions. When the Jay Treaty threatened serious division within the country's leadership, most of the southerners put aside their objections and defended the agreement. As France became a serious threat during the latter portion of the decade, they abandoned their pro-French attitudes in favor of Adams' war program. Even Grove and Marshall, while remaining supportive of France longer than the others, were careful to maintain and affirm their allegiance to the American state. In the election of 1800, most southern Federalists staunchly defended the president's policies. Federalists in the South did not always readily adopt the position of the national government, but when it was threatened by factionalism, they lent it almost unqualified support. This concern for order and the preservation of the national institutions was the glue which held the coalition together as a part of a true political party.

Perhaps it was this ideology which enabled the southern wing of the party to maintain its relatively close association with the northern Federalists. In retrospect, their nationalism appears to be one of the most important traits they held in common with their northern counterparts. Like William R. Davie, Massachusetts Federalist Fisher Ames saw "clouds and thick darkness in our horizon" after 1800 and feared that the Republicans would use the state governments "like batteries against the U.S. Govt."²⁰ Rufus King of New York, in a manner similar to John

²⁰Fisher Ames to Rufus King, June 12, 1799, quoted in Winfred E.A. Bernhard, Fisher Ames; Federalist and Statesman 1758-1808 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 316-17.

Marshall, viewed Genet's privateering efforts as "offensive to the dignity and sovereignty of the nation as well as humiliating and injurious [sic] to its constituted authorities."²¹

Their unyielding faith in the national government forced Federalists both north and south of the Potomac to practice negative politics or the politics of control. Throughout the 1790's, they were quick to denounce any trend which threatened their hold on the political structure. Whether it appeared in the form of objection to the Jay Treaty, the Whiskey Rebellion, or as a "Virginia Republic with Jefferson at its head," dissent was something to be rooted out and destroyed.

To a large extent, it was this mentality which led to the party's breakup in the South and elsewhere. The Republican ascendancy in 1800 proved that there could be a peaceful change in leadership and that factionalism and dissent were not necessarily evils which would destroy the nation. Contrary to Davie's prediction, the nation did again manage to "see one clear day." It was not only the end of the French crisis which signalled the end of Federalism, but the removal of that problem and the other threats to the national government which triggered the decline of the party.

What forces drew such a diverse group of southerners to a party based on the principles of order and flagrant nationalism? One possible explanation is offered by Richard Buel. In his book, Securing the Revolution, Buel asserted that politicians who feared the possible repercussions of democracy were apt to be Federalists. It is his contention that most of the party's adherents believed their own lives and careers

²¹Rufus King quoted in Robert Ernst, Rufus King, American Federalist (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 191.

to be threatened by republican government. In their opinion, the duties of state should be entrusted to those of wealth and birth. The masses, if imbued with blatantly democratic ideals, could dislodge the best men from their rightful positions in the political structure. According to Buel, Federalism became "the choice of those who felt insecure as leaders."²²

Buel's thesis of insecurity is typified by the reactions of Ralph Izard and Jacob Read. During the 1790's, they believed their very survival as politicians and community leaders to be at stake. Izard and Read were quick to criticize the democratic doctrines of the French and both detested the Virginia Republicans who promoted the "scandalous business of disruption." They continually stressed the need to elect "good men" and classified all others as "anarchists" and "jacobins." When the actions of the French appeared to be the prelude to a slave insurrection, Izard and Read became caught up in the fear that unchecked democracy could destroy their economic well-being. Their reactions paint a picture of leaders who, even though they held positions of power, believed themselves to be walking a thin line between deference and destruction. It is more than reasonable to assume that they were attracted to Federalism because they feared the effects of democracy run amuck.

Buel's ideas can also be applied to Daniel Morgan. Like Izard and Read, he was distrustful of the French dogma and even expressed some apprehension of a slave revolt. On the whole, however, Morgan's insecurity was of a different sort. He was less concerned for his own position

²² Richard Buel, Securing the Revolution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), p. 85.

than for that of the nation itself. Having fought to establish the new government, Morgan wished to see it endure and therefore became fearful of the masses. He may not have been an insecure leader in the same sense as Izard and Read, but he did believe himself to be a citizen of an insecure nation, threatened on all sides by those who possessed a "wicked design for anarchy."

It is possible to argue that Buel's ideas can be used to describe the Federalist attachments of the remaining six southerners. All eventually came to fear and distrust the French and during the middle and latter 1790's, most were more than willing to criticize the policies of the Republicans. There are, however, certain problems with such an interpretation. The other southern Federalists were much more comfortable with democracy than were Morgan, Izard, and Read. At least for a time, they could identify with the ideology of the French. Most were not members of the high aristocracy and at times even expressed faith in the ability of the people. At some point in their careers, several were either linked to or a part of the Republican faction. They must have been drawn to the party out of some other concern.

According to James H. Broussard, that concern may have been the French nation itself. In his recent monograph, The Southern Federalists 1800-1816, Broussard states that the common denominator among the party's southern membership was a shared fear of France. As evidence to support his thesis, he notes that Federalist policies and politicians were most popular when war with France seemed inevitable and surmises that it was this tenet of their thought which held the southern Federalists intact. Broussard outlines his argument in the following manner:

In the years just before 1800, when France was the chief concern of American politics and statecraft, the Federalist party was at its

peak of southern popularity. After 1806, the French again began to seem dangerous and Federalism gained at the polls reaching a secondary peak during the War of 1812, when fear of being tied to the French kite was again widespread. No sooner did Napoleon fall in 1815, than the party began its decline to extinction. It was not the end of the American war with England, but the end of the long European war and the removal of France as a possible danger to America that foretold the disintegration of the Federalist party in the South.²³

Although Broussard's work primarily deals with the decline of the party after 1800, his thesis has some important implications for the interpretation of southern Federalism before that year. A fear of France did eventually become a part of the mentality of every Federalist used in this study. As noted earlier, the party's defeat in 1800 can, in part, be linked to the resolution of the French problem. Such evidence indicates that the French question may indeed have been one factor which drew southerners into the Federalist party.

In spite of this evidence, however, there are problems with Broussard's theory. Buel's ideas indicate that for some southern Federalists, a fear of France was simply a sidelight of their overall insecurity as leaders of a democratic society. Others, such as John Marshall and William Barry Grove, did not begin to abandon their affinity for France until 1797, but supported the Federalist stance on the Jay Treaty. While every Federalist politician at some point expressed a fear of France, the very nature of their attitudes during the 1790's precludes their being lumped together as victims of Francophobia.

Broussard's thesis works best when used to explain the mentality of moderate southern Federalists including John Steele, John Rutledge, Jr.,

²³Broussard, pp. 402-03.

Samuel Johnston, and Edward Carrington. These men did not become securely linked to the party until the middle of the decade. Prior to that time, each of them had problems accepting Federalist positions on assumption and the Jay Treaty. It was only when the French nation reacted violently to the Jay mission and became a military threat to the United States that they became firm Federalists. Broussard's observation is important, but its applicability is restricted to the more moderate members of the party.

A final thesis useful in the interpretation of southern Federalism is that of David Hackett Fischer. In his work, The Revolution of American Conservatism, Fischer classifies the party's adherents as either "Federalists of the old school," born between 1720 and 1760, or "transitional and young Federalists," born in 1760 or after that year. According to Fischer, all Federalists shared elitist ideals, believing that the aristocracy should control the government. However, their age differences forced them to adopt different styles. Older Federalists were able to establish themselves as prominent national politicians during the early 1790's, before there was a significant challenge from the Republican faction. When the party system became better defined and they were threatened with defeat at the hands of Jefferson's party, they simply retired into private life and relinquished their positions in the political structure. As younger politicians, the transitional and young Federalists could not afford to retire. Their careers were not yet established and they were not able to re-enter private life. As democratic ideals came to dominate the electorate, the transitional and young Federalists were forced to disguise their elitism and court public

opinion in order to win the support of the citizenry and secure re-election over their Republican challengers.²⁴

Fischer's ideas are especially helpful in understanding the forces which prompted John Marshall and William Barry Grove to join the Federalist ranks. He categorizes both as transitional figures, indicating that their opinions would have been more temperate than those of the other seven. Their decidedly pro-French attitudes may have been a part of an effort to satisfy a pro-French public and secure election after 1800.

With the exception of John Rutledge, Jr., Fischer classifies the remaining Federalists as members of the old school and there are several problems with his interpretation. While Izard and Read were flagrantly elitist, the moderates were more comfortable with democracy and did not become firm Federalists until the middle of the decade. Yet all were replaced by Republicans. John Rutledge, Jr., classified as a young Federalist, did not follow the same pattern as Grove and Marshall. Instead, he became increasingly conservative after his election to national office. During and after 1797, he was violently anti-French, but was re-elected to Congress in 1798 and again in 1800. His shift to a hard-line stance and his ability to remain in the government is another important contradiction to Fischer's ideas.

This examination and comparison of several theories pertinent to the first party system indicates that the forces which motivated southerners to support Federalism were almost as diverse as the politicians

²⁴David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), passim.

themselves. Some came to the party out of elitism and insecurity, others out of their developing fears of France, and still others probably found the party attractive because they adhered to elitist ideals in an increasingly democratic society.

In spite of its diversity, the Federalist party survived and prospered in the southern states until 1800. Its survival hinged on the one ideological thread common to each southern Federalist: an overriding concern for the preservation of the national government. It was this trait that enabled the party to put aside local considerations and coalesce around the policies of Washington and Adams when their administrations were threatened by dissent. And, ironically, it was this staunch nationalism which led to the party's decline and eventual demise after the election of Thomas Jefferson.

The Significance of the Southern Federalists

While southern Federalists were part of a true political party and shared the nationalistic ideology of their northern counterparts, this study also reveals at least three characteristics of southern Federalism which have important implications for any interpretation of the first party system. First, it is incorrect to classify all members of the Federalist party as hard-line opponents of the French Revolution. In the South, that attitude was prominent among some of the membership, but it was not typical of every Federalist. The southern faction was composed of leaders from different occupations and social strata and to a large extent, a southern Federalist's attitude toward France was the result of his own background.

Secondly, every southern party member was not possessed of elitist values. A typical southern Federalist may have been a planter,

merchant, lawyer, retired military hero, or farmer. He was not necessarily a member of the high aristocracy nor did he absolutely dismiss democratic ideology. He may have even been associated with or in some manner linked to the Republican faction. It was not elitism, but rather a nationalistic ideology which, for a variety of reasons, drew southerners into the Federalist camp.

Finally, the pattern established in chapter four refutes one simplistic interpretation of the first party alignments. It has often been asserted that the Federalist party was strong in New England because of that region's commercial interests. In its simplest form, this argument states that New England merchants supported the party because it offered a sound financial structure and promoted close relations with England which insured continuing commercial ties. The logical extension of this interpretation is that the South was Republican because the Jeffersonian party espoused agrarian interests.²⁵

Although such an assertion is obviously an oversimplification, the argument still persists. Richard Buel has offered the most recent effort to explain the sectionalism. According to Buel, the leaders of southern society were more secure than those of the north because they could expand their agricultural holdings by acquiring new lands to the west and in this fashion insure that their positions in the landed aristocracy of the region would remain intact. In contrast, Buel writes, New England leaders were "so dependent upon commerce that they could not migrate without forfeiting economic power." Therefore, the northern

²⁵Buel, p. 83.

political leadership adhered to Federalism because the party centered upon elitism and the politics of control.²⁶

Chapter four of this thesis, however, points out that in the South, the party drew its most important support from large planters such as Jacob Read and Ralph Izard. These members of the agrarian aristocracy were the most vocal in denouncing the French Revolution and their reactions to other issues of the 1790's indicate that they were anything but secure in their leadership roles. Those Federalists who farmed smaller plots were more secure, but those party members most sympathetic to the French effort and most comfortable with democracy were the representatives of commercial interests. This pattern is a complete reversal of that offered by Richard Buel.

These three conclusions have important ramifications for future interpretations of the first party system. It may be necessary to rethink all Federalist attitudes regarding the French question. A close examination of northern Federalist opinion might reveal that New England Federalists expressed ideas similar to those of the southerners and that they too were influenced by their respective socio-economic backgrounds. Perhaps Federalists should no longer be categorized as an elitist political faction, but should instead be characterized as a party desirous of order and supportive of the national government as an agency to prevent disruption. Finally, the base of support for the party may have to be reconsidered. It should no longer be classified as a coalition dependent upon mercantile interests for its existence. It is more likely that it was composed of politicians of varying social classes, all of whom, for whatever reason, believed in the federal institutions.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 81-82.

While this study offers evidence which indicates that southern attitudes need to be taken into account in any interpretation of the early national period, it has only unveiled the opinions of a small segment of the party's southern affiliates. Indeed, as noted in chapter one, southern Federalists in general have suffered from a serious lack of scholarly attention. Except for the efforts of Rose and Broussard along with several articles, that wing of the party has been untouched by American historians. If the conclusions contained in this thesis are borne out by further study, the opinions of the southern Federalists may become critical to any understanding of the 1790's and America's first two political parties.

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