"The magic of the many that sets the world on fire" : Boston elites and urban political insurgents during the early nineteenth century.

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"THE MAGIC OF THE MANY THAT SETS THE WORLD ON FIRE": BOSTON ELITES AND URBAN POLITICAL INSURGENTS DURING THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

A Dissertation Presented
by
MATTHEW H. CROCKER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

September 1997
Department of History
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"The Magic of the Many Which Sets the World on Fire":
Boston Elites and Urban Political Insurgents During the Early Nineteenth Century

September 1997

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"The Magic of the Many Which Sets the World on Fire":
Boston Elites and Urban Political Insurgents During the Early Nineteenth Century is a broad analysis on social class and political culture in Boston and Massachusetts between 1800 and 1830. I have consciously focused on the political odyssey of congressman, Massachusetts legislator, and Boston's second mayor, Josiah Quincy, to investigate the political and cultural evolution of Boston during these three crucial decades. Quincy's political career--though central to the story--is utilized as a narrative hook that helps unveil the dramatic changes in the political and social culture that Massachusetts faced in between the first and second party systems.

During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, Massachusetts and Boston, in particular, faced a dramatic period of political, cultural, and economic transformation. At the beginning of the century, the
transformation. At the beginning of the century, the politics, economy, and culture of the state were controlled almost exclusively by a close-knit elite which ran roughshod over the ordinary citizenry. By the mid-1820s this elite faced an onslaught of serious challenges to its hegemony in Massachusetts. By 1823 the political arm of the elite, the Federalist Party, was gutted by a united lower-to-middling class electorate led by ex-Federalist and Brahmin, Josiah Quincy. This newly charged electorate refused to abide by the political standards of the past, resulting in the passing of the first party system.

This study investigates the emergence of a dramatically new sort of political culture while also providing an analysis of a highly popular caesarist who helped destroy the first party system in Massachusetts, but could not survive the advent of the second.
Historians of nineteenth-century Boston have consistently viewed the city as a static fortress of elite conservatism—truly a protected "city upon the hill." Those interested in elite-class studies invariably turn to Boston's patricians as a premier example of an economic, cultural and political hegemonic class that ruled over a region with oligarchical power. Only the historiography on Southern slaveholding elites can compete in sheer volume with the work done on Boston's "Brahmins" and their class structure.¹

Though mostly interested in economic and/or cultural dominance, Frederic Cople Jaher, Edward Pessen, Ronald Story, and Betty G. Farrell among others, assert that Boston's nineteenth-century cultural and economic elite held sway over the politics of Massachusetts. Established cultural and economic institutions intertwined with the political structures of the state, giving a unified Boston patriciate nearly complete control over the Bay State. Inextricably bound together not only by cultural, political and economic institutional ties, but reinforced by direct familial allegiances, Boston's elite posed a sustained and unified front against the various forces of democratization that threatened its hegemony. Much like the slaveholding elite, Boston's Brahmins embraced a unique brand of paternalism as the philosophical justification for their
dominance. Built by "many of our wealthiest and most liberal merchants," Massachusetts General Hospital cured Boston's sick. The director of the privately funded Perkins Institution for the Blind claimed he could teach "an oyster" to read. Armed with a sense of noblesse oblige, Boston's nineteenth-century patricians consolidated and reinforced their economic, cultural and political power—unified in their common purpose and right to lead as a class. As Frederic Cople Jaher argues, "between 1800-1860, [a] multi-functional upper-class, by dominating the foremost local business establishments, political organizations and cultural and philanthropic institutions, assumed the role of a ruling elite." In the political realm, it is argued that despite nineteenth-century party mutations and restructuring, Boston's ruling elite maintained unremitting political solidarity in the face of growing political turbulence during the first half of the nineteenth-century. In this sense, students of Boston's elite class structure have formed an incomplete and static model that neglects the complexity of antebellum Boston politics while ignoring how political disruptions affected the solidarity of the elite class structure in Boston. The limited geographic space imposed by the Shawmut peninsula, despite the city's nineteenth-century fill-in projects, compelled the commingling of Boston's various classes. As much as
they may have wanted to, the city's elite did not live in social isolation. The effects of urban life during the early nineteenth-century bred counter-hegemonic thought that directly affected the political culture of Boston.

Ronald Formisano, John Brooke, Paul Goodman, John R. Mulkern, and others interested in popular political confrontations with this economic, cultural and political elite focus on challenges to the Bay State's established order. Tracing the successes and failures of antebellum Massachusetts political insurgents, these historians concentrate on popular forays into the state's political culture. Despite heated historiographical debate over ethnocultural vs. sectional/local vs. national causation for the break-up of established party systems, these studies greatly expand our understanding of how nineteenth-century party systems changed in Massachusetts over time. Yet they too often fall victim to the static model of Boston elite hegemony--all too easily associating Federalist/Whig/Republican political interests with the interests of Boston's upper class. Massachusetts' most adroit political historian, Ronald Formisano, concedes "[t]he nerve center of maritime Massachusetts, Boston, was Federal[ist]. Its upper classes were predominantly so...." Demonstrating the alliance between elite economic interests and Federalist party affiliation, Formisano resolves that the Bay State's coastal region "boasted 'many families of
wealth and culture,' including the Cabots, Lees and Thorndikes, who sat in the highest Federal[ist] councils. Its social hierarchy was well marked and highly cohesive." Despite an analysis demonstrating Massachusetts Whiggery's broad social construction, in the end, Formisano succumbs: "The Whig Party, it is not farfetched to say, was the instrument of this [Brahmin] elite."6

Drawing from both these historiographical approaches, I hope to expand dominant notions of elite-class hegemony, while also broadening our understanding of popular political urban insurgency movements. In studying the political career of patrician Josiah Quincy, it became apparent that many assumptions historians placed on elites and particularly the "Brahmins," do not hold together after a close reading of the primary material. In particular, the presumption of a static and unified nineteenth-century Boston elite is vitiated by the evidence in the rich papers and manuscripts of the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Antiquarian Society. Perhaps, Boston's historians had too easily accepted the mythology of Brahmin apologists such as Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Adams, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Cleveland Amory, Samuel Eliot Morison and a myriad of other upper-class Bostonians. The alternative newspapers of Boston--the New England Galaxy, the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, the Debtor's Journal, the Independent Bostonian and many others, as well as the
diaries and correspondence of elites, demonstrates political solidarity among Boston patricians proved difficult to maintain when it came to local and state politics. At times, any form of cohesion was impossible.

Illustrative of the fragility and frailties in elite-class solidarity was the turbulent relationship between Brahmins Harrison Gray Otis and Josiah Quincy. Both men are usually viewed by historians as political and class allies, yet their political relationship was at best uneasy and often broke apart, reflecting larger social divisions within Boston's elite class structure. Otis and Quincy also were not connected financially. In fact, during the early-nineteenth-century, while Otis became heavily invested in Massachusetts's early manufacturing industry, Josiah Quincy strongly railed against New England money being funneled away from merchant trade and into manufacturing in the factory towns of Waltham and Lowell.

This is not to say that in the eyes of ordinary citizens there was not obvious class divisions between the Quincy family and the vast majority of Bostonians. Without question the Quincy's were viewed as wealthy gentry. Nevertheless the political support they garnered among Bostonians who had shed traditional notions of deference, indicated that the electorate had formed significant distinctions between elites like the Quincy family and those epitomized by Harrison Gray Otis. By making such
distinctions and then articulating them through the electoral process, early nineteenth-century Bostonians claimed a significant role in controlling their destinies.

Although the established elite in Boston was perhaps more entrenched socially, economically, institutionally, and politically than in other northern cities, by 1820 popular challenges to its authority emerged. Paradoxically, one of Boston's oldest and most respectable elite families accelerated this political challenge. Under such circumstances it is difficult to abide by the provincial mythology of Boston as the Brahmin's cocoon-like "city upon the hill." By 1820, those who could claim stewardship of the hub were not only composed of the town's "first families," but also contained people from the lower-to-middling orders. For these "other Bostonians," allegiance with politically astute Brahmins like Josiah Quincy succeeded in destroying the traditional shackles of class deference, exposing the ignorance and weakness of the established "standing order." Boston became a much more democratic city because of these innovative intra-class relationships.


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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION:
THE SETTING FOR INSURGENCY

"...nothing is so unequal as equality."  
-- Samuel Lyman, 1800

"...the duped and deluded mob whose hosannas and  
excrations are as much mechanical and responsive as  
the pipes of an organ."  
-- Harrison Gray Otis, 1801

No other political organization more overtly  
epitomized and championed Massachusetts's patrician class  
than the Federalist party. Unlike its structure elsewhere,  
Boston Federalism developed a highly sophisticated and  
effective machine that promoted, reinforced and maintained  
what Ronald Formisano identifies as "deferential-  
participant politics." While in other states the party  
atrophied after the "treason" of the Hartford Convention,  
Federalism's political infrastructure in Massachusetts  
forestalled its demise and provided the party an unusually  
long and somewhat anachronistic life. Until the early  
1820s, ordinary voters continued to participate in a  
variety of elections, following the lead of their cultural  
and economic "betters"--voting, often, against their own  
interests. Although as early as 1814, Federalism on the  
national level was dead and buried, in the Massachusetts  
the party continued to enjoy significant appeal and  
experienced a rebirth of sorts in its opposition to the  
Missouri Compromise. Yet the party's "Indian Summer," as
historian Samuel Eliot Morison once described it, was short lived.¹ By 1822 Federalism had lost the city of Boston, and with it the party's last bastion. The decisive blow, ironically, occurred not only in the party's most loyal stronghold of Boston, but was delivered by ranking members of both the party leadership and the Boston patriciate.

During the city's first mayoral race in 1822, a curious nonpartisan coalition formed between estranged members of the Boston Federalist elite and a diverse urban electorate, containing a majority membership of poor-to-middling Bostonians. This unconventional fusion mustered the energy to cause the collapse of Federalism in Boston, thereby signaling the party's final demise.² The party disloyalty shown by some of the Boston elite in 1822 also indicated that the normative socio-political precepts in Boston had changed. No longer could Federalism bank on Boston's elite to follow in lock-step. In this sense, the political events that began in the early 1820s transcends conventional political history and illuminates a cultural crisis among Boston's once homogenous elite. These activities expose the precariousness of an elite class structure that has traditionally been seen as one of the most durable and unified political and economic structures of its kind in America.³

The most visible member of this insurgency in Boston was patrician Josiah Quincy. Quincy was a scion of Boston
wealth and lineage. John Adams once described him as "a rare instance of hereditary eloquence and ingenuity in the fourth generation....He comes into life with every advantage of family, fortune and education." A graduate of Andover and Harvard, and buttressed with a hefty inheritance in real estate, he chose a life in politics, serving in the U.S. House as a reactionary Federalist for most of his early adulthood. Yet, in his first run for mayor Quincy dramatically broke with his party and led an insurgent campaign that resulted in the uprooting of Federalist hegemony in Boston. This was hardly the presumed role of a man whom Boston patrician and diplomat, John Lothrop Motley hailed as "the head of the Brahmins of America."

As the popular mayor of Boston for six years between 1823 and 1829, Quincy ushered in a new form of politics that centered almost solely around himself. Operating much like future Boston political impresario and mayor James Michael Curley, Quincy remained unfailingly confident in his right and ability to consolidate municipal power within the Mayor's office. He presided over a rambunctious assortment of bristling political factions, while promoting a wide array of public service activities that consistently satisfied a general electorate that annually re-elected him. Ever the individualist, and seemingly above the narrowness of party and class loyalty, Quincy manipulated,
cajoled and appeased Boston's variegated political forces into acceptance of his ambitious agenda of urban growth. More than any other factor, Quincy's appeal in Boston rested upon a cult of personality. The Quincy mayoralty was dictatorial as some have accused. Nevertheless, his rise to political power in Boston and his mayoralties should be viewed as a transitional phase that positively imbued ordinary Bostonians with a new sense of political empowerment and stability during a turbulent period of change and political dissent. Many factors combined to produce this moment of political transformation. Besides the men and their motivations, the historical setting was all-important.

Three years before Quincy made his first bid for the Mayor's office, depression hit the nation. What began in the cotton export markets of New Orleans and Charleston in the beginning of 1819 quickly spread east, causing financial panic and chaos in virtually every sector of the American economy. No region of the country was immune. Not even the strong economy of Boston, some two thousand miles away, withstood the tremors.

Cotton prices steadily rose after the War of 1812. British textile manufacturers, deprived of American cotton during the war, hankered for product and were willing to pay for it. Between 1815 and 1818 the price per pound of raw cotton in the export markets of the South nearly
doubled from 16.5 cents to 32.5. Running parallel to the remarkable increase in cotton prices, Northern controlled shipping rates quadrupled between 1817 and 1818. The cotton boom of the post-war years not only benefited established Southern cotton planters and Northern merchants, but also sparked the greed of speculators who gobbled up virgin cotton lands in the Southwest for resale at inflationary prices. Those who bought the speculator's land happily mortgaged themselves to the hilt to Northern bankers betting on the continued rise of the cotton market.

By 1818, English cotton importers found their market could no longer withstand the high price of American cotton and began tapping other sources for the staple crop. British manufacturers began importing East Indian cotton, nearly doubling its Far East importation between 1817 and 1818. The price of cotton in the South plummeted, taking with it the value of newly bought, underdeveloped producing land in the Southwest. The ambitious farmer who had recently bought land in the Southwest, saw property values plunge by 50 to 75% within one year. The same pound of cotton that had sold in foreign markets for 32.5 cents in 1818 went for less than 14.5 cents in 1819; and after the New Orleans or Charleston trading house got done with him, the actual planter only took home 9 cents per pound of cotton. Just as commercial shipping rates had followed
cotton's upward trend during the boom years, so did they fall during the panic. The maritime interest of New England had lost its primary customers on both sides of the Atlantic.⁹

The sea-board towns of Massachusetts were not the only areas hit by the depression. Fledgling manufacturers also felt the sting. The strict trade restrictions on British importation into the United States during the War of 1812 had served as a air-tight protective tariff for youthful American industries. Boston-financed industry developed during the war from an embryonic state into a viable and largely healthy toddler. With peace, Great Britain's burgeoning warehouses opened and flooded the American market, undercutting Massachusetts manufacturers. The protective tariffs imposed on British goods in 1816 proved ineffective against unscrupulous exporters with falsified documents. Custom agents were easily fooled or bought, rendering the tariffs ineffectual in defending home industry. A steady stream of British imports continued to deluge American ports.¹⁰

More close to home and directly affecting Boston's small merchants, jobbers, and importers was an ingenious new method of retailing conjured-up in the boardrooms of England's manufacturing headquarters. Not only would Britain manufacture finished products, it would now sell them directly to American consumers in open auction. A
full bellied ship would anchor in Boston harbor stock-piled with goods; word would spread on the street and its cargo would sell at the highest bidder to Boston's consumers. All local importers, jobbers and retailers were undercut by the public open bidding of the auctions. Although this clearly benefited Boston consumers, the system drained money out of American coastal cities and into the coffers of British industry. The auction system only further intensified the economic pressure Boston already faced due to the national depression.

During a three month period in 1822, one hundred businesses in Boston failed. Shipping rates fell and dock workers were laid off in unprecedented numbers. Credit was frozen and banks, reported Boston's *Evening Gazette*, began to "demand immediate repayment of the debtors." Between 1819 and 1820, prices for goods tumbled, yet, as one observer explained, money was "tighter than the skin on a cats back." So who could pay? "[T]he industrious mechanic," revealed the Boston *Patriot*, "may not be able to earn enough money by his labor to supply the natural wants" of himself or his family. Between 1820 and 1822, more than 3,500 Bostonians were imprisoned for debt. Governor John Brooks declared the state was in "times of peril and extreme pressure." In 1819 alone Massachusetts lost twenty-five percent of it commercial capital. According to the Boston *Patriot*, the city had become "a dull and
uncheerful spectacle—silence reigns in the streets and gloom and despondency" rules. "Money is so scarce," sardonically reported the Boston Castigator, "that a gentleman has offered his character for sale."12

For many Bostonians, the Castigator's report directly illustrated the problem. Boston's leaders did nothing to ease the burdens of depression and, as a result, fell under suspicion of selling their "character" to maintain economic and political supremacy. For the city's established leadership, such charges to its benevolence and honor had devastating consequences. Before the insurgent challenges of the 1820s, the elite's strongest grip on the "lower orders" depended upon Boston's collective reverence for patrician "character." As historian Ronald Formisano explains the pre-depression culture of the city: "Boston was once an oligarchy....It was a world in which deference to one's social betters did not necessarily imply servility or obsequiousness, and in which respect for social rank was quite compatible with integrity, self-respect, and one's own sense of importance." Such a social order depended on traditional arrangements of reciprocal obligations between the classes. During the panic of 1819, this arrangement fell into disrepair and community leaders quickly became viewed as uncaring, aristocratic, and corrupt.13 Old party alliances fell by the wayside as the character and honor of Boston's leadership faced blistering attacks.
In the one-party town of Boston, such a new political consciousness could mean only one thing: an attack on the Federalist establishment. The Massachusetts Federalist Central Committee was controlled at the time by Harrison Gray Otis, William Sullivan and Thomas Handasyd Perkins. These men ruled their party with a dictatorial iron hand. Having total control over the party's purse-strings, its caucuses and its press, the perception grew that the committee used such resources to implement its class interests at the great expense of the people.14

All three of these men were seasoned and wily politicians. Although Sullivan tended to stay in the shadows, preferring to avoid public office, his devoted and active administration of the central committee proved essential to the day-to-day operations of the party. His low-profile status was hardly the result of a lack of personal political ambition. Instead, his shadowy role within the party was probably due more to the fact that his father, James, had allied with the state's Jeffersonians who elected him governor in 1808. Also, Sullivan had been raised in the far-away Maine district. Thus, in Boston, he seemed quite a strange commodity. Perkins, on the other hand, had served either in the House or the Senate of the Massachusetts General Court pretty much non-stop between 1805 and 1822. Without question, Otis's record proved the most impressive of the trio and made him its natural
leader. In 1796, his political career began with a boom. In that year alone, he received an appointment by John Adams to head the U.S. District Attorney's office in Massachusetts; he was appointed to the director's seat of the U.S. Bank in Boston; and without already enough to do, he ran for and won a position in the lower house of the General Court where he stayed for a year before taking over Fisher Ames's coveted spot in the U.S. House of Representatives. Leaving Washington in 1802, he returned to his seat on the Massachusetts General Court, serving as House Speaker between 1803 and 1804. In 1805, Otis rose to the state Senate where he stayed, despite a one year foray in the House, until 1817. In the state's upper-house, he wielded immense power as its president for four of his eleven years there before returning to the U.S. Senate and making a failed bid for the governorship of Massachusetts in 1823.15

Each of these men epitomized what Boston's oppositional press began in 1820 to identify as an undemocratic "monied aristocracy" that subverted the authority of the electorate.16 The central committee's key leadership was politically dominant and fabulously wealthy. Unlike most Bostonians, Perkins, Sullivan, and Otis maintained sufficient capital to easily weather the depression. In fact, both Otis and Perkins significantly expanded their business ventures during height of the
financial panic. Taking advantage of a falling market, Otis expanded his Boston real estate holdings during the panic and continued to extract high rents from his tenants. In 1819, Perkins took advantage of the economic chaos and his large cash reserves to invest $765,000 in a shipping venture to the Far East while his competition's ships languished in their slips.¹⁷ These facts did not go unnoticed by the ordinary citizens of Boston whose financial affairs were thrown into a state of chaos by the depression.

Before the depression, Otis had acquired a real estate empire by successfully speculating (often with the aid of inside information) in Boston and Maine lands. By 1822, he had branched-out into manufacturing. With Otis's encouragement, Sullivan became his partner in the lucrative real estate syndicate, the Mount Vernon Proprietors which developed Beacon Hill. Sullivan also had inherited stock in the Middlesex Canal which had languished until the creation of the Lowell mills in 1813 reinvigorated its profits, adding to his personal wealth. Perkins was the richest of the group--a merchant prince who had made a fortune in the illegal opium trade. Receiving an estimated profit of $50,000 on each shipload of opium sold in Canton, China, Perkins accumulated massive sums which he successfully reinvested in manufacturing and, later, railroads.¹⁸
These men controlled huge amounts of capital and were members of a intricate network of interlocking financiers that virtually commanded the wealth of the state. Meeting each Saturday night with various others of their ilk, Otis, Sullivan and Perkins established the Saturday Fish Club, a highly secretive social fraternity estimated to have a total membership of six. Here these powerful men enjoyed madeira together and schemed over politics and business. As historian Peter Dobkin Hall argues, by the first two decades of the nineteenth-century, this elite, "had been thoroughly transformed. Its power was no longer based on public authority, formal or informal....Its power now derived explicitly from...possession of wealth...."19

Heightening public awareness to the inequality of Boston's class structure, the depression of 1819 fostered a rebellious spirit in the electorate that rejected this new foundation for elite Federalist authority and dramatically altered Boston's traditional power structure. Overstating the situation, yet betraying a common anxiety among many upper-echelon Massachusetts Federalists, Harrison Gray Otis described the new political temper of Boston as "revolutionary."20 And in many ways it was.

After the Revolution, "the Boston political and economic elites merged," explains historian Frederic Cople Jaher, "and government service advanced class power as well as class...honor."21 Business and the politics that
Federalism bred went hand-in-hand in defining the Boston elite to itself. To challenge the validity of one, was to denigrate the status of the whole. As one historian of Massachusetts explains, a Federalist "was expected to adhere to the Federal standard and the acceptable conservative creed. To renounce one's past political behavior, if one was a Federalist, was tantamount to admitting a serious character flaw." Besides this particular aspect of the Federalist party culture, there was a practical side to blending political and economic interests—of fusing Federalist policy with the affairs of elite enterprise. Not only could such a combination be easily justified by following the pragmatic logic of Alexander Hamilton that trumpeted the benefits of binding capitalism with government, but in a much more utilitarian sense, it ensured Federalist oversight of economic policy in the state. As Oscar and Mary Handlin have demonstrated, Federalist command of the Massachusetts General Court advanced enterprise and capital accumulation. Clearly, those who benefited most from the legislature's patronage were those with established wealth. Thus, the Federalist policy-makers and the Massachusetts economic elite worked in tandem, advanced the same agenda, and, as the Federalist Central Committee's membership suggests, were often one-and-the_same.
By 1822, Federalism, with its firm directive requiring obedience from its members, its elitist overtones and the economic interests the party blatantly championed, was under siege by a new party with the innocuous name of the Middling Interest. Surprisingly, the candidate to lead the insurgency's charge had spent most of his life as a self-described "raving Federalist."²⁴

To understand the transformation in political culture that occurred in Boston during the early nineteenth-century, the political odyssey of this "raving Federalist" turned insurgent, Josiah Quincy, must be examined. Quincy's political career had many ups and downs which resulted in his remarkable political transformation from Federalism to third partyism. Whether he led the political and cultural realignments that occurred in Boston's ordinary citizenry, or whether it led him, is less important than acknowledging that the two became inseparably linked and were widely associated with the other. The political journey of Quincy reflects not only his personal odyssey, but that of all the Bostonians who supported him.

Josiah Quincy stood at the epicenter of every contentious political battle waged in Boston and the state during the first three decades of the nineteenth-century. Never hesitating to strongly voice his often irreverent opinions, he maintained a reputation throughout his career
as an individualistic and independent politician who did not fear retribution from any party elders. He first earned this reputation while serving as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.
Notes


2. Most historians of Massachusetts use Federalist Harrison Gray Otis's defeat to Republican William Eustis in the 1823 gubernatorial race as the indicator of Federalism's death in the state, yet I argue the 1822 mayoral race foretold the fate of Federalism before the governor's race.


4. Robert A. McCaughey, *Josiah Quincy, 1772-1864: The Last Federalist* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 17. McCaughey's is the best and most thorough biography of Josiah Quincy yet written, although he tends to down-play Quincy's significant role in local party politics during the crucial years covered in this manuscript.


6. Richard G. Hewlett, "Josiah Quincy: Reform Mayor of Boston," *New England Quarterly*, 27, 1951, 179-181, argues "[t]he basis of Josiah Quincy's career as reform mayor of Boston was to be found in his own social philosophy and the society in which he lived...Josiah Quincy's reform program [as mayor] was but one manifestation of the social ferment of his age," 195-196.


16. "Aristocracy," *New England Galaxy*, Sept. 22, 1820, AAS. It should be noted that the Galaxy's full title until the end of 1820 was the *New England Galaxy and Masonic Magazine*. By the end of 1820, it dropped "masonic" from its title. For brevity, I have have abbreviated the title even when using it as a source before the newspaper's change.


CHAPTER II

NEW ENGLAND FEDERALISM ON THE ATTACK:

THE WASHINGTON BENEVOLENT SOCIETY AND

TURNING GARDENS INTO REPUBLICAN FARMS, 1800-1819

"Federalism takes opium; Jacobinism gunpowder and rum."

--Fisher Ames to Josiah Quincy, Feb., 1804

The morning after the devastating defeat of John Adams to Thomas Jefferson in the election of 1800, Federalism awoke to the disarming reality that it was powerless on the national level. The party lost its chief executive and both houses of Congress. Jefferson stalwart, Albert J. Beveridge gloated that those remaining Federalists in Congress were simply a bunch of "grumbling...out of date gentlemen...mournful of a glorious past." Jefferson himself christened the lingering partisans "mere obstructionists," who would challenge his mandate in vain. And in many ways, both Beveridge and Jefferson's appraisal of the battered Federalists was right. Even Federalist party warhorse from Dedham, Fisher Ames, scolded his party fellows after the election, professing "[f]ederalism takes opium; Jacobinism gunpowder and rum." Indeed, during Jefferson's first term, congressional Federalists were reduced to bitterly complaining about the acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase and the wholesale reversals of the Adams administration's policies.
When Federalist Josiah Quincy began his eight year tenure as Suffolk County's congressional representative in 1805, Jefferson savored his second term victory and seemed more popular than ever. Both the Senate and the House remained in the hands of the Republicans and there seemed little the Federalist freshman from Boston could do. As his wife, Eliza, confessed to Abigail Adams in 1806, her husband confined his ambitions to "enjoy[ing] the satisfaction of preventing evil," but to "produc[e] good, beyond [his] power."³

Eliza's assessment of her husband's role in Congress proved overly optimistic. As a Congressman, Quincy failed and failed dramatically. Perhaps if "the little band of federalists," as Eliza described the minority position in Congress, had been more united the "evil" of Jeffersonian policies could have occasionally been checked; but internal differences within the party caused resentments between the younger and the older generations, dividing congressional Federalists.⁴

Having learned a harsh lesson from their Republican victors in 1800 and 1805, young Federalists began to practice oppositional politics in a much more pragmatic manner than their party elders had ever imagined. Quincy sided with this vanguard and its new approach to politics. As Harrison Gray Otis explained, Quincy was "the only man among us who had intended...to pursue politics as a
profession." This seemed vulgar to older members of the party. To them government service should be restricted to benevolent, disinterested amateurs. The old guard distrusted the very notion of established parties. Although many were the beneficiaries of their own party's state and local organizations, these crusty old men despised what they saw as the corrupting influence party spirit inflicted on the great united family of America's revolutionary past. "Let not party-rage, private animosities, or self-interested motives succeed that religious attachment to the public weal which has brought us successful thus far," pleaded Boston traditionalist, Jonathan Mason. If conspicuous partisanship became the primary basis for Federalism, what would distinguish it from the "Jacobin" Republicans? With Jefferson's reelection, younger Federalists rebelled and openly disagreed with the very premise of such a question. Harrison Gray Otis articulated New England's interest in the fresh Federalist approach: "If we mean to preserve the commonwealth and New England...our organization must be more complete and systematic. It must extend through every county and town, and an ample fund must be provided for the distribution of political truth." Old guard, Massachusetts stalwarts like George Cabot, Stephen Higginson, John Lowell and Theodore Lyman looked on in utter dismay as younger Federalists like Otis and Sullivan established a highly
effective party structure that would elect and send the confirmed non-traditionalist, Josiah Quincy to Washington.6

After serving only one year in the Massachusetts Senate, Quincy, at age thirty-two, entered the House with little political experience. His opinion of the Federalist traditionalists he met there was unmistakably negative. Writing to John Quincy Adams, he severely criticized the old guard as "cautious politicians, who are always prophets by retrospect; men who neither devise nor execute," and who were altogether ill equipped to challenge the majority position in Congress.7 Often single-handedly, Congressman Quincy would overtly defy the old guard's party regimen and follow his own political instincts into unchartered and often dangerous waters. The result was a botched and embarrassing congressional career.

Three notable incidents point out his political naivete, his impetuosity, and his enthusiasm to stir still waters in order to strengthen his minority position. The first occurred in 1809. Characterizing Jefferson as a "dish of skim milk curdling at the head of our nation," on the House floor Quincy demanded the President's impeachment just five weeks before Jefferson was to step-down from office. In his January 25, speech before the House, Quincy accused Jefferson of corruption, directly linking the President to staffing problems in the Boston Customs House. Even House Federalists were appalled by the audacity of the
charge and Quincy's proposal was overwhelmingly defeated by a vote of 117 to his 1. Four years after the House vote, Henry Clay predicted that the Federalist from Suffolk county's act "shall live only in the treasonable annals" of history.  

When Quincy rose to the floor to speak against Louisiana statehood on January 14, 1811, he was once again charged with treason, this time from his Republican opponents in Congress and from much of the Boston press. "If this bill passes," Quincy threatened, "I declare it my deliberate conviction that the bond of this union is virtually dissolved: that the states are freed from their moral obligation: that as it will be the right of all, so it will become the duty of some, to prepare for a separation--amicably if they can: forcibly if they must." In Boston, the Republican press promised that "the people of [Quincy's] own state would crush any rebellious movement...as quick and as effectively as they did the insurrection of Shays." Despite Quincy's menacing claim, New England refused to secede from the union once Louisiana was granted statehood.

Later that year, in the fall, Quincy concocted an ambitious scheme to reestablish Federalism as a national political force. Believing that the recent Republican clamor for war with England was merely saber-rattling designed "to embarrass [New England] commerce and
annihilate its influence," Quincy decided to push the issue by coming out in favor of war. His strategy rested on the assumption that war with Great Britain was an impossibility. By strengthening the position of the Republican "war hawks," as he dubbed them, Quincy believed he could drive a deep wedge between the pro-war and the anti-war Republicans. This, he believed, would irreparably shatter Republicanism. On January 25, 1812, he supported a Republican war bill to strengthen the navy. In February, he voted with the war hawks to step-up appropriations for armed conflict. On June 1, 1812, pro-war Republicans achieved what Quincy had not believed possible--by a vote of 79 to 49, the House approved the President's declaration of war. Much to Quincy's horror, the war hawks's clamor for combat had been sincere. By severely underestimating the genuine pro-war feeling in the House, Quincy contributed in provoking an armed conflict that would prove devastating to his region.11

As Fisher Ames sadly predicted for Quincy before Ames's own death in 1808, "I declared to you, I fear Federalism will not only die, but all rememberence of it be lost. As a party, it is still good for everything it ever was good for; that is to say, to cry 'fire' and 'stop thief,' when Jacobinism attempts to burn and rob. [Yet], [i]t never had the power to put out the fire, or to seize the thief."12 Despite trying to defy Ames's judgment by
employing Machiavellian techniques to strengthen his minority position in Congress, Quincy finally absorbed the fact that Ames's assessment of Federalism was accurate. Federalists had no place in Washington. They had become exactly what Jefferson predicted--"mere obstructionalists."

"I feel ready...to throw myself out of the window, or into a horse pond, when I think of coming here [Washington] again," Quincy confessed in utter dismay to William Sullivan.\(^\text{13}\)

In fall 1812, Quincy informed the central committee that he would decline a Federalist nomination to Congress if it was offered. Disregarding his wishes, the committee reassigned him to the post, but Quincy refused to accept. For eight miserable years in the House, he had filled the unpleasant role of being one of Federalism's most explosive and reactive operatives. His intricate and unsuccessful political stratagems had caused him to be ridiculed and spurned by his own party as well as the opposition. He had few friends in Washington and the capitol, during the early nineteenth-century, was no more than a frontier town that Quincy and his wife hated. Writing to his wife on the eve of the War of 1812, he explained his "odd" position: "By some I am thought such a raving Federalist as to be shrewdly suspected of [treason]; by others that I am...in danger of turning Democrat [Republican]."\(^\text{14}\)
Clearly, Quincy's congressional career merited such confusion. He had called for a popular President's impeachment; he had threatened New England secession over Louisiana's constitutional right to enter to Union; and he had gone against the anti-war sentiments of his constituents in a failed political scheme to destroy the Republican party. Quincy had always thought of himself as a professional politician in the Federalist cause, but his impulsive and erratic behavior in the House belied any sense of professionalism. Henry Clay's summation of Quincy's career held more truth than falsehood when he stated before the House that, "[t]he gentleman from Massachusetts...has entertained us with Cabinet plots, Presidential plots which are conjured up in the gentleman's own perturbed imagination," and done little else. Quincy's covert partisan adventures marked a man whose stubborn refusal to surrender his independent and often self-righteous personal campaigns for more reasonable solutions to the problems Republicanism caused in New England, resulted in a highly unsuccessful and humiliating congressional career. "I left Washington," Quincy wrote in his 1813, personal journal, "with the feelings of a man quitting Tadmor in the Wilderness, 'where creeping things had possession of the palace, and foxes looked out the windows,' and sought the refuge in home, and in family."
In March, 1813, Quincy escaped from Washington and seemingly found more refuge in his family estate's gardens than with his family. According to both his son, Edmund, and his daughter, Eliza II, the ex-Congressman transferred his intensity for congressional partisan politics into an obsession with experimental farming. "[W]ith all the zeal of his ardent temperament," as Edmund put it, his father poured money and time into his agricultural experiments. Soiling cattle (a topic he wrote a book on), cultivating hedges, using root crops as cattle feed and growing carrots were Quincy's particular specialties. As one historian argues, Boston's early nineteenth-century elite often turned to the farm to resolve their contradictory notions of aristocracy and republicanism as embodied in the image of the sturdy New England farmer. Revolutionary ideals of equality clashed with the reality of an established, post-Revolutionary ruling class based in the urban setting of Boston. Boston elites desperately tried to resolve the contradictory nature of their existence within a democracy by dabbling in the soil.17

If one of the most visible symbols of elite control--the country estate--could be manipulated to represent a more democratic meaning in the popular mind, then the hypocrisy of a dominant "seated" gentry within a democratic society could be better hidden. The rub for Boston's landed gentry was how to go about implementing the
perceptual change. George Cabot, the director of the Massachusetts Bank and leading old guard Federalist, found the solution in cultivating potatoes instead of rare flowers on his Brookline estate; Thomas H. Perkins took time out from his work on the Federalist Central Committee and in the opium business to begin growing fruit; Theodore Lyman experimented with bananas and pineapples on "the Vale," his estate in Waltham when he wasn't tallying his profits from the East Indies and China trade or raving against the atrocities of one Republican administration or another. And Josiah Quincy grew a particularly hardy breed of carrots.18

The idea was to shift the purpose and meaning of the country seat from a place of leisure to one of utility. The country estates, with their beautifully extravagant, but useless gardens, were transformed into working farms. With the establishment of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture and the Massachusetts Horticulture Society, patrician farmers institutionalized their new self-perception and pursued a bucolic form of noblesse oblige. The stated purpose of both the MSPA and the MHS was to provide Massachusetts's yeomanry with advanced farming techniques that were being discovered on patrician estates. In an ironic twist, Boston's Federalist aristocracy would return to the soil under the guise of Jeffersonian, agrarian democratic principles.19
Most of Boston's "book farmers" clearly were insincere about their conversion to functional agriculture. None of them gleaned a living from the soil, but from maritime commerce or manufacturing. True to the Hamiltonian economic agenda and as high-ranking Federalists, the "book farmers" consistently fought America's agricultural interests. Instead, most Boston elite's involved in experimental farming saw it as a way to stave-off popular criticism, and at best, to sure-up the state's yeomanry for Federalism.20

Josiah Quincy viewed his estate differently. Perhaps because he was trying to gain some success as a farmer after his miserable failure as a Congressman or, perhaps, sincerely driven by a passion to revolutionize hedge technology, between 1813 and 1820, Quincy dumped the family fortune into his experiments. Being "wholly occupied with thoughts of agriculture," as he explained himself, Quincy seriously jeopardized his family's financial security as he plowed more and more cash into his carrots, hedges and root-crop cattle feed. As his son Edmund gently explained, his father had lost "more than it was at all convenient to him to lose," claiming the only profits culled from the family estate came from selling salt to the local fishermen--a venture his father had no interest in. Quincy's daughter, Eliza, somewhat distressed, confessed to her dairy in 1820, "upon settling his account...
father] found that his expenses were exceeding his income. A fact that caused him anxiety with regard to future independence." Summing up the situation, Eliza declared: "farming experiments were the cause of this difficulty."21

By April, the Quincy's financial situation became so grave that they could no longer afford to lease their posh Boston home on Summer street. Eliza was aghast. "[T]he only plan to be pursued," she reported to her diary, "was to reside at Quincy all the year now." Horrified because this meant "the exit of us from Boston Society," Eliza and her family prepared for a new, more isolated life as fallen gentry. Yet, Quincy's uncle, John Phillips, upon hearing the news, came to the family's rescue and provided them, free of charge, with a "modest" house on the corner of Hamilton Place and Tremont street. Although Edmund remarked their new residence, "was not, in itself, so large or so good as that [they had] left," the Quincy family was spared the public mortification of social exile from the Hub of New England society and culture.22

Although Quincy spent much of the five years after his unfortunate congressional career in convalescence with his hedges, roots and carrots, to the surprise of many, he did remain engaged in politics. "I thought you would have died a peaceful political death, but I see it is not in your nature," Philadelphian, Richard Peters, noted as an aside to Quincy in a long letter detailing the proper uses for a
particular breed of Newcastle thorn bushes. 23 When he had first returned to Boston in 1813, the central committee rewarded Quincy with a nomination to the state senate. "He is proverbial industrious," explained Harrison Gray Otis, "and though an occasional expression or two have served as catchwords to injure his popularity, I have no doubt that in th[e] Senate he would soon efface any petty prejudice existing against him, and be a very useful member." 24

"Useful" may not be the most operative word for Otis to have used. As Edmund Quincy explained, his father's "duties [in the Senate] were confined to a few months out of the year, and were not of a very engrossing nature." 25 Instead, when not in his gardens, Quincy preoccupied himself with much more exciting extra-legal party affairs. First as vice-president of the Washington Benevolent Society [WBS] from 1812 to 1815 and then as its president in 1816, he remained active and contributed greatly to local Federalist party business. 26

With the inevitability of war with Britain, the Boston chapter of the WBS was established in the downtown Exchange Coffee House on March 6, 1812. Its founding members, Nathan Appleton, Henry Dwight Sedgwick, Nathan Hale, Samuel Livermore, Jr., Benjamin Russell, Thomas H. Perkins, Josiah Bradlee, Francis J. Oliver, and Lemuel Shaw, represented the local vanguard of Boston's Federalist young turks. 27 Instigated by their anti-war stance, the 1811 losses of the
governors's seat and the General Court to Republicanism, and the ineptitude of Federalism's past organizational structure, these men astounded Bay State's old guard by mimicking Republican political fraternities such as New York's Tammany. Under the auspices of "benevolence," the Boston chapter of the Washington Benevolent Society constructed a highly organized and effective arm of the Federalist party.  

The WBS's primary goal was to broaden party membership. Since 1800, Boston's population had steadily grown. By 1810, the town held 33,250 people, an increase from 1800 of over nine thousand people. The vast majority of Boston's new arrivals were young, semi-skilled to skilled native men from the countryside who came to the Hub seeking their fortunes. Although the political persuasion of these men is not known, clearly the WBS was partially established to ensure that these new Bostonians would come into the Federalist fold. Indeed, society members tended to be young and semi-skilled or skilled. The Boston chapter contained 44 laborers, 68 clerks, 296 shopkeepers, 153 professionals and 309 mechanics. Codified into its constitution under article 17, those who could not afford the modest initiation fee of two dollars were exempted and given free membership. Over one third of Boston's membership in 1814 were designated by the society as "Free Members."
The WBS constitution declared that the society would "oppose all encroachments of Democracy, aristocracy or despotism...and with all our strength to oppose the establishment of any usurped power therein...[we pledge to] alleviate the sufferings of unfortunate individuals, within the sphere of our personal acquaintances."30 The "sphere of personal acquaintances" of the society proved extremely limited. In 1813, the WBS gave only $10 out of its total yearly expenditure of $1,721.70 to the widow of society member W. Reynolds. When Fred W.A. Brown applied for charity from the society in 1812, "it was found," according to the WBS minutes, "that he is not a member of the Society & consequently not entitled to relief."31 According to the WBS's annual budgets, the income of the society either paid for partisan propagation or went to speculative business ventures to turn a profit. The WBS managed its money in similar fashion as a bank. It made loans and charged interest much more often than it issued charity. Many investments were lucrative, but, in 1815, the WBS found itself in financial trouble, running a deficit of $1,398.33 after one of its companies, Austin & Blanchard, went bankrupt.32

Fluid in structure, the WBS's administrative positions often rotated annually. Its leadership included a president, six vice presidents, a treasurer, vice treasurer, a secretary, two assistant secretaries, and a
standing committee of sixteen that decided upon who would and would not be accepted as members. Underneath this super-structure lay the heart and soul of the organization. Each of Boston's twelve wards held a committee of four who circulated WBS information, collected membership dues, recruited potential members, oversaw elections for the society's leadership and reported relevant information from each ward to the Standing Committee. In turn, the Standing Committee reported to the WBS leadership that relayed information directly to the Federalist Central Committee.  

By 1813, the Boston WBS boasted a membership of 1,500. That same year, it formed a committee to centralize and coordinate the efforts of all the WBS chapters throughout the country. Boston's highly organized system proved so effective that Federalists from all over New England began writing to the Boston chapter for copies of its constitution, advice and organizational blue-prints. Shilborn Whitman of Pembroke's letter is typical of the flood of communications arriving at the Boston WBS headquarters: "[I]t is my wish to have a copy of it [the constitution]...and...I will thank you for your opinion, on this kind, in every town in the County, the Officers of which, shall be the organs of communication to the county Society, & they the medium of intelligence to the Head Quarters of Good Principles--I am seriously of the opinion, that if this plan could become universal in each County in
the State by next year, good men would be restored to their standing...." The Boston chapter sent organizational material to towns as close as Salem, and as distant as Hallowell, Me. After one year of its founding, voter participation in the state gubernatorial race swelled 13%, the majority of which voted Federalist. In 1812, Federalism recaptured the governor's seat--a position the party would hold until 1823. In Portsmouth, NH, a young, budding Federalist, Daniel Webster waited for his copy of the Boston chapter's constitution so he could draft one of his own.

Partially due to the WBS's success, the society provoked the wrath of Boston's Republican press. The Independent Chronicle charged that "the 'Washington Benevolent Societies,' so called, were established to answer the purpose of a political party, and that they are in direct opposition both to Washington and Benevolence, must be evident to every one who will give himself the trouble to review their conduct. The fund, said to be raised for benevolent purposes, is...expended in paying for banners, votes, ribbands [sic.], and other vapid trumpery, to make up a show." The Chronicle's assessment of the WBS's allocation of society funds proved accurate. In 1813, $101.61 went to pay the Federalist-leaning Boston Washington Artillery Company for firing cannons during a society festival.
Other militias often employed by the WBS were the Boston Light Infantry, the Boston Hussars and the Winslow Blues. These militias not only provided great color to WBS functions, but also protection. After the 1812 pro-war riots in Baltimore, where mobs attacked and killed several society members, the Boston branch heeded the advise of G.S. Stewart, the WBS Secretary of Maryland. Stewart, fearing for his life during the rioting, fled Baltimore for exile in Philadelphia. He provided the Boston branch with a detailed description of the Baltimore rioting and urged the Boston chapter to hire protection. Baltimore, Stewart claimed, had been "shamefully trodden under the foot by a brutal and licentious mob who exercise an alarming tyranny over the good people of Baltimore and its vicinity. [Society members] have fallen victims to the fury of a mob, and the treachery of the civil authority. The reign of terror and confusion," Stewart heralded, "still continues to agitate that infested city, where scenes of massacre and bloodshed have of late occurred." Taking no chances, the Boston chapter of the WBS had various militias on its payroll and placed WBS members to lead them. Certainly the militias would prove loyal to the WBS since they were well paid, but also, as Fisher Ames once had suggested, "[l]et the popular and wealthy Federalists take commissions in the militia, and try to win the men [for Federalism]."
The WBS functioned solely to broaden and deepen the Federalist party's social base. The *Boston Patriot* accused it of attracting "the neediest and meanest people." WBS celebrations featured liquor, mummery, and rowdiness. After one Boston banquet, drunken society members stumbled through the streets causing havoc. "[T]hey were exceedingly noisy and sang songs and swore oaths, and did commit other acts of folly and wickedness," explained one observer. "Yea, they took the vessels of glass which contained the wine and other liquors, and did throw them at the heads of each other....And the watchmen who guarded the city, hearing the uproar, rushed in among them....And some fled one way and some another, and some were lying motionless on the ground like men slain in fighting."  

Although old guard Federalists were disgusted by such unruly behavior, in many ways, such political antics were exactly what was needed to reinvigorate the party. The founders of the society understood this from the WBS's inception. As the preamble of its constitution declared, "[w]e hold it to be always a right & sometimes a duty, to assemble & deliberate upon the state of public affairs to acquire & impart knowledge & to increase the ardor of our patriotism by the warmth of our social attachments." In the rough-and-tumble, urban culture of early nineteenth-century Boston, what could be more effective in "increas[ing] the ardor" of Federalist-style patriotism,
than a boisterous party? Here the lowly mechanic met the silk stocking merchant on the common ground of gluttony. In this, at least, they were equals.

Judging by the reaction of Republican press, the party of Jefferson genuinely feared the society. According to Federalist operatives outside of Boston, Republicans had begun intercepting and destroying communications between various New England societies. WBS member, Otis Williams of Easton, MA warned the Boston chapter's first President, Arnold Welles, that "owing to the treachery of some of our political opponents...[s]ome person has stopped the papers [sent by you] by some means or other as there is very violent opposition to the formation of the Society in this town." Refusing to trust the mail service for matters so important, Williams sent his warning to Welles via courier. William Gordon of Keene, NH, had similar problems and also refused to use the mail. Instead, he sent his own son all the way from Keene to request a copy of the Boston chapter's constitution.42

When the WBS contacted Quincy in 1812 after its first meeting at the Boston Exchange Coffee House, he still served in Congress and had not yet heard of the organization. "Although I have no previous delineation of the plan of the institution, of which you inform me, I am elected Vice President," Quincy explained to Lemuel Shaw, "the object expressed in its designation and the venerable
and ever cherished name associated with it permit no hesitation. I therefore accept the honor." The Washington Benevolent Society would gradually lure Quincy out of the isolation, safety and protection of his beloved gardens and into the public arena again. The society's inclusive approach to politics meshed well with Quincy's pragmatic style of politics. The Washington Benevolent Society would provide Quincy with the confidence he had lost in Congress. More importantly, his involvement with the WBS would expose him to an urban constituency of lower-to-middling-folk who would supply him a popular base for new and untried political ventures.

Although rain threatened to ruin the Washington Benevolent Society's April 30th, 1813 celebration, the heavens held as some two-thousand disciplined, but joyous WBS members and their supporters paraded through Boston's streets. Just weeks before the celebration, Federalist Caleb Strong, running on a "peace ticket," thoroughly thrashed the Republican candidate for governor, Joseph B. Varnum by 10,421 votes. The two-thousand member WBS parade was a show of force demonstrating the potency of Federalism and anti-war sentiment in the state. Members from throughout Massachusetts converged on Boston to participate in the ceremonies that honored Washington's inauguration. Three-hundred and twenty eight armed militia-men of the Winslow Blues, the Boston Light Infantry, the Boston
Washington Artillery Company and the Boston Hussars marched ahead of two-hundred and seventy uniformed "school boy Federalists," as Edmund Quincy remembered. Behind them, some one-thousand loyal Federalists and WBS members from the rank-and-file marched, four abreast—waving banners to the Boston throng who watched from sidewalks and balconies. Eliza Quincy vividly described the broad social composition of the typical WBS parade: "[R]epresentives of all the Trades drawn on sleds with appropriate standards, and carrying their tools [marched]. The bricklayers were building a house, they broke their bricks and worked busily. The carpenters were erecting a temple of Peace. The printers worked a small press, struck off handbills...and threw them among the crowd. The bakers, hatters, paper-makers, blockmakers, etc., etc. had each their appropriate insignia." At the head of the procession, mounted on a white stallion and serving as the Boston Hussar's newly elected Captain, Josiah Quincy led the column to the "Old South" church for a huge banquet and orations. 44

Trying to discredit the parade, the Republican Independent Chronicle reported that the WBS parade was racially integrated, "including the gentlemen from [Boston's] Negro-Hill." The report chastised Quincy, likening him to his horse, Bayard. The children of the parade, argued the equally Republican Boston Yankee, had been "educated like Colts to the menagerie, to be bridled
with restraints, to be saddled with prejudices, and jockeyed about by party spirit. When trained sufficiently in this charity school, they are to be bound out to Faction to learn the trades of Sedition and Treason."

The Yankee's charge of treason, though perhaps a bit overstated, held some truth. William Sullivan privately explained the WBS was created to block pro-war fervor throughout the country and promote anti-war sentiments as well as to buttress Federalist partisanship. Indeed, the Boston Hussars were trained by a member of the WBS's Standing Committee member, Michael Roulstone, a local riding instructor and was founded during the early stages of hostilities between the United States and Great Britain in 1810 by wealthy, anti-war, Federalists. Its loyalty to the Madison administration was in doubt. Many wondered which side the militia would take if Britain invaded Massachusetts, and the Hussar's did little to belay such suspicions. The symbolic pageantry employed by the militia clearly delineated its political leanings. Hussar uniforms were modeled after those of the French Imperial Guard and the militia's most prized possession (which it shared with the WBS) was the gorget Washington had "heroically" worn as a British officer during the French and Indian War. According to Edmund Quincy, the Hussar's costume represented "their dislike [of] Bonaparte and all his works." In April of 1813, with the United States at war
with Great Britain, the people of Boston undoubtedly interpreted the WBS's great procession as a massive demonstration of the anti-war, anti-administration, and anti-Republican sentiment in New England. If the symbolic message of the parade was missed by those who observed the procession, after Josiah Quincy's partisan speech in "Old South," any misunderstanding would be put to rest.

"This war, the measure that proceeded it, and the mode of carrying it on, are undeniably Southern and Western policy," Quincy announced to a full audience. "[I]n the eyes of reason and common sense we [of New England] are slaves,...slaves to no very desirable masters....The new States govern the old, the unsettled, the settled; the interests of the emigrants prevail over those of the ancient natives; a black population overbalances the white....[W]ilderness legislators...control...the destinies of [New Englanders], paralyzing all their interests and darkening all their prospects." According to Quincy, "this great and ancient and once proud, but now...humbled Commonwealth, has absolutely no more weight in the national scale than a specie of beings [black slaves]." "Remember," Quincy reiterated, "the very blacks of the Southern States are equal in weight, in the political scale, to the whole State of Massachusetts."
By drawing direct connections between national policy and local anxieties, Quincy had designed his speech brilliantly. Populated with African slaves and European immigrants, the South and West had pushed the nation into war against the wishes and interests of New England. Not only was this an assault to the region's honor and authority, but the war, Quincy charged, would transform each household economy from one of happy prosperity to "darkening all their prospects." At the hands of the slave power, hardworking and free New England would be forced into economic subjugation by western and southern slaveholders. With one major exception, the ideology Quincy articulated would, in fifty years, prove remarkably similar to the foundations of the second Republican party's free-labor outlook. The exception rested in Quincy's skeptical opinion of manufacturing which future free-labor doctrine embraced. Throughout his life, Quincy staunchly refused to invest in manufacturing and remained tied to the state's maritime interests. Also, Quincy's WBS speech hinted once again at New England secession.

Although the speech predictably received favorable reviews from Boston's Federalist organs, the Republican press lambasted him. "Can any man of sober reflection," asked the Independent Chronicle, "attend to a declaimer acting in the character of a disciple of Washington, while he [Quincy] exhibits himself in the boisterous attitude of
a manic?—Foaming,...beating the air,...acting the part of a mad Tom, and exposing his folly by rant and arrogance." How could he have so insulted the Bay State by claiming "that the Representatives from Massachusetts were no more weight in Congress than so many black cattle?" the Chronicle questioned.49 Despite such harsh criticism, the average Bostonian in 1813 probably would have disagreed with the Chronicle's assessment of Quincy's speech. The congressional vote for war had fallen sharply along regional lines—all of New England's representatives, including twenty Republicans, having voted against the war.50 Also, the effect of war would, in fact, be damaging to New England's economy, just as Quincy claimed.

The war made some Boston ship captains wealthy as privateers and hastened the transfer of New England maritime money into new manufacturing ventures. Also, Boston banks with sound money, made profitable war loans to the Federal government. Nevertheless, the Bay State's main enterprise, maritime commerce, dramatically declined because of the war. Beginning in 1810, and not recovering until the war's end in 1815, the actual tonnage of shipping in customs houses in Massachusetts and Boston dwindled to new lows that would not be matched again until 1855. Fishing, a lucrative pursuit for many coastal Massachusetts towns since the 1790s, also found itself in serious trouble. The collapse of Boston's largest sector of the
maritime enterprise significantly touched the lives of many average Bostonians."

As Bostonian George Ticknor explained "[c]ommerce and trade were dead; the whole population was idle." According to Francis Bassett, Boston "industry was paralyzed, the music of the saw and hammer was no longer heard, and a general gloom seemed to hang over the town." In Governor Strong's assessment "the influence of Massachusetts, and of the Eastern States...is lost, and the systems of commercial restriction, of War, and conquest, fatal to their interests, and outrageous to their feelings, are found in ruins." Editor, Joseph T. Buckingham, who went bankrupt during the war, reminisced that in the "business of publishing, fifty barely live above poverty and die in possession of little more than enough to pay the joiner for a coffin and the sexton for a grave." Although his problems had little to do with the war, in 1811, Boston's premier architect and chairman of the town selectmen, Charles Bulfinch's imprisonment for debt symbolized for Bostonians their vulnerability. "[T]hose, who are benefitted [sic.] by the enormous abuses [of the war policy]," heralded the Boston Spectator, "are so few, compared with the great mass of the community, who are suffering beyond calculation or endurance....[The war] arrests their...necessary pursuits, robs them of their property, and exposes even life to peril." Clearly, pre-
war impediments to commerce and the war itself intensified laboring Boston's uncertainties about its future. Politically, these insecurities were easily exploited by the Washington Benevolent Society to attack Republicanism while strengthening the ranks of Federalism in Boston and throughout the state.

In October of 1814, every Bostonian in the General Court unanimously voted in favor of an anti-war convention to be held in Hartford. Suffolk county's representatives adamantly opposed the war, convinced as they were that the conflict sucked the life-blood out of the state. Overall, the General Court decided 260 in favor of the convention to 90 opposed. Only the Norfolk county delegation unanimously voted against the resolution. The majority of every other district's representative delegation to the state legislature voted for the convention. In the November state elections, a month before the Hartford Convention met, the Federalist slate swept the state. John Holmes, the Republican leader of the Senate and the most vocal against the resolution and for the war, was defeated at the hands of a Federalist.\(^5\) As the General Court's overwhelming support for the Hartford Convention indicates, the anti-war and sectional appeal that Federalists such as Quincy espoused significantly strengthened the party throughout the state.
In December of 1814, Massachusetts sent twelve Federalist delegates to Hartford with the overwhelming approval of the General Court and the governor. Although Quincy voted in favor of the convention in the Senate, he was not chosen as a delegate. As Quincy's son recalled, the Federalist leadership was "afraid to trust his [Quincy's] impetuous temperament and fiery earnestness." Such fears were justified. In one of his first acts as a state senator, Quincy challenged what he saw as the blatant hypocrisy of his Federalist colleagues. Before Quincy's arrival to Senate, the General Court routinely bestowed official state honors on naval commanders who successfully protected American waters from British warships. Quincy viewed such actions by his fellow anti-war Federalists as two-faced. When the Senate attempted to pass a resolution honoring the "gallantry and good conduct of Captain [James] Lawrence, in the capture of a British brig of war," Quincy rose from his chair. "[I]n a war like the present, waged without justifiable cause and prosecuted in a manner which indicates that conquest and ambition are its real motives," Quincy explained, "it is not becoming a moral and religious people to express any approbation of military or naval exploits." 54

Predictably, the Republican papers charged Quincy with "moral treason." John Holmes, having not yet been displaced from the General Court, demanded that Quincy's
remarks be struck from the minutes of the senate. Even some leading Federalists found Quincy's purist stand irritating. These legislators saw no harm in tipping their hats to American bravery when it was merited while still maintaining an anti-war position. Thus, when the delegates to the Hartford Convention were chosen, as Edmund Quincy explained, the Federalist leadership "thought that [Quincy] would represent too well the spirit of those who demanded the Convention. He always described the Convention," Edmund remembered, "as 'a Tub to the Whale,' as a dilatory measure to amuse the malcontents [like himself] and make them believe that something was doing for their relief, and keep them quiet." Nothing would come of the convention, Quincy told a friend, except an insignificant "GREAT PAMPHLET."55

With General Andrew Jackson's unnecessary victory in New Orleans and the Treaty of Ghent, Quincy's prediction proved only half true. Vilified after the war, those who took part in the Hartford Convention became marked men—seen by most of the nation as secessionists and traitors. In this sense, the convention had done something of great significance: it severely damaged the reputation of the Federalist party throughout the nation. After 1815, throughout most of the country, to be called a "Federalist" was a dire insult. An Indiana man successfully sued for $1000 in damages after being accused by another of being a Federalist. "Indeed," explained a friend of North Carolina
Federalist, Ducan Cameron, "the word Federalist alone without the aid of expletives represents to [the people's] affrighted imaginations every thing that is base and infamous." Only in New England did the party continue to enjoy success, but within four years of the Treaty of Ghent, even the stronghold of Boston would waver.

During the economic crisis generated by the War of 1812, the Federalist party had proved highly effective in exposing the root-cause of the Commonwealth's financial problems. Employing the Washington Benevolent Society, as we have seen, the anti-war, anti-Republican party message resonated throughout the state strengthening Federalist partisanship. In addition to this, in Boston, the decline in commerce was augmented by a rise in urban development largely funded by wealthy Federalists like Harrison Gray Otis and William Sullivan. Merchant ships may have been rotting in Boston harbor, but new improvement projects were underway in the town. During the Embargo of 1807, workers began to rebuild India and Long wharfs; the erection of Central wharf started in the midst of the war and proved so extravagant that it was not completed until 1816; and Harrison Gray Otis's Mill Pond Corporation began filling-in the northern cove of the Shawmut peninsula in 1807. Such development helped off-set the negative effects of the war for the town's population and had direct political implications. Spreading its wealth, Federalism's Boston
leadership appeared sensitive to the broader population's financial needs.

Some three years after the war, with the depression of 1819, Federalist rhetoric would seem stale and its coffers fastened tight. Unlike its response between 1807 through 1815, the party proved ill equipped to deal with the economic and political turmoil of Boston in 1819. Although the WBS persisted until 1824, the organization suffered from financial mismanagement and its overt partisanship seemed anachronistic during the "Era of Good Feelings." As the newly elected president of the WBS in 1816, Josiah Quincy successfully reduced the deficit the society incurred in 1815, yet membership levels steadily declined. Nevertheless, the WBS's remarkable political success illustrated the potential power to be gained by inclusionary politics. By 1819, in the midst of economic and political chaos, the Federalist leadership seemed to have forgotten this and came to be regarded by many Bostonians as an exclusive "junto" set on maintaining its political and economic dominance at the expense of the people. Josiah Quincy would be spared such condemnation.
Notes


3. Eliza S. (Morton) Quincy to Abigail Adams, April 6, 1806, Quincy Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston MA. (microfilm, Papers relating to the Quincy, Wendell Holmes, and Upham Families at the Massachusetts Historical Society with the Quincy, Wendell, Holmes, and Upham Family Papers in the Collection of Hugh Upham, of Arlington Virginia, hereafter cited as Quincymicro).

4. Eliza S. (Morton) Quincy to Abigail Adams, April 6, 1806, Quincymicro. Fisher, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 1-49, argues this division was generational. Younger Federalists saw the need to expand the social composition of the party at the expense of older Federalist's most basic conceptions of party ideology.


9. Quincy as quoted in "Rebellion Threatened," (Boston) Independent Chronicle, Jan. 24, 1811, Massachusetts Historical Society (microform copy, hereafter cited as MHSform). Also see, Walker, "Memoir of Josiah Quincy," 100-103, for Quincy's explanation for the speech. He claims he was trying to shock the majority party so it would listen to his Constitutional arguments against Louisiana statehood. For a Constitutional defense of the speech see Josiah P. Quincy, "The Louisiana Purchase; and the Appeal to Posterity," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, vol. 38 (Nov. 1903) (Boston: Published by the Society, 1905), 48-59.


14. Josiah Quincy to Eliza Quincy, March 22, 1812, as quoted in McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 75.


16. Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 306. I have searched for Quincy's literary reference and cannot find it.


22. Eliza Susan Quincy (daughter), "Diary," 1820, *Quincymicro*. The inadequacy of being solely a resident of Quincy, MA, instead of both Quincy and Boston, as expressed by Eliza Quincy is echoed by Henry Adams in his, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961 reprint), 9-10, where Adams explains: "Though Quincy was but two hours' walk from Beacon Hill, it belonged in a different world....Quincy was in a way inferior to Boston and...socially Boston looked down on Quincy....Quincy had no Boston style." Edmund Quincy, *Josiah Quincy*, 390. John Phillips had inherited all of his father's estate, none of which filtered down to Josiah Quincy or his family. As Edmund explained, "William Phillips...influenced by the desire of keeping together the large fortune he had accumulated, bequeathed it almost entire to his only son, leaving to my father, the only representative of one of his daughters, absolutely nothing...," see, ibid, 384.


24. Harrison Gray Otis to John Phillips, [?], 1818, as quoted in ibid, 376. Although Otis is referring to Quincy's nomination to the senate chairmanship in 1818 and not his 1813 nomination, Quincy's liabilities to the party were the same in 1818 as 1813. He was haunted throughout his life by his call for Jefferson's impeachment and his threat of Northern secession on the House floor. In 1814, the Boston press was still debating his secessionist comments of 1811, see "The Integrity of the United States Must Be Preserved, No. I-IX," *The Boston Spectator*, Feb. 19, 1814-April, 23, 1814, *APSmicro*, which carried front paged articles for three months on Quincy and the issues he first raised in 1811. In the midst of the 1814 Hartford Convention, the *Spectator*, as well as many other newspapers, returned to the logic or illogic that Quincy had used to justify secession in 1811. Thus, what concerned Otis about Quincy in 1818, was the same as in 1813--Quincy had spoken too rashly and openly while in Congress, and many people, even in 1818, had not forgotten. If his congressional stands remained a liability in 1818, clearly, they would not have been forgotten in 1813.


33. "Journal of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts," "Minutes, of the Washington Benevolent Society: 1812-1824," March 28, 1812, p. 7, *Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824*, MHS. Although I have found no direct evidence that the WBS directly communicated to the Central Committee, it seems impossible that it did not, considering Thomas H. Perkins, and William Sullivan were both members of the Central Committee and Perkins was a WBS founder, while Sullivan was its President in 1813 and 1814; also, it should be mentioned that Harrison Gray Otis's son worked his way up in the organization, serving as its secretary in 1819, "Journal of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts," *Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824*, MHS.


35. For voter participation see Fisher, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 188, which shows voter participation in 1812 stood at 68%; in 1813, 64%; in 1814, 64%; in 1815, 50%. The point being that after the WBS's formation in the state, voting participation rose and Federalists were getting elected (after 1812, Federalism held the governor's seat until 1823). Therefore the significance of the WBS in getting out the vote seems quite remarkable.

Tilden, March 28, 1812, document 49. See documents 59, 63, 66, 69-70, and 75 all contained in "Washington Benevolent Society Correspondence, etc., 1812-1818," Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824, MHS, showing Federalists from Plymouth, MA, Gloucester, MA, Marblehead, MA, Easton, MA, and Keene, NH asking for advise on how to set-up their own WBS.


38. There is evidence that the Boston Hussars were formed by the WBS and served as the society's primary protection force. The Hussars were trained by an individual named Roulstone who was first a stable-keeper and then a riding school instructor who served as the Hussars's cavalry instructor. Roulstone also was one of the original members of the WBS, see Prince, "Boston's Lanes and Alleys," 22-24. Also, Josiah Quincy served as the Hussars first "Captain of the Company" while he was the WBS's vice president, see Prince, "Boston's Lanes and Alleys," 24. "Washington Benevolent Society Correspondence, etc., 1812-1818," document 15; "Minutes of the Washington Benevolent Society, 1812-1824," April 14, 1812, April 4, 1812, April 30, 1812; "Washington Benevolent Society Correspondence, etc., 1812-1818," G.H. Stewart to Lemuel Shaw, Aug. 18, 1812, document 77, Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824, MHS. Fisher Ames as quoted in Formisano, Transformation of Political Culture, 133.


40. Ibid, 282.


42. Otis Williams to Arnold Welles, June 1, 1812, document 70; William Gordon to Lemuel Shaw, June 1, 1812, document 75, "Washington Benevolent Society Correspondence, etc., 1812-1818," Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824, MHS.

44. "Washington Benevolent Society," Columbian Sentinel, May 1, 1813, estimated the parade held 2000 people; the Independent Chronicle, May 6, 1813, estimated the number to be 1700, MHSform. Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 2, 93, for Strong's reelection numbers. For a breakdown of the procession see "The 'Art' of Faction," Independent Chronicle, May 6, 1813, MHSform. Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 308-309, for another description of the march. Morison, The Urbane Federalist, 255-257, which describes the April 30, 1814 WBS parade that proved larger than the 1813 celebration. Eliza Quincy's description taken from, Whitehill, Boston: A Topographical History, 66. It should be noted that Eliza's description is of the WBS's Washington's Birthday parade in 1815, though there is no reason to believe that the social composition of the 1813 parade was any different.


46. For Sullivan's comments see Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 1, footnote 1, 300. John G. Weld, "Sidelights of the Old Boston Militia Companies," Proceedings of the Bostonian Society, Jan. 18, 1949 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1949), 34, which describes the Hussar's as "the most extravagant" of all the militia; Weld claims the cost to be a member was $800, not including the expense of one's horse. Also, Weld identifies Quincy as its first Captain. Also, see, Prince, "Boston's Lanes and Alleys," 24, which inaccurately identifies the "John" Roulstone as the trainer of the Hussars, instead of "Micheal" Roulstone. Prince also provides the name of William Sturgis as a member of the Hussars. Sturgis was also a member of the WBS and became a leader in the Middling Interest party in 1821. McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 79, which suggests the Hussars might fight against U.S. troops if they came to crush Boston's anti-war sentiments. Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 346-347. For Roulstone's connection to the WBS see, "Journal of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts," Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824, MHS.

47. Josiah Quincy, April 30, 1813, as quoted in Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 309-316.

The Last Federalist, 80-82.


53. Morison, *Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis*, vol. 2, 104, which provides a tally of how the General Court voted. Morison's chart breaks down the legislative vote for or against the Hartford Convention by district, see footnote 20, 104.


57. Formisano, "From Deferential-Participant to Party Politics," 33. Kennedy, Planning the City Upon a Hill, 38.

CHAPTER III

MILITIAMEN, DEBTORS, DOWNEASTERNERS AND "DEMIGODS":
THE INGREDIENTS FOR INSURGENT ACTIVISM AND
FEDERALISM ON THE DEFENSIVE

"I always told you, Mr. Lincoln, that I was the most of a republican."
--Josiah Quincy to Levi Lincoln, Jr. 1821.

The financial panic of 1819 proved much more severe than the economic problems Boston faced during the embargoes and the war. As a consequence of the depression hundreds of businesses failed causing widespread unemployment in Boston. In 1823, the North American Review reported that "thousands [of] mechanics" were out of work due to the numerous bankruptcies within the city's mercantile and manufacturing sectors.¹ In June 1822, forty-two petty merchants in Boston stopped payment on their debts and faced jail time. In May, June, and July of that same year, one hundred Boston businesses, estimated to be worth a total of $4,000,000, went under.² More and more people were being sent to Boston's almshouse and many, for the first time, were "respectable" voters who had fallen on hard times.³

In 1820, the first copy of the Debtor's Journal circulated around town. The "Association of Gentlemen" who edited the Debtor's, announced their over-all goals were "to subdue aristocracy and promote our freedom and happiness, as Americans." The Debtor's demanded a
political response to the growing numbers of people imprisoned for debt. It attacked the state's debtor's laws through the press and in petitions to the General Court. According to the journal, "our debtors' laws are extremely oppressive to the poor debtors....[T]hey only serve as rods in the hands of tyrants to torture the unfortunate, while the more independent debtors have it in their power to escape the lash." "Viewing this," announced the journal's editors, "as a growing evil, and as repugnant to the laws of liberty and equality, [we] deem the subject worthy of legislative action."

Accumulating a remarkable total of 4,000 signatures, debtor advocates twice petitioned the state legislature for reform. They asked that work-furloughs for imprisoned debtor's be extended to include the whole of Boston instead of the traditional one or two block circumference around the debtor prison. The General Court responded by debating the issue, but refused to act. On September 23, 1820, the Debtor's reported that, "[t]he inhabitants of this town, or a majority of the legal voters, have petitioned for the limits of the prison to be extended over the whole town. By the influence of a petty remonstrance of 120 names, the petition has been rejected." Having no other recourse, debtor advocates filed suit against the town. "The petitioners, finding themselves attacked by a small, though spirited opposition [in the General Court]," reported the
Debtor's "immediately employed two gentlemen of the bar to defend their cause; and, (what is uncommon for Americans) were conquered by an inferior force." The debtor advocates had employed lawyer, Republican operative and future co-editor of the Jackson Republican, Henry Orne, to represent them in the Court of Sessions for the County of Suffolk in September of 1820. The attempt to reform the laws failed in the courts, yet the Debtor's Journal continued to be printed for another year, keeping the issue of debtor's law in the public eye.\(^5\)

The debtor movement in Boston is significant because of its advocacy for legislative reforms and for its identification of an oppressive monied aristocracy that threatened popular conceptions of democracy. "The rich man," heralded the Debtor's Journal, "is pondering over hoarded wealth, and devising means to save and increase it, while the real patriot, the man of honesty, is meditating upon...the means...to make men equal and happy."\(^6\) The debtor movement focused on class inequity—a particularly timely and popular theme for many trying to survive the depression-ravaged Boston. "With a sincere desire to...subdue aristocracy and promote...freedom and happiness," the movement helped redefine Boston's political standard by injecting class issues into the political dialogue—issues that unlike the economic crisis

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surrounding the War of 1812, the Federalist leadership refused to address.

As the numbers of those imprisoned for debt grew in Boston, the conservative, Federalist organ, the *Columbian Centinel*, found it could no longer completely ignore the debtors. The paper gave the issue credence by running an editorial debate. Although the *Centinel* stated that the existing laws "favored the honest and enterprising merchant, and show[s] no mercy to the rogue and is therefore much needed in this country," the paper also ran a counter-editorial. It argued, "the present severe laws against insolvent debtors as remnant of barbarism, as un-Christian, and as ineffectual." The *New England Galaxy*'s editor, Joseph T. Buckingham, no stranger to bankruptcy and debt, actively supported the movement in his paper.7

Having been born in Windham, Connecticut to a poor family, Buckingham was an autodidact who aspired to become a master printer. In 1796, at age seventeen, he secured an printing apprenticeship in New Hampshire before moving to Massachusetts where he worked for the *Greenfield Gazette* and then in the printing offices of Andrew White and William Butler in Northampton. Being dissatisfied with his position and filled with ambition, Buckingham embarked for Boston in 1800 to make his mark in the state capital. Within weeks of his arrival, Buckingham landed a job working for the city's largest printing press, Thomas &
Andrews. Impressed with Buckingham's printing skill, Thomas & Andrews in 1805 handed the firm over to Buckingham to manage. That same year, Thomas and Andrews offered to sell their press to him. Buckingham jumped at the chance, but quickly fell into debt. Soon he lost his press and resorted to teaching school and overseeing the printing firm of West & Richardson to make ends meet. Despite his failure, he had worked in publishing for twenty-one years and had become an expert printer, editor, and writer. It was these qualities that led prominent freemason, Samuel L. Knapp to come to Buckingham when he wanted to establish a weekly in Boston. In 1817, the first copies of Buckingham's new venture, the *New England Galaxy and Masonic Magazine*, were distributed throughout Boston. The paper catered to the city's large numbers of skilled workers and mechanics. Although the *Galaxy* promised to avoid "all partizanship [sic.]," by the panic of 1819 and fears of going bankrupt once again, Buckingham refused to stay silent. Between 1820 and 1822, in a flurry of editorials, the *Galaxy* attacked the Federalist dominated legislature for its stubborn support of the old debtor's laws which the paper described as reminiscent of the "barbarism of former times."³

Picking up the crusade when the *Debtor's Journal* went bankrupt, the *Galaxy* kept debt reform alive in the public mind. On national issues, the *Galaxy* was decidedly
Federalist, but Buckingham took great care to keep his paper out of the hands of the Federalist Central Committee. On local issues, such as debt reform, Buckingham assumed a decisively independent and individualistic view. As one appreciative reader explained in a letter to Buckingham, "[y]ou have not only been bold enough to assail the central committee—a knot of aristocrats—but you have ventured to attack aristocracy itself...Your paper remains alone unsubdued. Bribery, flattery, cowardice and corruption are the means by which your editorial brethren have been drawn into the monied aristocracy." Buckingham's commitment to maintaining an independent voice proved so successful that the Galaxy held a remarkably high subscription rate of over one thousand and enjoyed a loyal readership.9

Buckingham imitated the innovative class-based editorial approach of the Debtor's Journal, charging that the General Court "is so lost to humanity and common sense as to wish that the poor man should be punished for his poverty by even a single hour's imprisonment....Let the swindler who hides his wealth for the rightful owners and laughs at [the debtor's] disappointments and losses starve, die and rot in his dungeon." The "knavish rich," the Galaxy argued, who live "in affluence, [and] bring up a son or two at college, and a daughter in elegant and fashionable idleness" were unfairly protected by the
current laws, while the "honest poor" suffered imprisonment.¹⁰

As more and more Bostonians failed to make ends meet in the depressed economy, popular opposition to the debtor laws heightened political awareness and galvanized Boston against what it viewed as an unjust Federalist aristocracy that ruled from the cold towers of the General Court. Although the debtor movement had discerned a politically charged and consequential concern in Boston, this one-issue movement proved too narrow to construct a viable oppositional third-party that could disrupt Boston's traditional Federalist political structure.

The depression spawned another reform movement that emerged largely from the same social base as the debtor advocates in Boston. In the midst of depression, many artisans, journeymen, mechanics, truckmen, and laborers began to call for the abolition of the state's militia requirement laws. These skilled and semi-skilled laborers relied on a steady stream of task-oriented work to maintain economic solvency and independence. To be forced to leave the shop or a contracted job for militia duty could mean financial disaster for this sector of Boston's independent labor force—especially in the hostile economic environment caused by the depression. Reminiscing, Buckingham described the deep resentment the law provoked and the extent to which poorer people tried to avoid service.
Describing Henry Emmons, a journeyman friend, Buckingham explained that "[a]t a time when every man in Massachusetts between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were obliged to perform military duty, or suffer the penalty of refusal, he [Emmons] suffered imprisonment for his obstinacy, and in order to escape further annoyance for similar cause he assumed the dress and probably adopted the doctrines of the Friends."¹¹

Men such as Emmons felt deeply insecure about their solvency and popular opinion mounted against the Massachusetts militia laws that they believed to be oppressive, unnecessary, and a profound economic burden. Serving in the militia required one to have a functional rifle, pay for powder, shot, and buy uniforms (many of which were quite elaborate and expensive), as well as train for days at a time with no financial compensation, and take orders from an officer corps which was accurately perceived as being exclusively composed of wealthy elites. The militiamen correctly suspected that the militias were used by the Federalist party to indoctrinate them to the Federalist cause.¹²

Adding to both the frustration of those forced to serve and the energy of the movement was the militia law's class-based exemption policy. All clergy, doctors, schoolmasters, those in public service (elected and appointed), justices of the peace, secondary school and
college students as well as anyone the Governor deemed, were not required to serve, nor pay for their exemption. "Every dandy," complained the Galaxy, "who is afraid of a gun...[and] can push himself into the governor's presence, and help himself at his table, gets a commission as a justice of the peace, and laughs at his neighbor, who has to shoulder the musket....The truth is," the Galaxy concluded, "there is nothing reasonable in the system; and there never will be til the whole is renovated, and established on principles of equality." The requirement to serve in the military during peacetime and while a national depression gutted Boston's economy, angered the militiamen. Families suffered while sons and fathers, forced to postpone work often for weeks at a time, drilled far away from home. With little or no income during these periods, family debt naturally accumulated and fears of imprisonment loomed.

Identifying a direct link between debtors and militiamen, Buckingham adopted the militia reform movement and used his editorial skill to splice it with the debtor's movement. According to his Galaxy, "performance of military duty is considered a hardship....It is a tax, which is most unwillingly paid...[T]he military tax is paid by the poor" only. Then squarely linking the debtor's plight with that of the militiamen, and employing the anti-aristocratic rhetoric inherent in both movements, the
Galaxy charged that "[t]he laborer, whose daily tasks supplies but a pitiful morsel for the support of his family, is called upon for the same sum as the nabob who is worth million[s]. He is driven from his employment, and trained to the use of arms [and] for the defence of what? Of nothing that he can call his own--of the palace and treasures of his rich neighbor...."  

The Federalist Columbian Centinel responded in 1820 to attacks on the militia system stating that "[f]ree men ought ever to consider the privilege of bearing arms and honor not a tax." Few if any lesser Bostonians had the financial luxury to agree. In a three month period during that same year, one-hundred businesses failed in Boston and the prisons were filling up with debtors. By spring 1820, the militia reform movement organized a state-wide petition drive and presented its recommendation for the abolition of the law to the General Court. Much like its response earlier that year to debt reform petitions, the legislature ignored the citizen's call for reform.  

Although the Federalist party's Centinel continued to defend the existing law, wide-spread criticism steadily mounted within Boston. In part due to the General Court's consistent refusal to even address the instructions of the people--let alone follow them--political tensions based on lower class animosity toward the "FEW" heightened over both militia reform and debt imprisonment. By the opening
months of 1821, Boston's political landscape was ripe for an insurgency that could integrate both issues within an over-arching doctrine that heralded the injustice of popular subjugation to aristocratic rule.

Since the state was solidly Federalist, simply being a Federalist no longer automatically defined a legislator's position on a given policy. Internal squabbles not withstanding, the last word always came from the central committee, which demanded compliance with its final ruling. When Quincy and other younger Federalists party operatives had challenged the conventional wisdom of the party elders with the Washington Benevolent Society, the central committee eventually accepted the idea and sanctioned the WBS due to its effectiveness in strengthening the popular appeal of the party—something it desperately needed at the time. Had the committee rejected the society, the whole idea would have been scrapped and those Federalists who supported it, had they not fallen in line, drummed out of the party. Massachusetts Federalism proved flexible, but only to a point—and that point rested with the central committee. 17

By 1819, trouble brewed not only in the Federalist party's popular base, but also within sectors of its elite-based, partisan foundation. The political activities initiated by Josiah Quincy in 1819 are representative of the predicament Federalism faced. Quincy's role within the
Federalist party drastically changed once he returned from Washington and began focusing on local issues as a state senator. When serving in the United States Congress, Quincy could clearly define his enemies on partisan lines. During the "Virginia Dynasty's" rule in Washington, the Federalist party was clearly the underdog, and Quincy enjoyed the luxury of reacting against Republican policy. Once in the General Court, the issues for Quincy became much more complicated. Although, at first, he did not distinguish himself from other partisan Federalists in any significant way as a state senator, the issues that arose in 1819 forced him into an activist role and at loggerheads with the party leadership.

By 1819, Quincy had alienated himself from the committee and lost its support over Maine's separation from the state of Massachusetts. The central committee's Otis, Sullivan, and Perkins viewed separate statehood for Maine as an effective means to purge the state of the meddlesome problem of down-east Republicans in the General Court. Without Maine, one Federalists chieftain privately remarked that Massachusetts would become "a snug little Federal state for the rest of our lives."¹⁸

Quincy strongly disagreed. "On the question of the Separation of Maine," his daughter explained, "he was begged to vote with his party, but he chose to stand alone, against a measure which reduced Massachusetts from the rank
of a great State" to a minor one. Indeed, Quincy worried that significant national representation within the U.S. House would be lost if the state split in-two. According to Quincy, if the Maine district was allowed sovereignty, Massachusetts on the federal level would lose its flagship status as the premier northern state in "opposition to Southern predominance." Quincy also thought abandoning Maine's loyal Federalists was an act of irresponsibility on the part of the central committee. The down-east minority Federalist position would be pointlessly served-up and quickly devoured by the ravenous appetite of Maine's Republican majority. When the question came to the senate floor, according to Quincy's son, he "resisted the passage...with all the energy of his character," which was formidable.19

In June 1819, Quincy stood with the Republican leadership by actively leading the legislative opposition to the Maine bill in the General Court. First, he unsuccessfully tried to bury the proposal in a senate committee that would review the question of whether any bill advocating separation should first be approved by referendum before reaching the General Court. His motion was defeated by a senate vote of 24 to 12. Doggedly pursuing his position, Quincy changed tactics by presenting an amendment to the measure that would require two-thirds of the Maine district's electorate to vote in favor of
separation before the bill returned to the legislature for final consideration. This too was rejected. Despite his efforts, the Maine bill would come to a final vote in the senate on June 15th.\textsuperscript{20}

Having exhausted all parliamentary tactics to prevent the measure from reaching the floor, Quincy fell back on his ability at personal persuasion. He spoke against the bill for two hours. The Boston \textit{Daily Advertiser} reported the speech was "able, clear and forcible," but did not sway the senate. Quincy's major problem was the central committee's strong support for the bill which it had a hand in drafting. Finding its plans complicated by Quincy's obstinacy, the central committee found a worthy proponent in Federalist operative from Essex, Leverett Saltonstall, who rose to the senate floor in response to Quincy's appeal and delivered an equally long and more persuasive oration for the bill. When the bill finally came to a senate vote, Quincy stuck to his convictions and cast his vote with a bizarre coalition of Maine Federalists and Massachusetts Republicans that lost to an even more peculiar coalition of bitter traditional enemies; Maine Republicans and Massachusetts Federalists out-voted Quincy's forces by a margin of two to one. In a last ditch-effort, Quincy persuaded a Boston representative to introduce his amendment for a down-east referendum to the House when the bill arrived there on June 16th. By a vote of 83 to 168,
the motion for Quincy's amendment died in the House. The next day, the House overwhelming voted in favor of Maine's separation. Thus, not only had Maine gained its first step toward statehood, but Quincy, by his persistent opposition, had forfeited his standing within the Federalist party. 

At the time of legislative debates, the general electorate seemed largely apathetic to Maine statehood. Within two years of separation, however, the Boston press ran editorial after editorial chastising those individual Massachusetts legislators who had so easily allowed their down-east brethren to break-off. According to one observer, "the general feeling was one of regret at a decision which it had become too late to reverse." Some three years after separation, the independent *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal* which rivaled only the *Galaxy* in its lower-to-middling class readership, argued, as Quincy had during the debates, that the central committee of "the 'federal party'... favored the separation of Maine, in order that the Government of Massachusetts might longer remain in their hands." The *Bostonian* accused "the ranks of aristocracy" of tricking the people for their own selfish, partisan interests and--though after the fact--it now stood with Quincy against separation. 

The immediate political ramifications of Quincy's energetic and stubborn defiance of the central committee's standing orders were severe and came at great personal cost
to his political ambitions. Before the Maine bill debates, he had been slated by the central committee to fill Eli P. Ashmun's U.S. Senate seat once Ashmun retired. After his stand on the Maine bill, the central committee was so angered that by Quincy's defiance that it rejected his nomination to the Senate. Quincy's punishment did not end there. On March 28, 1820, for the first time since 1813, the committee's nominating list for the state senate did not include Quincy's name. In his place, the Federalist leadership nominated one of its own--insider, William Sullivan. The committee publicly justified dropping Quincy on the grounds that he "has not received for several years as many votes as the other senators had who were on the federal Ticket." One-time Federalist lieutenant governor and Quincy's uncle, William Phillips, was outraged and expressed "strong indignation at the ingratitude of the party." "I declare," Phillips confided to Quincy's wife, "if I was Mr. Quincy I would go out of Boston and shake its dust from my feet."24

By so doggedly positioning himself against the central committee and allying with the Republican opposition during the Maine debates, Quincy found himself ostracized by the party leadership. Harrison Gray Otis revealed the fissure between Quincy and the central committee could have been easily avoided "[i]f he [Quincy] had always voted at his party's call, and never thought of thinking...but he had an
inveterate habit of thinking for himself." As Quincy's son remembered, the central committee "look[ed] upon him as one whose political zeal might out run his discretion, and who could not be depended on in...partisan emergenc[ies]."

This, according to his daughter, "rendered him unacceptable to the Federal managers....[T]hey could not calculate on his obedience to them," so he was purged.25

Coinciding with these events, in spring 1820, the debtor and militiaman movements's anti-aristocracy rhetoric, with Buckingham's help, was laying the groundwork for viable third party challenges to the central committee's strangle-hold of Boston and the state. Before the April elections, the Federalist Columbian Centinel warned its readership of third party activity in Boston. "[B]eware of mixed tickets," it cautioned. In Essex and Salem counties attempts were made to establish a third party against Federalist domination.26

A month before the state elections, in March, the central committee fell under severe attack. Buckingham's Galaxy, on March 10, made its position clear: "We despise...the federal and all other juntos--and we should like to see the [end of the] central-committee, which has so long been the scourge and disgrace of Boston."27 The Galaxy's next issue suggested a radical plan for the restructuring of Boston politics, devoid of the central committee's influence. "At this important crisis, when the
incompetency of our Central Committee and Primary Caucus are so glaring, and when we are smarting under the disgrace which has recently been fixed upon us in consequence of their former folly and obstinacy, I would suggest," heralded "Vox Populi" in the pages of the Galaxy, "the expediency of taking measures for establishing a new Committee and Caucus, on the principle of a real representation of the wards; the ward delegates to be actually chosen by the...voters in each ward....[For] the junto...are only lovers of themselves [and] manage to monopolize those offices, which, for the honor of the town [Boston] and the good of the nation, should be given only to men of talent and patriotism."  

"For one caucus to determine the...future," the Galaxy argued in April, "is too absurd and ridiculous for the serious consideration of any but self-created dictators."  

Responding to the assaults, the Federalist press argued that "[t]he Central County Committee, in Boston, have existed ever since parties began; and have the same political origin, and been organized to advance the cause of Federal[ism] the same as the old Jacobin Club....Is it because the former have been so successfully frustrating all the plans of the latter," questioned the Federalist Centinel, "that they have become so obnoxious to their virulence and abuse?"  

Despite repeated batteries from the Galaxy and the Republican press, in the April elections
the Federalist party ticket held the state, holding a majority of eleven in the state senate.31

The events of 1820 generated an initial movement based on the legitimacy of a new third party committed to ward voting. Within two years, the ward voting issue would grow in popularity and the political party it nurtured would effectively serve as the umbrella under which the debtor's and militiamen's movements coalesced into a powerful coalition of popular interests. The Galaxy's charge that the Federalist Central Committee acted as selfish, "self-created dictators," supplied the common ground for all three movements to merge into a single insurgent party.

For Josiah Quincy, the Federalist "wire-pullers" overt rejection in 1820 caused him great bitterness and understandable anger.32 But Quincy also saw opportunity. His remarkably bold and independent actions over the Maine bill prompted many ordinary Bostonians to view him differently from Federalism's regular operatives. To many Bostonians, Quincy seemed to possess something quite unique for a Federalist leader—a highly independent character consistently unafraid of the central committee and the immense political power it wielded.

Some in the Federalist and independent press seemed confused by the central committee's draconian measures. The Boston Daily Advertiser asked "why [has] the name of Mr. Quincy [been] withdrawn?" Buckingham's Galaxy viewed
Quincy as one of the "few of our statesmen [who is] entitled to the esteem of [our] fellow citizens....[H]is friends, even those who disapproved of his warmth and impetuosity, refuse to acknowledge that he was an honest and upright, and independent politician. He ha[s], in some way or another," Buckingham explained, "become unpopular in the federalist party" leadership.³³ Considering the growing political dissension and dissatisfaction within Boston, this was not wholly bad for Quincy.

As the depression plundered ordinary Bostonians's household economies while the Federalist leadership did nothing, being viewed as an outsider from the Federalist "cabal" or "junto" could be exploited politically. Indeed, in March, 1820, a coalition of dissident Federalists and Republicans temporarily formed in Boston to successfully challenge the Federalist Central Committee's slate for the town's Board of Selectmen. In October, the same coalition, with the Galaxy's support, came dangerously close to upsetting Boston Federalist stalwart, Benjamin Gorham's run for Congress with its own Samuel A. Wells. Buckingham captured the anti-establishment mood of Boston in his Galaxy: "we would sooner vote for Beelzebub than for the greatest and wisest man in creation, who should be nominated by a secret cabal, a junto of purse-proud demagogues, who care no more for the interest or the welfare of the middling classes of society than the afore
mentioned Beelzebub." Having been purged from the "secret cabal's" nominating list, Quincy was viewed favorably in the eyes of those who supported the Galaxy's position.

Much to the astonishment of the central committee, after his censor from the party, in April of 1820, Quincy showed up at the Federalist caucus in Faneuil Hall. According to his son, "[h]is appearance there, which was...a great surprise, excited as general a curiosity to know what he was going to say...--a curiosity probably not unmixed with anxiety on the part of those who had engineered the dropping of his name from the lists of candidates." In particular, William Sullivan was there representing the central committee. When Quincy rose to speak before a packed audience of rank-and-file Federalists in Faneuil Hall, his daughter explained that it was the "turning point in my father's political life." According to Edmund Quincy, his father addressed the caucus "in such a strain of humor, [and] wit" that the "old walls shook with laughter and cheers." After sardonically explaining the "way in which he had been thrown overboard" by the central committee, Quincy endorsed the same Federalist ticket that had spurned him. In so doing, according to one observer, the oration made him "the most popular man in the town." Positioning himself in between the Federalist leadership and the party's rank-and-file,
Quincy, in one speech, enamored himself with ordinary Federalists. He had shown himself to be highly critical of the central committee, yet, all the while, selflessly loyal to the party as a whole despite its treatment of him. After 1820, Quincy's political strength would no longer come from the central committee. Instead, he would garner political popularity from a Boston electorate that viewed him as an honest and independent leader who had successfully stood up to the "self-appointed Federal dictators" of the central committee."

Quincy's daughter claimed that her father met head-on, "the desertion of the Federalist leaders," with a new found "spirit." Also, he had gained the support of many upper-class Federalists who deemed the committee's harsh discipline of him unjust. These men occupied a similar position within the party as Quincy had held before he had been purged. Men like John Phillips, William Phillips, Benjamin Pollard, and William Sturgis were established Federalist politicians. Nonetheless, they remained excluded from the inner councils of the Federal Central Committee dominated by Harrison Gray Otis, William Sullivan and Thomas H. Perkins. It was this group of dissident Federalists who continued to support Quincy despite the central committee's order. With John Phillips's support and influence, Quincy ran successfully for a position in the lower house of the General Court. Federalists loyal to
the central committee made his election difficult and Quincy just barely won a seat in the less prestigious House.\textsuperscript{37}

Understanding that he had lost the central committee's patronage and aware of the mounting popular criticism being leveled at the Federalist leadership, Representative Quincy amassed legislative support among both regular Federalists and Republicans. In one of his first acts in the House, Quincy angered the central committee by calling for a state-wide convention to rewrite the Massachusetts Constitution. "At 10 took seat in house of Rep." Quincy wrote in his diary. "[A]t meeting...on the subject of proposing to the people an opportunity of amending the constitution. Argued to pass such a resolution and appoint a committee to draft." With the Maine district gone, Quincy logically and persuasively argued that the old system of representation within Massachusetts was invalid and had to be revised. This caused an unforeseen dilemma for the Federalist leadership. The old constitution of 1780, according to one Massachusetts historian, "was the pride of the conservative men who led the Federalist party" from its strongholds like Hampshire, Essex and Suffolk counties. Support for Quincy's motion came from Republicans and representatives from the back-country districts like Berkshire and Worcester counties, as well as dissident legislators from Boston.\textsuperscript{38} By successfully
pushing through a motion for a convention to completely overhaul the constitution, Quincy pressed the central committee to face democratic reform impulses which it rather would have ignored.  

Employing the talents and influence of Governor John Brooks, the central committee lobbied tirelessly against a convention. Claiming the existing constitution had been "drawn by masterly hands" of John Adams, Brooks spearheaded the committee's position, arguing that any changes to the constitution should be drafted in committee by the General Court and then presented to the electorate for ratification. If done within the General Court, undoubtedly, all reformist influence could easily be checked by the Federalist dominated legislature. The central committee's Federalist press strongly bolstered the governor's recommendations in editorial after editorial, but to no avail. Stating that "the federal dictators, especially in and about Boston," were up to no good, the Independent Chronicle attacked what it identified as Federalist subterfuge against the will of the people. Despite the Federalist leadership's best efforts, the overwhelming opinion of both rank-and-file Federalists and Republicans prevailed. In a state-wide referendum the electorate voted by a margin of two to one in favor of a convention.
With convention delegates to be elected in town meetings throughout the state on October 6 and a commencement date set on November 15, the central committee rushed to devise a new strategy to control the convention. Much was at stake. If the reformers had their way, the apportionment of the senate would no longer be based on regional property holdings, but population. Federalist strongholds of Suffolk and Essex counties would loose their over-representation in the upper-house. As things stood under the constitution of 1780, the combined weight of these two counties sent a third of senate's representatives to the legislature. Also, reformers demanded that the legislature have more control over the state-supported college of Harvard. Reformers also wanted to end the state's support of Congregationalism which they viewed as unfair and discriminatory. Thus, the Congregational church's coffers were threatened by constitution reform. The independence of the state's judicial branch also fell under reformist attack. The independent court system, reformers charged, unfairly upheld the interests of the elite. Reformers demanded legislative authority over the courts. Also, they called for the codification of universal male suffrage, though practically, it already existed.⁴² These reforms were only the ones proposed before the convention met, although there were undertones that the militia and debtor's issues would be forced into
the convention's agenda. Who knew what would emerge at the convention once the delegates met on November 15th? Republicans like Levi Lincoln, Jr. from Worcester, James T. Austin from Boston, Henry Dearborn from Roxbury were unpredictable and publicly had vowed radically to amend the constitution. Making matters worse, the central committee believed delegates sympathetic to reform would hold the majority at the convention.43

Understanding its compromised position, the central committee quickly worked to consolidate its forces in an attempt to mitigate the potential damage constitutional reform could wreak on the status quo. Harrison Gray Otis discharged orders to his operatives throughout the state to support conservative Republican delegates who would be sensitive to Federalist orthodoxy. In the Republican power-broker and state Supreme Court Justice, Joseph Story, the central committee found its most effective champion. Though a loyal Republican, Story felt dismayed by his party's consistent attack on an independent judiciary. Republican and some Federalists reformers were calling for legislative authority over the judicial branch. Also, as the Galaxy charged, "[t]he little state of Massachusetts [with Maine gone] must still have as many judicial officers, and pay them as high saleries, as when she had three times her present territory, and a third more inhabitants." As the Galaxy further explained, during the
depression "when the farmer and mechanic are compelled to submit to low prices," why should not they "expect...some method to reduce the expenses of government,...by reducing [judge's] salaries or the number of salaries."^4 For Story, who, since 1809, had lobbied in the legislature for higher salaries for judiciary members, such sentiments were repugnant and secured his alliance with the central committee against reform.^45 Being perceived as a Republican partisan, Story would use his influence as a Republican to pacify the more radical reformist voices at the convention.^46

Cognizant of the committee's tactics, Republican reformist, P. F. Degrand seemed disgusted with the ineptitude of his fellow reformers during the elections for convention delegates. Writing to his friend John Quincy Adams, Degrand explained his frustration in trying "to move our political friends to a sense of importance of electing [to the convention] their own men."^47 In town meeting's throughout the Commonwealth, as in the convention itself, Federalist and Republican delegates were both supported and denounced by the central committee regardless of party. Traditional party alignments verged on being thrown into chaos.

On November 14th, a day before the convention opened, Story was summoned to Boston to meet with the central committee's newest rising star and Boston newcomer, Daniel
Webster. The gathering, which included other Republicans recruited to the cause, focused mainly on a new and ingenious strategy to undercut the majority power of the reformers. Webster's plan was to divide the convention into ten select committees. Each would have the task of evaluating each knotty constitutional issue being addressed at the convention. By controlling and framing the convention agenda in this manner, the most controversial concerns could be ignored and the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the entire constitution of 1780, as a whole, would never come under question, let alone fall under attack. Instead, the delegates and the issues would be sliced-up into ten detached pieces and buried in ten separate sub-committees. 48

The first essential step for the central committee to engage their plan was to secure the president's seat at the convention. It was the president's responsibility to appoint the chairman of each of the ten committees. If the anti-reformists could place one of their own in key chairmanship positions, the reformers could easily be controlled. Covering all their bets, Webster and Story decided to propose Federalist stalwart and chief justice of the Massachusetts supreme court, Isaac Parker and Story, as the Republican, for the position of president. No matter who won, the central committee would have its man. 49
The next day, with the opening of the convention, Webster and Story witnessed the fruition of their scheme. Parker won the presidency by sixty-five votes in a close election that pitted him against Story. Many of the delegates from the western part of the state had not yet arrived to the convention. Interestingly, disgruntled Federalist and Quincy's first cousin, John Phillips's name had been on the ballot, nominated as a third party candidate of sorts, and received fifty votes. Noting that many delegates were still making the long journey to Boston, the *Pittsfield Sun* of the Berkshire region argued Parker would have been defeated if the vote had not been rushed through the convention.  

Clearly disgusted by Federalist political subterfuge, Buckingham criticized Parker's election, stating, "this is the first time that a...judge of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts has put off the...unsullied robes of his office and entered undisguised and naked on the political arena, converting the hall of justice into a caucus room, and its bench into a forum for the promulgation of sectarian sentiments...." Jettisoning any remains of honorable disinterestedness, Buckingham exposed Federalism's descent into the petty politics of self-preservation. The Republican *Patriot* also reprimanded Parker, but went farther, charging that the convention was fraudulent to its core: "we very much disapprove [of] the
design and complexion of the whole [convention]. We cannot but consider it an injudicious [sic] attempt to influence the people, whose business it alone is, to alter and amend that Constitution....The people are competent to the task without the aid of Lawyers...."51

In spite of such criticism, the convention was masterfully rigged and the reformers largely defeated before the debates even began. Josiah Quincy had been elected as a delegate despite opposition from the central committee. Wisely, Parker appeased Quincy by appointing him to chair a committee which the Federalist leadership knew would limit his potential to disrupt the convention. As chairman of the committee selected to review Harvard college's relationship to the state, Quincy found himself toeing an anti-reform line. On Harvard, Quincy's loyalties were known and distinctly conservative. After Maine separation had so badly damaged the rank of Massachusetts as a leading state in the nation, Quincy foresaw the Commonwealth's only hope in regaining national authority was by maintaining and strengthening its cultural and educational foundations. Although the state may have become "second class in population, and of the lowest in extent of territory," it could emerge, despite its numerical inferiority, as a national beacon to steer the moral and intellectual course of the country. According to Quincy, the maintenance, support and growth of Harvard was
crucial for the Commonwealth to reacquire national authority. Needless to say, he was also a loyal alumnus. Thus, he endorsed and supported the continuation of state support for the college, despite reformist cries that Harvard was an elitist institution that had been "built up by the State," but wholly "above the control of the State government." 

The one reform Quincy adopted lay within the dogmatic qualifications required in the old constitution that any and all ministers on the Board of Overseers were required to be Congregationalists. With Quincy's support and endorsement, this provision was swept away and the committee recommended that "the constitution...be amended as to make ministers of the gospel, of any denomination, eligible to the office of overseers...." On other matters, Quincy bucked the Federalist leadership at the convention. During the debates on suffrage rights, Quincy distinguished himself from the central committee's representatives who fought to maintain the traditional voting qualifications. Under the constitution of 1780, voting rights were restricted to those who owned sixty pounds of freehold property or earned an income of three pounds annually. Because, in actual practice, this translated into universal manhood suffrage, the issue was largely inconsequential. Nonetheless, it took on significant symbolic value in helping to define the
convention's opposing sides. Reformers, such as Levi Lincoln Jr., asked that suffrage be extended to all of-age men who paid a state or county tax. According to Edmund Foster, a delegate from Littleton, "[m]en who have no property are put in the situation of the slaves of Virginia; they ought to be saved from th[is] degrading feeling." On this, everyone agreed.

On a closely related matter, Quincy presented a convincing case to restrict paupers from gaining the vote. Arguing that voting paupers damaged the status of the working poor, he presented an amendment to the convention floor. Quincy contended that his "provision is in favor of the poor, and against the pauper;--that is to say, in favor of those who have something, but very little;" Quincy's position was an old argument that distinguished between the worthy and unworthy poor.

The provision appealed to the lower-to-middling classes and debtors because it distinguished them from propertyless paupers. More importantly, Quincy convincingly argued that to bestow voting rights on a class thoroughly dependent on wealthy benefactors for its very survival was fundamentally undemocratic. Without his amendment, Quincy explained that "the poor man has...lost his political all; he has no power of indemnifying himself. Where as the rich, by the influence resulting from his property over the class of paupers, has the power of
indemnifying himself a hundred fold." Comparing the problems he predicted in pauper suffrage to his own personal anxieties about the future industrial course Massachusetts was taking, Quincy asked what barriers existed "to prevent manufactures [mechanics and factory operatives] from being absolutely dependent upon their employers... The whole body of every manufacturing establishment... are dead votes, counted by head, by their employers. Let the gentleman from the country consider, how it might effect their rights, liberties, and properties, if in every county of the Commonwealth there should arise... one, two, or three manufacturing establishments, each sending... from one to eight hundred votes to the polls depending on the will of one employer, one great capitalist."  

Quincy's arguments during the suffrage debates expose his great fear of a electorate susceptible to manipulation. Bribery of the weak could lead to a managed electorate. The implications, as Quincy viewed them, would be devastating to a free and independent electorate. Paupers would be forced into economic dependency by unscrupulous partisan operatives, robbing the society's most vulnerable of their independence. The electorate would fall victim to the corrupting influence of calculating partisans who would subvert the electoral system. Powerful interests would seduce society's most vulnerable members to surrender the
most revered emblem of citizenship— the freedom to vote one's mind. Under such circumstances, the key foundation of a democratic society— an independent and autonomous citizenry's right to vote— would be placed in jeopardy. Whether it be paupers so destitute that financial desperation drove them to sell their vote, or a future industrialized world where masses of worker-voters forfeit political autonomy to "one great capitalist," the result would be the same. The independent Massachusetts citizenry would be coerced into a state of dependence and thus, surrender electoral freedom.

Quincy's overt attack on the state's manufacturing interests appalled industrialism's advocates, like Daniel Webster. After Quincy's speech, one of the reformers most vocal representatives, James T. Austin, referring to Quincy, remarked, "[o]ne gentleman [has forewarned of] our becoming a great manufacturing people. God forbid." In their general opinion of the potential problems growing industrialization would have on the democratic process, Quincy and men like Austin agreed. On suffrage rights, they did not. Austin and George Blake, Republican delegate from Boston, forcefully championed the pauper's right to suffrage; yet, finding they held more in common than they thought, Quincy's and Austin's forces worked out a compromise provision that excluded paupers from voting, but gave the vote to all of-age men who paid taxes. As
mentioned earlier, the suffrage issue proved largely symbolic. The codification of new suffrage rights in the state's constitution did not increase voter participation in Massachusetts after 1821.\textsuperscript{61}

Despite Quincy's unpredictable nature, he, along with the reformers, had fallen victim to the central committee's covert scheme. All the significant issues raised during the convention were declawed and the constitution that emerged upheld the status quo. Interestingly, militia reform secured a spot on the convention's agenda, but all hopes for any significant changes in the law were quickly put to rest when Joseph Varnum of Dracut was appointed chairman of the Militia Committee. Varnum, a Republican, was the Major General of the Boston Brigade and, in 1820, had fallen under severe criticism by the Boston press for misappropriation of militia funds. Specifically, "A Friend to the Militia," in the \textit{Galaxy} accused Varnum of syphoning-off militia funds by giving them to his brigade quarter master, who happened to be Varnum's son. Clearly, General Varnum was highly invested in the maintenance of the existing militia laws. Chairman Varnum silenced the reformist voices in his charge and the committee did little more than insert a clause into the new constitution that allowed under-aged militiamen to vote for their officers.\textsuperscript{62}
In many ways, the militia committee symbolized the whole convention process. Despite the great potential for reform that the constitutional convention offered the people of Massachusetts, in the end, the reformers found themselves out-classed and overpowered by a Federalist machine that had employed the services of various anti-reform Republicans. As an exasperated Republican, reform delegate, Nathan Martin of Marblehead, somewhat naively pleaded, "[w]e know what's right, and what's wrong,...but it is not to be expected that we can express ourselves so politely; [we] who have not had the education" of the anti-reform forces. 

After the convention, Daniel Webster proudly wrote to his confidant, Jeremiah Mason, that "[w]e have got out as well as we expected....It was a great body, in numbers...tho'...there was a good deal of inflammable matter, & some radicalisms in it. We are exceedingly fortunate, in finding a considerable number of Gentlemen well disposed, who might otherwise have occasioned much trouble." Webster and Otis's strategy to control the convention had worked brilliantly. Writing to Mason, Joseph Story explained, "[t]here was a pretty strong body of Radicals, who seemed well disposed to get rid of all the great fundamental barriers of the Constitution. Another class still more efficient, and by no means small in numbers was that of the 'lovers of the people, alias the

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lovers of popularity.' The combination of the two classes sometimes defeated us, and always posed us with difficulties....It was no small thing to prevent sad mischiefs to the Constitution. The struggle for our part was not victory, but for the preservation of our institution. We were for the most part on the defensive: and...we have repelled the most popular attacks."

Although Story did not declare total victory, the central committee's ability to stave-off popular challenges to the constitution amounted to a significant triumph. The central committee successfully reached all its goals. It had purged the state of Maine Republicans and maintained a state constitution that benefited its interests. Even more significantly, the central committee could claim that neither maneuver had been done in an undemocratic manner or partisan manner--no one, that is, except Joseph Buckingham.

In a series of articles, the Galaxy attacked the convention for ignoring the economic devastation the depression inflicted on the ordinary citizens of Massachusetts. "What has the convention done?" Buckingham asked. "Nothing--absolutely nothing."
Explaining that the convention refused to address the depression ravaged state of the Massachusetts economy by not "lessen[ing] the state's expenses," Buckingham accurately accused the "rich" of rigging the constitutional process. "Every article of produce has fallen from 20 to
50 per cent with a few years. The farmer and the mechanic are compelled to submit to lower prices for their produce and manufactures, and to many deprivations....and had the right to expect that the convention would devise some method to reduce the expenses of government, either by reducing salaries or the number of salary-taking officers. The Convention itself," Buckingham figured, "will cost the state $70,000, at the lowest calculation--and who is to pay it? Not the judges--not the clergymen--for they are all of the privileged orders; not the stock-holders in banks--their tax goes to enrich the funds...to buy every man's vote....But the farmers and mechanic--the labourer; and the shopkeeper--who will [on top of] taxes, rents,...bad debts, and though last not least, the whole burden of military duty," will be forced to pick up the bill.56

In the same edition of the Galaxy, Buckingham included a speech given by Quincy at the Massachusetts Peace Society and followed it up with a very favorable editorial that was succeeded the next week by an equally positive article on the same speech. According to the Galaxy, the Peace Society, despite its being "the subject of sarcasm," contained "a few gentlemen...who saw and deplored [the] military fanaticism...pervading the country." Although Quincy's speech did not directly illustrate his opinion on the growing popular opposition to forced militia service,
clearly Buckingham discerned the connection when he ran both articles side by side.67

The bipartisan alliances made before and during the convention hastened and exposed the fragility of the two party system in Massachusetts. Just as members of both parties fought for reform, so too did bipartisan, anti-reform forces campaign vigorously for the status quo. During the debates, party alignment and the posturing of delegates on a given issue rarely corresponded.

Having distanced himself from the central committee during the debates, a day after the convention adjourned Quincy took advantage of the resulting partisan disorder and cultivated a new base of power. On January 10, 1821, disaffected Federalists and a remarkable number of Republican partisans elected Quincy Speaker of the House. According to the previous Speaker and leading Republican, Levi Lincoln Jr., "Mr. Quincy had never been so well understood as since the convention." Republicans like Levi Lincoln Jr. and James T. Austin, as well as Federalists, John Phillips and William Stugis, threw their weight behind Quincy and achieved what Lincoln claimed "no one would have" thought possible. As Eliza confessed in her diary, "I knew that my father was a candidate for [Speaker], but I did not expect his election." Illustrating Quincy's Republican support, Eliza recounted a conversation she had with Levi Lincoln. Lincoln stated "that no one was more
happy to see Mr. Quincy in the Speaker's chair than himself." Considering their past partisan warfare, this union between Lincoln and Quincy clearly revealed the growing dissatisfaction and fragmentation occurring within the Federalist party.

Since the beginning of his political career, Levi Lincoln Jr. consistently spoke-out vigorously against the Federalist Central Committee. Charging the committee with "intolerance and oppressive violence in electioneering," Lincoln argued that "[i]ndividuals have been threatened with deprivation of employment and an instant exaction of debt to the last farthing as a consequence of withholding a federal vote, or rather of not giving one." In his advocacy to change the basis of representation in the state senate during the constitutional convention, Lincoln posed the most formidable obstacle to the central committee's goals. He emerged from the convention with the distinction of being reform Republicanism's most powerful and outspoken spokesman. Feared and respected by the central committee, during the convention Lincoln forced the issue of senate representation onto the convention floor in the midst of imposing opposition. "Our government," Lincoln declared, "is one of the people, not a government of property....Property is incomplete to sustain a free government....Were it not for a government of the people, the people would be without property....It is only
necessary that all who are taxed should be represented, and not that they should be represented in proportion to their tax."70 As a spokesman for the central part of the state, an advocate for debt reform and the central committee's most influential critic, Quincy saw the great advantage of winning Lincoln's support.

Seventeen days after his election as speaker, Quincy hosted fourteen of the state's most preeminent Republicans and those Federalists who had supported him, at a formal dinner in his home on Hamilton Place. "I never expected to see Mr. Lincoln & J.T. Austin dining here," wrote an astonished Eliza Quincy. Quincy charmed his dinner company that night. To Lincoln he stated, "I always told you, Mr. Lincoln, that I was the most of a republican." Where Lincoln responded that he "did not expect to find that [he] was more aristocratic than [Quincy]."71 The dinner conversation, according to Eliza, was very jovial, "chiefly political" and indicates the initial preparations for a future bipartisan front to be launched against the central committee.72

Austin, a Republican activist from Boston, was considered by both Harrison Gray Otis and Joseph Story as a dangerous and influential trouble-maker. Writing of Austin that same year, Story described his fellow Republican as "hostile & impolite; and [someone who] essentially lowers the dignity of the great department he occupies."
Nevertheless, "[P]ublic opinion," Story warned Federalist, Jeremiah Mason, "begins to manifest itself considerably as to the merits of J.T. Austin....[T]he demagogues approve it; and the mob cries hurra...."73

Yet, if future articles are any indication, the editor of the influential *Columbian Centinel*, Benjamin Russell, who also attended the dinner, could not be won over that night by Quincy or his little circle of cohorts. Despite an editorial by Russell that had voiced subtle criticism of Chief Justice Parker's nomination to the convention's presidency,74 Russell's political positions were strictly restricted within the criteria set forth by the central committee. He had been richly rewarded for his loyalty. In 1819, Russell was admitted into the inner-circle of the central committee. Unlike Harrison Gray Otis and Thomas H. Perkins, Russell was not rich, nor was he ever going to be. Indeed, by 1844 he was penniless, sick and living in a boarding house. As a fellow Boston journalist explained, "Russell was proud of his character as a mechanic. To the mechanics, as a class, he was strongly and affectionately attached. [Having] associated with men of the highest rank...and even courted by some of the leaders of his party, he never forgot that he was a mechanic." Russell founded the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association and served as its president between 1808-1817.75 Also, Russell and Quincy enjoyed an old
friendship. Quincy knew Russell from the Washington Benevolent Society where both had served as high ranking members and together represented the cross-class basis of that organization. It was, perhaps, these qualities and feelings that prompted Quincy to believe Russell would be sympathetic to him and openly critical of the central committee. Unfortunately, Russell's loyalties could not be shaken. Quincy would have to find the editorial support he needed elsewhere. By the end of 1821, Quincy found his man and organ in the fiercely independent Joseph T. Buckingham and his *New England Galaxy*.

In May of 1821, Quincy's popularity in the House was reaffirmed when he was re-elected as Speaker. After reform's failure at the constitutional convention, Quincy's original position on Maine statehood became increasingly popular. With Maine's independence and the convention, many in the Commonwealth perceived a strengthened centralized political aristocracy in the form of the central committee that did, in fact, exist in the state and was, in fact, repressing the rights of the people. In such a light, Maine separation seemed a big mistake. "Since her separation from Massachusetts," explained the *Galaxy*, "Maine seems to be making rapid advances in improvements, while the parent state, clinging with ridiculous veneration to old, absurd, and anti-republican principles and customs, jogs on the beaten path; and if an attempt be made to
reform an error, to dispense with a useless office, or to reduce an extravagant salary, the author of it is immediately selected as a mark for the displeasure of our political oracles and aristocratic demigods....In Maine...people are allowed to vote for whom they please, without danger of oppression from the rich....But in Massachusetts, and especially in Boston, all the candidates...for ...chief magistrate of the state down to the keeper of the town bull, are selected by the 'Central Committee.'" "The deserving," have been "driven from your service," the Galaxy declared to Boston. Traditionally, the central committee so controlled the politics of Boston, the Galaxy argued that voters "might as well stay at home. [We ask voters] to break from this ignoble vassalage and act with independence [and fight against the] mere tools of a party, the pandar of a cabal."

A year earlier, the Galaxy, in similar fashion, had advocated third-party activism in Boston. The first challenge Buckingham posed to the people of Boston had been blunted by the Federalist machine. After the convention debacle legitimized popular fears of an oppressive aristocracy, growing economic dissatisfaction, and the advent of dissident Federalists like Quincy breaking from the central committee, Boston would meet Buckingham's challenge in 1822. This political insurgency would take advantage of the bipartisanship that grew out of the failed
reformist platform at the convention, the debtor's plight, the militia reform movement, the early call for a ward system, and other local issues that would arise in the upcoming year. Most importantly, the coalition would be held together by a deep distrust and even a hatred of the Federalist Central Committee, and by a new reverence for a revitalized and reconfigured political leader, Josiah Quincy.
Notes


2. Coleman, *Debtors and Creditors*, footnote # 17, 50.


4. "The Poor Debtor's Journal," *New England Galaxy*, Sept. 1, 1820, APSmicro, is a public announcement of the forthcoming journal which states the paper's purpose is to "open...discussions upon the subjects of Bankruptcy, poor debtors, debtor's laws, &c." Its publishers were Clark and Brown. *Debtor's Journal*, Sept. 23, 1820, APSmicro. Also see, Formisano's discussion of the debtor's movement in *Transformation of Political Culture*, 187-190.


162, which also provides much information of Quincy's legislative tactics against the Maine bill.


23. Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 26, 1823, AAS.


26. For third party activity see, [Boston] Columbian Centinel, April 1, 1820 and April 8, 1820, MHSform.


31. For election results see, Columbian Centinel, April 8, 1820, MHSform.

32. For Quincy's response to being dumped see, Eliza Susan Quincy (daughter), "Diary," 1820, Quincy micro; and Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 375-376.


36. Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 376-377. Unfortunately, Quincy's speech before the Federal caucus in 1820, has not survived; yet, according to his son in 1869, the memory of it was remembered at that late date, by those who attended the 1820 caucus. In a story run by the New England Galaxy, on April 6, 1821, APSmicro, entitled "Mr. Quincy," an account is given of a speech made by Quincy on April 1st, 1821 at the Federal caucus. The similarities between Edmund's and Eliza Quincy's account of the 1820 speech with the 1821 speech reported by the Galaxy are striking and, perhaps, indicate that Edmund (who based much of his biography of Quincy on the records and diaries of his sister) may have confused 1820 with 1821. McCaughey's Josiah Quincy, 1772-1864: The Last Federalist, 89, concurs with Edmund's 1820 date for the speech, but is, according to its notes, also relying on Eliza's diary. In any case, if the Galaxy's dates of Quincy's speech are accurate, Quincy was still quite embittered about the central committee's treatment of him as late as 1821.

37. Eliza Susan Quincy, "Diary," 1820, Quincymicro. For elite Federalists who supported Quincy see, Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 377-378; McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 101-102, 88-89.

38. Josiah Quincy, "1818-1828 Diary," June 6, 1820, Quincymicro; Quincy's diary during this period, unfortunately provides little insight into his own partisan/political actions or the politics of the day; mostly the diary contains material relating to his in depth readings of Cicero, and other classical writers, as well as, material relating to his personal discussions on the Revolutionary era with John Adams. Merrill D. Peterson, ed., Democracy, Liberty, and Property: The State Constitutional Conventions of the 1820s (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), 3, 4-5.

39. Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 2, 235. Peterson, Democracy, Liberty, and Property, 6-7, where Peterson concludes that Quincy played a conservative role in the convention upholding the Federalist cause against liberal reformers. I disagree with Peterson's conclusion. Peterson neglects to mention that Quincy was the first to propose restructuring the constitution and also, he does not place into context Quincy's deflated role within the Federalist leadership. As we shall see, Quincy gained such significant Republican support while serving in the convention that at its conclusion, he was elected.
president of the House of Representatives with the strong backing of the Republican leadership, see Eliza Susan Quincy, "Diary," Jan. 27, 1821, Quincymicro.


41. Morison, The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, 234-235. [Boston] Independent Chronicle, June 7, 1820; also see June 10, 1820, June 14, 1820, June 20, 1820, as quoted in Sheidley, "Preserving 'The Old Fabrick,'" 122. The referendum vote came to 11,756 for, to 6,593 against, see Peterson, Democracy, Liberty, and Property, 18.


48. Sheidley, "Sectional Nationalism," 77-80. It should be noted that my discussion of the Constitutioonal Convention in this section relies heavily on the thorough and extensive research, and analysis of Harlow Sheidley. Sheidley has done remarkably solid work in exposing the tactics employed by the Federalist conservative elites during the convention. I am indebted to his work on this subject. For the structure of the convention see, Peterson, *Democracy, Liberty, and Property*, 3-17 and footnote 46.


56. One delegate at the convention explained how the property qualification for voting rights was often gotten around by those who may not have qualified: the question would be asked, "what property have you? have you the tools of your trade? Yes. What else? A pair of steers my father gave me. And if this was not enough, then he said, a note, which is never intended to be paid, makes up the balance," as quoted in Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 141; as this quotation clearly indicates, the qualifications for voting easily could be subverted. For Lincoln's position on suffrage during the convention see, Hon. Charles C. Haswell, "Death of Ex-Governor Lincoln," *The Boston Journal*, as reprinted in *A Memorial of Levi Lincoln the Governor of Massachusetts From 1825-1834* (Boston: J.E. Farwell & Co., 1863), 57. Peterson, *Democracy, Liberty, and Property*, 11, 61.

57. Quincy as quoted in, Peterson, *Democracy, Liberty, and Property*, 65.

58. For an explanation of the origins and perpetuation of this distinction between the "worthy" and "unworthy" poor in Boston see, Eric C. Schneider, *In the Web of Class: Delinquents and Reformers in Boston, 1810s-1930s* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 4, 23, 25, 30, 45, 106, 190.


61. Morison, *Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis*, vol. 2, footnote #2, 235, which provides voting statistics for the governor's races between 1815-1824. According to Morison's statistics, in 1820, after Maine's separation, but before the establishment of the new constitution, the total number who voted was 53,648, compared to 1822, after the new constitution took effect, when the vote was 49,664. In the heated gubernatorial race of 1823 that pitted Harrison Gray Otis against William Eustis, the number rose to a total of 64,573, yet Morison's point still stands that the codification of new suffrage laws, did not increase the numbers of those who could vote. For historians who reached a similar conclusion see, Formisano, *Transformation of*
Political Culture, 141, and Peterson, Democracy, Liberty, and Property, 11.


68. Levi Lincoln as quoted in Eliza Susan Quincy (daughter), "Diary," Jan. 27, 1821; Jan. 10, 1821, and, Jan. 27, 1821, Quincymicro.

69. In every partisan issue before the convention of 1820-1821, Quincy and Lincoln held diametrically opposite positions. Most representative of their differences, is their opposing positions on the War of 1812. Despite many Massachusetts Republican's hesitation in supporting the war, Lincoln adamantly supported the administration, see, Delano A. Goddard, Boston Daily Advertiser, in A Memorial of Levi Lincoln, 51.

70. Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, June 2, 1805, as cited in Robinson, Jeffersonian Democracy in New England, 73. Hasewell, "Death of Ex-Governor Lincoln," 56-57. It should be noted that Lincoln's opinion on voting qualification (all of-aged men who paid taxes should be allowed to vote) was successfully codified in the new constitution; but reform in the basis of representation in
the state senate was not achieved. In the convention's "Address to the People," it states on the matter of representation in the senate, "[w]e have not thought it expedient...to make any fundamental changes in this department." This proved a significant victory for the central committee which would continue to enjoy Federalist domination of the senate due to the over-representation of Suffolk and Essex counties; see, Peterson, *Democracy, Liberty, and Property*, 114.

71. Both Quincy and Lincoln as quoted in Eliza Susan Quincy (daughter), "Diary," Jan. 27, 1821, Quincymicro.

72. For a full description of the meeting see, Eliza Susan Quincy (daughter), "Diary," Jan. 27, 1821, Quincymicro.


76. Russell had worked his way up in the WBS organization, serving on the standing committee at the organization's inception in 1812; then in 1813 becoming its 6th vice president; in 1814, he became its 4th ranked vice president; in 1815, he ranked as its 2nd vice president which proved the highest he rose in the WBS, see "Journal of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts," Leadership Lists, *Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824*, MHS.

"'the moon had come nearer the earth...and had made some men mad.'"  
--an observation of Boston Town Meeting, Dec. 1821

"The People...were determined....It was in vain to contend."  
--William Sullivan to Harrison Gray Otis, Jan. 1822

In the midst of depression and the shrinking local economy, many Bostonians struggled not only under burdensome state militia laws and fear of imprisonment for indebtedness, but also under a corrupt and inefficient tax system. What proved truly irksome for all but a few was the realization that the town had no power to reform its own tax codes. Many had expected the state Constitutional Convention, as Joseph Buckingham put it, to "devise some method to reduce the expenses of the government." But, the convention had failed the task and achieved little to ease the heightened sense of economic insecurity that average Bostonians felt.

With popular enthusiasm in Boston for meaningful tax reform peaking in the spring of 1820, integral political realignments soon followed. By 1821, vocal, cohesive and widespread third party activism erupted, shaking Boston's traditional political status quo. Defenders of the militiamen, debtors and Boston's ward voting advocates consolidated their forces around the call for tax reform
and used the issue to transform Boston's political structure toward a much more democratic system. By the winter of 1821-22, this coalition directly challenged the town's Federalist order. Stemming from what first seemed a fairly benign impulse for moderate reform, a successful endeavor to dramatically alter Boston's traditional system of governance occurred that ushered in a new municipal city structure to Boston.

Coinciding with the rise of this coalitional insurgency and its demand for the radical restructuring of municipal governance, Josiah Quincy's problems with the Federalist leadership intensified to the breaking-point. His defiance during the Maine statehood question and within the Constitutional Convention placed him and the central committee at each other's throats. After being reelected as House speaker in spring 1821, Quincy escalated tensions when he began to publicly criticize the Federalist Central Committee. Reinforcing popular sentiments in Boston, he openly lashed out at the party leadership charging that "the most prominent [fault of the central committee] was apathy." On April 1, 1821, he presented a cutting speech enumerating the severe problems he detected with the central committee's command of the Federalist party. 

"[T]hey care nothing about offices," Quincy alleged, "[a]nd this is one of their greatest faults....There is scarcely a man among them fit for an office. And this is the reason

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why they fish up every crooked stick that floats...and make a mast of it." Clearly still embittered by the committee's decision not to nominate him to the state Senate the year before, Quincy explained in the third person that "he had liked the [senatorial] office, and had no objection to serving several years longer. He was snug in his birth," Quincy claimed, "when these gentlemen [the central committee], without saying, with your leave, or by your leave, turned him out--tumbled him overboard into the saltwater." Conceding that "[t]his gave him something of a shock," Quincy concluded that the central committee was guilty "of turning their officers over-board and making shark's meat of them." He explained that since the central committee had behaved "rather uncivil to him," he had reached out to "our good friends the democrats." Quincy speech conclusively attacked the central committee, while further distancing him from the Federalist party leadership.  

The relationship between Quincy and the central committee had become irreconcilable and each knew it. For many in Boston, Quincy seemed a concerned and independent voice--one that understood the problems faced by the vast majority of Bostonians. The Galaxy carried the whole of Quincy's speech and lauded its message. "There are few of our statesmen," Joseph Buckingham proclaimed, who were
"more entitled to the esteem of their fellow-citizens, than the Hon. Josiah Quincy."³

Less than three months after the ratification of the new constitution and two months after Quincy's speech, in June 1821, the tax revolt ignited in Boston. Eventually this issue would dramatically change the governmental structure of the town and Quincy would combine his voice with a host of other outraged Bostonians struggling to be heard above the customary Federalist clamor that habitually enveloped the people's injunctions.⁴ The modus operandi for tax reform ironically developed out of one of the few new opportunities given to local communities within the Commonwealth by the new conservative constitution. Specifically, Bostonians employed section 11 of the 1821 Constitution, which sanctioned the establishment of cities within the Commonwealth, to achieve some sense of equity within the town.

Before the convention convened, beginning in the summer of 1820, moderate proposals in Town Meeting aimed at reducing the average Bostonian's taxes were met with fierce opposition by the county bureaucracy charged with assessing, collecting and dispensing Boston's tax revenues. This audacity on the part of the county authorities clearly demonstrated to most Bostonians the town's inability to oversee its own affairs.
In May of 1820, Boston Town Meeting approved a plan that would, in the up-coming year, consolidate the Town and County Treasurer's offices into one department. The original petition modestly argued such a merger would prove much more efficient and help reduce the tax burden. Because the proposition overextended the designated authority of the town and expanded into Suffolk County's legal domain, the state legislature had to amend existing law before the merger of offices could occur. Secondly, a gubernatorial appointed judicial body that controlled county tax monies and made-up of the much hated Justices of the Peace, the Suffolk County Court of Sessions, also had to sanction the proposal before the reform could be enacted.

Although it took a year, in May of 1821, both the General Court and the Court of Sessions approved the plan as "proper and expedient." Then, unbeknownst to anyone in Boston, on June 11, 1821, the Court of Sessions reversed its decision. At Town Meeting on June 15, Boston's selectmen had gotten wind of the court's retraction, and reported that the Court of Sessions had defied the town's request by appointing two treasurers "at an increased expense" to Boston's tax paying citizens. Bostonians were furious. "Curiosity is alive," the Galaxy sneered, "to know the reasons why the purposes of the town has been
defeated; and a spirit of indignation seems to pervade all classes of citizens."

Such "disrespect to the People,...utter disregard to [their] interests, [and] total want of respect to themselves in their official capacity," led to a Town Meeting resolution that stated the Court of Sessions was "unworthy of the public trust and confidence." Also, tax paying Bostonians became concerned when the Boston press reported that $9,763.40 in county tax revenues under the direct control of the Court of Sessions could not be accounted for. "How happens it," Buckingham asked in the Galaxy, "that the court of sessions gave a statement of the probable expenses of the county, $20,000, and yet drew upon the town treasury for $29,762.40?"

A committee, appointed by the town and led by William Tudor, immediately formed to look into how the court spent county tax monies. Tudor's committee was to conduct a thorough audit of the Court of Sessions and the report back to the town. Furthermore, an angry Town Meeting on July 2 appointed a second committee, chaired by town selectman and Boston shopkeeper, Lewis Tappan, to investigate widespread accusations that the whole tax system was thoroughly biased--favoring Boston's large property owners at Boston's more modest property holders' expense.

For years ordinary Bostonians had grumbled over the tax code, claiming that it unfairly accommodated "certain
rich men, who *magnanimously* retire to their county seats...in order to avoid the [Court of Session's] assessors." But not until the court had so blatantly gone against the will of Boston were concrete accusations of corruption leveled on the court. Without doubt, the militia exemption policy for all justices of the peace and their high incomes (averaging $3000 a year)\(^3\) added to the animosity.

By September many property owners with moderate holdings strengthened their indictments, claiming that court's assessors accepted bribes from large property owners who were buying favorable assessments.\(^4\)

Assessments held particular monetary significance for Boston's property owners due to the nature of the tax codes. Bostonians who owned real estate faced triple taxation. State tax required each citizen above the age of sixteen to pay a minimum of fourteen cents annually, plus a percentage on assessed property; county tax was based on one's assessed property, as was the town tax. If tax evasion--through bribing assessors or escaping Boston during the assessment period--proved impossible for the struggling, small property owner, he would be forced to pay three levels of taxes.\(^5\)

At Town Meeting in September, Tappan's committee, in a carefully worded report, only hinted at corruption while boldly asserting endemic unfairness in the tax system. The
committee found that "checks can and ought to be made on [the assessor's]...ability to abate taxes [because]...opulent citizens do not hesitate to exert persevering personal application to the Assessors until they obtain reductions of their taxes." Reaffirming what most ordinary Bostonians already knew, Tappan reported that indeed many of Boston's wealthy fled to their country estates during the April assessment period and those who stayed in town often threatened to leave if their property assessment outstripped their tastes. Less wealthy property owners faced with having to fight off bill collectors during the depression and who were desperately trying to maintain their modest holdings within the town deeply resented such obvious injustice. Such deceit and selfishness by wealthy Bostonians who could easily afford such taxes, exacerbated the growing wedge between the lower-to-middling and the upper class. This anger helped forge a unified middling class-based sensibility that eventually expressed itself politically. As "Brutus" complained in the pages of the Galaxy: "the power of wealth has corrupted the virtue and subjugated the influence of the many, to the selfish purposes of the aristocratical few."16 "Another complaint to a considerable degree well founded," Tappan charged, "is that the richer classes of inhabitants are not proportionally taxed with those of smaller property. [The small property owner] is unequally
taxed in proportion to those who are as rich or richer."¹⁷
This class-based perception of injustice would significantly help define insurgent activism.

After the Tappan report, Tudor rose to deliver the results of his committee's audit of the Court of Sessions expenditures of county tax monies. He reminded Town Meeting that Suffolk County contained only two towns, Boston and Chelsea, and that, in 1820, Bostonians, as always, had paid the lion's share of county taxes at $25,332.25, while Chelsea only contributed $187.63 to the county coffers. Since Boston paid over 95% of the county taxes, Tudor argued that the hub was fully justified in its attempt to find out where its money went, especially when (referring to the missing $9,763.40), "[i]t would seem...obvious that there must be some waste in our expenditure."¹⁸ According to Tudor, when the committee requested to inspect the court's expenditure records, the justices refused, arguing "that as the court was not appointed by the Town, it could not...render an account of its doings." Undeterred, Tudor's committee by-passed the court, going directly to the County Treasurer's office and demanded to see the records. The treasurer complied, but as Tudor explained, the committee "found themselves checked in the outset, by a want of the Schedules...all of which...have been taken out of the files." The committee, he confessed still had "not been able to find them."¹⁹
Accusing the Court of Sessions with a cover-up, Tudor charged that "this inferior department of justice seems liable to many objections under its present system; that the immediate expense is perhaps the least of its evils." Because "of these circumstances," Tudor's committee recommended that the Town institute yet another committee "to ascertain whether the Court of Sessions cannot be...abolished." After printing and distributing the Tudor Report throughout Boston, Town Meeting on October 22, overwhelmingly voted in favor of such a committee.  

When this third committee, spearheaded by Stephen Codman, concluded that the best way to abolish the Court of Sessions was for Boston to become its own county, others in the press and in Town Meeting began urging that an even better solution might be found. "If we adopt a city," one Bostonian argued, "we shall have the same beautiful, definite and efficient system, which we admire so much in its operation in our state and national concerns....The whole authority...emanating from the people." The move to make Boston a city would intensify conflict between the Federalist leadership and the aspiring forces of political insurgency.

Even before the tax revolt, Boston's town meeting system of government periodically had fallen under criticism. Many charged that it was fundamentally undemocratic. As early as 1820, "Brutus" matter of factly
stated that "in Boston,...a monied aristocracy has absolutely more sway and is more adverse to our boasting republicanism, than a legalized aristocracy of birth." Even Josiah Quincy who was highly skeptical of abandoning the old town meeting system, recalled when writing his history of Boston that not only were there "no direct check or control; no pledge for fidelity," on the "agents of the town," but also typical "town meetings were usually composed of the Selectmen, the town officers, and thirty or forty inhabitants" at best. Buckingham's assessment of Boston's traditional system was even more withering. "Sometime fifteen or twenty, seldom more...do all the business of a town that contains near seven thousand voters," he explained. Also, "[i]t is well known," continued the Galaxy editor, "that, in Town-Meetings, when a subject of great importance is to be referred to a committee, the moderator...nominates three, five, or more, of the citizens present to...select such a committee....Now it hath chanced that these gentlemen...have been under the disagreeable and embarrassing necessity of announcing themselves as the fittest persons that could be found to form the committee. This is a terrible evil," Buckingham charged, "and to get rid of it no sacrifice can be too great." "It is yet to be hoped," heralded "Brutus," "that the middle and lower classes of the community...will
tread back the path of error and endeavor to rescue themselves" from such domination.  

Ironically, the direct democracy promised by the town meeting system was routinely subverted by a small handful prominent Bostonians who dictated policy by their control of Town Meeting procedures. Using the parliamentary rules and practices of the town meeting system, the policy course of Boston fell under the direction of a few men with specific economic interests. Disgusted with selfish upper-class rule, Boston's middling interests demanded more democracy while Josiah Quincy sought the means to recapture the power that had been denied to him by the Federalist hierarchy.

When Federalist central committeeman, William Sullivan gained the appointment to chair the committee responsible for "remedy[ing] the present evils" of the town, Buckingham's assessment of the exclusivity inherent in the daily operations of Town Meetings was confirmed. Yet, "Brutus's" appeal to ordinary Bostonians had not been forgotten. When the Sullivan committee returned to Town Meeting with a proposition that fell far short of establishing a city charter, a jammed-packed and unruly Town Meeting overwhelmingly rejected Sullivan's proposal and demanded that the committee be enlarged to include one representative from each of Boston's twelve wards. These independent men, it was thought, could sincerely forge the
town into a city without being influenced by the Federalist Central Committee. Buckingham strongly praised the independent course taken by Boston's citizenry. "The Municipal Affairs of Boston," heralded the *Galaxy* on December 14th, "are...to be set right at last. The long experience, the profound legal learning, the acute, penetrating mental powers, and the disinterested political views of some of the venerable young members of the new committee, to whom the report of the old one was recommitted, afford solid ground to hope the errors and prejudices of our...Sullivans, and...Jacksons, will be corrected. Old folks used to think young ones to be fools, but our young folk know the old ones to be so. There can be no doubt,...that a complete system of municipal government will be reported, and joyfully accepted by the citizens at the adjourned meeting....[A]ll our old abuses corrected, and the honors of the new system fairly distributed."26 By the end of 1821, a growing consensus in Boston demanded the termination of the traditional town meeting system and the drafting of a city charter as a means of challenging Federalist rule.

Four earlier attempts to abolish the town meeting system and institute a city government in 1784, 1792, 1804, and 1815 had drawn great numbers and faced staggering popular opposition in Town Meeting. Each time the proposals were defeated. In the past, Bostonians fought
off any dramatic alteration to the town meeting system for fear that a centralized city structure would weaken majoritarian rule. Before 1821, all attempts to change the traditional system were instigated by the Federalist elite to further consolidate its power within the town. On this issue, a normally inactive Boston electorate in town meeting had consistently become active. Clearly Bostonians in the past seemed to have understood elite strategy and rallied to crush all earlier city proposals by saturating Faneuil Hall with vocal opponents to the post-charter plans. In response, Federalist elites changed strategy and abandoned their calls for a centralized city government. Instead, they successfully consolidated power in Boston by assuming leadership positions in Town Meeting which resulted in their domination of Boston's civic matters.27

By 1821, popular attitudes dramatically changed. Boston's new-found acceptance of municipal centralization was fostered initially by the town's disadvantaged position within the Suffolk County, the corruption within the tax assessment process and a distrust of the Court of Sessions. On top of this, a large voting block came to embrace municipal change as a means to firmly establish ward voting within Boston. Ward voting meant more power to the disaffected. Although minor town bureaucrats traditionally were elected by ward, town selectmen and all state, and
federal representatives, were elected at-large in Faneuil Hall.  

Since the 1820 state elections, ward-voting proponents forcefully advocated the setting up of decentralized polling stations throughout Boston. In that year, numerous articles and editorials in Buckingham's *Galaxy* ridiculed the at-large voting system as "absurd and ridiculous"—an outdated system, "manage[d]...to monopolize those offices" by the Federalist Central Committee "junto." By the winter of 1821, the supporters of ward voting, some of whom had taken on the title of the "Middling Interest," viewed the chartering initiative as a prime opportunity to codify their aspirations for a more democratic voting system into the new municipal structure of Boston.

Ironically, the Federalist Central Committee also came to support a city system, but for very different reasons. Men like Sullivan, Thomas H. Perkins, and Harrison Gray Otis agreed with the popular criticisms of the power held by the Court of Sessions, but more importantly, they viewed a city structure in much the same light as Federalist elites had in earlier years. To the Federalist leadership in 1821, a city charter potentially could offer the means to strengthen its power within Boston, but only if it could control the charter's drafting. Paradoxically, the two combative factions had hit upon the same strategy to achieve their opposing goals. For Harrison Gray Otis's
individual political ambitions, a city structure meant even more.

Otis served in the U.S. Senate since 1817. During much of his tenure in Washington he found himself discredited and ineffectual due to his unpatriotic participation in the Hartford Convention. In an attempt to rectify his political reputation, between 1817 and 1818, Otis spent much of his time collecting and organizing as much material on the convention as he could find. In 1819, he edited and drafted a public defense of the convention. Hoping his "Letters Developing the Character and Views of the Hartford Convention" would finally silence the constant badgering and criticism he faced on the Senate floor, Otis published his appeal in the Washington National Intelligencer under the pseudonym "One of the Convention." When his defense collapsed, Otis began planning a hasty escape from Washington politics. As he wrote to Connecticut Federalist and the Hartford Convention's secretary, Theodore Dwight, in 1821, "a boundful allotment of the odium attached to the Hartford Convention has been heaped upon me." Claiming "'the hounds are all out,'" sniffing and baying him, Otis plotted his next political move. 31

Irritated and consistently checked in the Senate, Otis set his future ambition on the Massachusetts governor's seat. His friend and Federalist compatriot, John Brooks
let it be known that he would not seek reelection in 1823, opening up the way for Otis to move in. Coinciding with Otis's decision to run for governor, the city chartering controversy raged in Boston. Seeing an opportunity in Boston's call for a city system, Otis devised a strategy to insure his assent to the governor's mansion. He would become the first mayor in Massachusetts and use this highly visible position to launch his campaign for the governorship. As Eliza Quincy recalled, "Mr. Otis...was put up for Mayor, and it appeared that a plan had been formed by a number of politicians, that he should be the first Mayor, as a stepping stone to the Governor's Chair, & would then have the arrangement of the City offices & salaries & could then reward partisans who had proposed the City Charter through the Legislature for this purpose." In early January 1822, Sullivan assured the Senator, "[i]f you incline to live in 'the Mansion House,' I will mount the stamp for you,—as will many other who can do more than I."32

Driven by such ambition, by December of 1821, Otis became highly invested and deeply involved in the details of the chartering committee. Sullivan pledged to do all he could for his old friend and ally, "whom," he "expect[ed] to see engaged at the labour of putting the [city] machinery in motion." Reassured by Sullivan's unswerving devotion, between December 1821 through January of 1822,
Otis shot off a litany of firm instructions to his operatives in Boston from Washington, thus securing his influence in the town committee charged with forging the city charter. "It is easier to manage the town of Boston," he advised Sullivan, "by a Lancastrian system of political discipline than to institute numerous schools."

"[G]ive...[the Mayor] a right, without imposing an obligation to ask advise," from other city officials. The executive, according to Otis, must have the "veto upon...laws (such as relating to taxes and taking away private property)....[G]ive him the power to ride out the squalls." Although he had no intention of serving as mayor for more than one year, Otis directed Sullivan to ensure that the Mayor "be appointed for more than one year at a time....If you [Sullivan] make your mayor respectable by giving him high authority you will give him auxiliaries to try the whores and rogues." Otis also strongly urged that the mayor should receive a "good salary." On ward voting, Otis was most adamant. "If it is done in wards, the town will be revolutionized."

Unfortunately for Otis and his operatives, Boston's insurgents who supported the charter viewed ward voting as the essential element to any acceptable proposal for a city structure. Indeed, the enlarged Sullivan committee, charged with drafting a city charter, contained twelve new members, two of whom were Boston's most vocal proponents of
ward voting and were the founders of an embryonic third party in the form of the Middling Interest: riding instructor, from the 6th ward, Michael Roulstone and the wealthy disaffected Federalist, William Sturgis of Ward 10. Potentially, these committee members could obstruct Otis's specific designs for the new charter.

Applying similar tactics employed during the constitutional convention, Otis's forces seduced at least one of the "venerable young members of the new committee," Republican Gerry Fairbanks into the fold. As a leading member of Boston's minority party, Fairbanks feared the politics of Roulstone and Sturgis perhaps even more than the Federalist Central Committee. If the third party activism which these men advocated gained significant appeal in Boston, it would disproportionately damage the Republican party much more than the Federalists who traditionally enjoyed majority status in Boston. Republicanism's position in the town had always been tenuous and its chronic vulnerability could be easily exploited by a third, coalitional party that would address the grievances of Republicanism's traditional constituency. Fairbanks correctly surmised that rank-and-file Republicans would abandon his party for the Middling Interest. If this occurred, the Republican party would become even less of a force within Boston than it already was. For these reasons, Fairbanks helped shape and solidify Republican
opinion on the new chartering committee while reporting his every move to Otis. Providing Otis with detailed analyses of Republican sentiments on the chartering issue, Fairbanks was a valuable source of information for Otis and his forces.36

On December 22, the Sullivan Committee presented its proposal to Town Meeting. At first glance, the document seemed to be a compromise between Otis's operatives and the advocates for ward voting. But after the charter's publication and distribution throughout Boston, and the resulting Town Meeting debates of December 31 through January 2, 1822, most Bostonians clearly refused to view the document as a victory for ward voting in any way. Otis had feared such popular resistance, but Gerry Fairbanks assured him that the plan would have the full support of Boston's Republican leadership. Five days before the debates, on December 26, Fairbanks guaranteed the Senator that the Republican members of the Sullivan Committee were thoroughly under control. "In fact," Fairbanks assured, "the prospect for moving for a recommen[dation]" that excluded ward voting, "came from a republican source." Despite recent articles in the Boston Patriot that suggested Republicans were making the chartering a partisan issue, Fairbanks promised Otis that the Patriot did "not speak for the sentiments of the party."37
Although Fairbanks's report to Otis may have been sincere, Fairbanks seriously underestimated Boston's popular opposition to a chartering plan without an iron-clad ward voting component to it. This omission gave rise, according to one observer, to "Bedlam" in Town Meeting. It was as though "the 'moon had come nearer the earth...and had made some men mad.'" The stately and orderly decorum of the exclusive few who traditionally ran and quietly dominated Boston's Town Meetings, were overwhelmed by a Faneuil Hall filled to capacity with an unruly Boston citizenry that consistently hissed and shouted them down. Federalist Francis J. Oliver, charged with the unfortunate task of moderating Town Meeting between December 31 through January 2, later described the debates as highly "arduous" and totally "perplexing."38

Much to the astonishment of Otis, Fairbanks, Sullivan and other Boston "betters," the deferential character that had so symbolized traditional Boston Town Meeting was consumed in turmoil as ordinary working Bostonians like town-crier, Ebenezer Clough and rat-trap maker, Samuel Adams actively participated in the discussions by bellowing out objections and invectives to the Sullivan Committee's proposed city plan.39

In spite of Otis's objections, Chairman Sullivan, in an unsuccessful attempt to appease ward voting advocates, recommended that a city common council of fourteen members
be elected in wards. No longer would Bostonians have to trek all the way to Faneuil Hall to elect this body of local representatives, he claimed. Committee members and ward voting advocates, Michael Roulstone and William Sturgis had battled hard for this arrangement. Yet, as Sullivan confessed, though Boston's electorate could vote for councilmen within their own districts, "it would not be expedient to have one Selectman [councilman] for each ward, as it would tend to divide the town too much into distinct portions." William Tudor, an original committee member, agreed that such an arrangement would "break up old associations, good feelings, [and]...there [would be the] danger of [Boston] splitting into twelve little towns." Therefore, though city councilmen would be elected in each of Boston's twelve wards at twelve separate ward polling stations, each ward was not guaranteed a representation in the city council according to the proposed charter.

Having followed Otis's instructions on another matter, Sullivan, with Fairbank's support, pushed through the committee a provision guaranteeing that all state and federal elections would be held at-large in Boston's traditional central polling station of Faneuil Hall. As Otis lectured Sullivan, "[y]ou should give no temptation to your Town Government to dabble in [state or federal] politicks, [because] if they [Bostonians] be democratic
which they will sometimes be—you may yet be safe in the State."\(^{41}\)

Again following Otis's instructions to establish a "Lancastrian" system, the proposed charter held that the city's executive would not be elected by the people in wards or otherwise, but by the common council instead.\(^{42}\) In an attempt to justify this provision, Sullivan disingenuously argued before Town Meeting that though he "was always reluctant to take away privileges from the people:...an executive officer will necessarily come in to contact with the inhabitants; many will be offended; if he does his duty he will not be reelected, or he will be so bending as to be unfit for reelection."\(^{43}\)

If the response to and the fate of the Sullivan Committee's proposal on the first day of the debates is any indication, this was not at all what the town wanted nor had expected. Some, like Ebenezer Clough and William Emmons, so despised the Sullivan report that they switched their positions and fought against any form of a city charter. Others, understanding the limitations of the single ward voting provision in Sullivan's charter, revealed that in the past, they had felt too intimidated to vote their conscience in an open meeting at Faneuil Hall. Addressing his statement to Sullivan and moderator Oliver, Samuel Adams explained: "For instance a journeyman who is in your employ. They feel so delicate in your employ, they
are afraid of offending you." With voting in wards, Adams charged, "there would be no more coaxing mechanics, threatening them with loss of work....We know each other [in our wards]....Here [in Faneuil Hall]," Adams confessed, "we are strangers." Concluding his arguments, Adams threatened that "the whole will be lost if we don't agree to vote in wards."\(^{44}\)

Adams spoke to the common fears of many Boston mechanics, journeymen, artisans and laborers who resented that their financial well-being and security was often directly dependent upon how they voted at Faneuil Hall. This issue resonated and, much to the Federalist Central Committee's dismay, refused to dissipate as a key issue. After much angry debate on both sides, a compromise was reached. A town-wide referendum would be held on January 8, to decide whether all federal and state elections would be held in ward polling stations or in Faneuil Hall.\(^ {45}\)

The next issue that quickly came under immediate and staggering attack was Sullivan's proposal for the election of mayor. Clough successfully argued that the mayor should be chosen in wards by the general electorate. According to Clough, if this was left to the city councilmen, the mayor would "be determined by the rich men...and the poorer people will have to pay for it."\(^ {46}\) The outcry against this proposal proved so prevalent, determined and hostile that Sullivan and his allies quickly acquiesced.\(^ {47}\)
After the first Town Meeting debates on December 31st, Sullivan and the Otis forces left Faneuil Hall astonished and bloodied. The customary reticence of Boston's electorate on such matters evolved into an articulate and potent defiance that firmly rejected Sullivan's motion for the election procedure for mayor. Also, though consensus was elusive, the proponents of ward voting had gained a significant victory with Town Meeting's overwhelming approval for a referendum to decide on voting in wards.

On January 8, 1822, both the revised charter and the question of ward voting were presented to Boston. By a vote of 1,805 to 1,006, Boston accepted the revised charter. Ward voting also passed by over four hundred votes. Although the total of Bostonians who voted came to an impressive 2,811, close to double that number voted on the ward voting issue. The fact that 4,806 cast ballots on this referendum question indicated that the ability to elect state and federal officers without the customary intimidation issued by Federalists elites to control Boston's voting behavior in Faneuil Hall held significant meaning for the town's electorate.48

Upon hearing the news, eleven days after the referendum vote, a dismayed Otis wrote to Sullivan: "If the provision respecting voting in wards for political affairs is irreversible, I am not about to cry for spilled milk—But I am hard of the conviction of the expediency of the
measure, and am full of fears, (if the federalism of the town be worth an effort to preserve—which I may live long enough to question)." Then, on a more optimistic note, Otis added, "perhaps the organization of wards, may be available for political arrangements in favour of good men and measures—though I had wished to see them kept altogether distinct from each other." 49

Sullivan one day earlier had shot off a long letter to Otis. "The People," he explained, "were determined....It was in vain to contend against this determination." As if to hearten Otis, Sullivan placed a positive spin on the defeat in Town Meeting, assuring the Senator that the victory of ward voting would not affect his ambitions to be Boston's first mayor. Utilizing the same pragmatic logic in Otis's letter, Sullivan suggested that despite the town's decision that "[t]he mayor and aldermen [were] to be chosen by the citizens, voting in wards[,]...so long as the present majority in the town continues, the mayor and...aldermen, will be agreed on in Caucus. Proper measures will be taken," Sullivan promised Otis, "to have this agreement understood at the ward meetings." This would insure the Federalist Central Committee's influence over ward meetings and guarantee Otis the Federalist party nomination for mayor. Although their original strategy had been stymied, Sullivan remained buoyantly optimistic. The wards could be controlled he believed. The Republican
party continued to be impotent in Boston and was not a serious threat. There seemed to be nothing to block Otis from becoming Boston's first mayor and, thereby, achieve the first phase in his overall design to become governor.  

Also, as both Sullivan and Otis understood, the charter first had to be approved by the General Court before it could become law, and Otis and the central committee still maintained significant power there. Having prepared for a worst case scenario coming out of Town Meeting, Otis had instructed Sullivan to have the charter altered after it was sent up to the General Court for legislative approval.  

When the charter reached the Senate on February 12, loyal Otis-Federalists flexed their muscles in a successful attempt to suppress ward voting in Boston. In an act of utter audacity, the upper house quietly scrapped the provision in the charter. The Senate's amendment "provid[ed] that the elections of State and United States officers shall be holden as heretofore in Faneuil Hall, instead of being holden in wards as proposed by the bill." The Senate's actions did not go unnoticed by the town. When the charter arrived at the lower house, Otis's forces were not prepared for the opposition. On February 16, the much more independent lower house, by a close vote of 63 to 61, refused to accept the Senate's revision concerning ward voting. This was a serious blow to the central committee,
but Otis's operatives in the Senate had added another amendment that slipped by the discriminating eyes of the central committee's opponents in the House. Section 30 of the revised charter stated that nothing in the charter "shall be so construed as to restrain or prevent the Legislature from amending or altering the same whenever they shall deem it expedient." Otis's opponents in the House had overlooked the implications of section 30.\(^{52}\)

For his part, Otis had wisely predicted problems in the House. As early as January 8, he had instructed Sullivan to see to it that once the legislature got a hold of the charter, the Senate should "insert in the charter some faculty of obtaining amendments.--As this would be a privilege, it might be added without [the] instructions from the town." Following Otis's orders, Sullivan had recruited William Tudor to unobtrusively drive section 30 through the legislature. Tudor was a perfect candidate for the job. His nonpartisan role as the town's auditor of the Court of Sessions and his genuine outrage at the court's resistance and corruption, made him seem trustworthy to members in the legislature who distrusted the central committee. More than anyone else, Tudor provoked and instigated Boston to move toward a city system in the name of reform. Nevertheless, as Sullivan fully understood, Tudor was no radical reformer, but a loyal supporter of Harrison Gray Otis and would follow the central committee's
directives to the letter. Though he strongly supported a city structure, Tudor had consistently opposed ward voting. Having reached no consensus on ward voting, the legislature sent a revised charter complete with section 30, and the ward voting question back down to the people of Boston to decide on both issues in yet another town referendum on March 4.53

Josiah Quincy had served on the Sullivan Committee and as usual he had taken an independent stand on the chartering controversy coming out against any form of city structure. Like many in Boston, he did not trust Sullivan. Only two short years before, it was Sullivan who had replaced him as the Federalist Central Committee's candidate for the state senate, and Quincy remained resentful. Also, since 1821, Quincy had chaired a Town Meeting committee to deal with the growing numbers of paupers who begged on Boston's streets. Just as he struggled to navigate through Boston's political transformation toward a popular democracy, he also struggled to maneuver through Boston's urban transformation. Proving himself to be a institution man, Quincy explained "[t]he leading principle," of his pauper committee, "was,—the duty incumbent upon society of discriminating in its charitable provisions and arrangements, between the poor by reason of infancy, age or misfortune, and the poor by reason of idleness, or vice."

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Quincy's committee had successfully lobbied Town Meeting in 1821 for funds to establish a House of Industry in South Boston that would segregate the "idle and vicious poor" from the "worthy poor." By housing and employing the "deserving poor" far away from the corruption of Boston's seedier neighborhoods which naturally, according to Quincy, bred licentious behavior for the healthier, pastoral atmosphere of rural South Boston, the "worthy poor" could rectify their lives.54

The town had approved the plan and Quincy worried his pet project would be stalled if a radical change in the town's government occurred just as the appropriations to build his House of Industry were being decided upon.55 Adding to this, Quincy, according to the Galaxy, perceptively "saw mischief in the section [section 30] which gives the legislature unrestrained power over the charter."56 Fearing "corruption and abuse," as his son remembered, Quincy "resisted" the charter "by speech and pen as long as there was any chance of defeating it."57

Quincy was not alone in his objection to section 30. "[I]f the Charter is accepted," with section 30, observed one Bostonian, "we may have as Mayor, possibly, some worthy gentleman from Berkshire." Buckingham predicted in the Galaxy that section 30 would provoke "many, who are in favour of incorporation as a city, [to] vote against the present bill--presuming that the legislature has the power
essentially to alter the charter or constitution of government...without the concurrence of the citizens." Because of this and another provision, section 22, which granted authority to the city common council to decide the number of representatives to be sent from Boston to the General Court, Buckingham opposed the charter. He closed his arguments by reiterating Quincy's fears that the charter constituted nothing but a plot by the "central committee" to disarm the power of "the people."\(^{58}\)

One day before the town vote, on March 3rd, William Emmons stood before Boston's citizenry at Faneuil Hall in a final attack against the city charter. "I am fully aware of the disadvantage, a humble citizen labours under, when addressing an assembly [at Town Meeting] composed of the powerful, and that power is their wealth," yet Emmons still believed that the old system more democratic in the long run, if "the voice of the rich will no [longer] be raised higher than that of the poor." Stand with the "intelligent decisions of a Quincy, and the penetrating eye of an Austin," Emmons implored. Vote against the charter.\(^{59}\)

Despite the apprehensions of Emmons, Austin, Buckingham and Quincy, the day after Emmons's impassioned speech, on March 4, 1822, Boston accepted the charter by a vote of 2,797 to 1,881. On the ward voting question, 2,813 Bostonians overwhelmingly came out in its favor, while only 1,887 had voted against it.\(^{60}\)
After an agonizing year of heated debates, political maneuvering and intrigue, Boston, with this vote, finally became a city, complete with polling stations in every ward. On April 8, 1822, the city would hold its first mayoral election and, for the first time, Bostonians would independently cast their votes with a sense of security and safety in their own neighborhoods.

Despite the imposing influence of Harrison Gray Otis's Federalist machine working at high-bore, the majority of Bostonians had earned the sort of charter they wanted. It had not been easy. Boston's "senators and representatives," railed one angry Bostonian, "not only opposed the wishes of their constituents, but joined in the votes which in one instance defeated the purpose of the large majority of the town....We allude to the...provision in the city charter, for the election of State and United States officers in wards."\(^6\)

In spite of resentment toward their representatives' behavior in the General Court, a voting system that insured more democracy to Boston's ordinary carried the day with little support from their own legislators. Unlike the reformist impulse that was effectively squashed by clandestine political tactics during the constitutional convention, in the chartering controversy the central committee's machinations failed to quell the resolute voices of democratic reform.
During the controversy and quite ironically, the Town Meeting system and its straightforwardly democratic structure worked in the interests of Boston's majority. The hated Court of Session had been abolished and the mayor would be elected for one year by the people—not by councilmen; executive power would be limited by the city council; and most importantly to the people of Boston, all city, state and federal officers would be elected in wards. Almost all of Otis's edicts for the structure of new city government had been squarely checked by a politically charged citizenry empowered and inspired with growing confidence and a distinct municipal vision that offered Boston's lower-to-middling classes a voice in determining the new city's future.

This was new to Boston. What had begun as a minor tax revolt calling for modest reform in the tax codes, resulted in a full blown and successful popular challenge to the traditional deferential nature of Boston's political culture. With both ward voting established in the new city and a raging economic depression that spawned popular dissatisfaction with the militia, tax and debtor's laws, political dissidents like William Sturgis, Michael Roulstone, and a Boston newcomer and Baptist minister, Francis Wayland saw an obvious political opportunity to forge a powerful enough insurgent third party to cripple if not completely destroy the Federalist party in Boston. If
Federalism fell in its stronghold, these men believed, the party would soon atrophy and whither away to nothing throughout the state. Carefully choosing an inoffensive name, the insurgents formally named their organization the Middling Interest and began preparing for its first challenge—the new city's first mayoral race. In the course of this new endeavor, they had to seek out someone who would both champion their cause and be able to stand up to the Federalist machine and its leader Harrison Gray Otis.
Notes


2. Josiah Quincy speech, April 1, 1821, as quoted in "Mr. Quincy," New England Galaxy, April 6, 1821, APSmicro.


6. Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 220-221. For the authority of the Court of Sessions over town affairs see, John Koren, Boston, 1822-1922, The Story of Its Government and Principal Activities During One Hundred Years (Boston: City of Boston Printing Department, 1923), 7-8. Note that Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 220-221, refers to the "Committee of Finance," and not the Court of Sessions. The Court of Sessions held within it a standing committee (the Committee of Finance) specifically in charge of county monies, see, Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, Codman Report, 226.


12. Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 227. For material on Lewis Tappan's Boston years, his best biographer remains Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969), 20-21 describes his life as a hardware store owner, but does not discuss his actions as a town
selectmen.

13. For salaries of Justices of the Peace see, Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 220.


25. Sullivan's original thirteen member committee had suggested, at Town Meeting on Dec. 10, 1821, that the Court of Sessions be abolished and an elected at large nine member town council be established to replace the court, see Cayton, "The Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 155-156; and Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 254. For an account of the addition of twelve new members to the Sullivan Committee see, "The Municipal Affairs of Boston," New England Galaxy, Dec. 14, 1821, APSmicro; and Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 254, which lists the additional members to the committee: from ward 1, George Darracott; ward 2, Redford Webster; ward 3, Thomas Badger; ward 4, James Davis; ward 5, Henry Farnam; ward 6, Michael Roulstone; ward 7, John Cotton; ward 8, Lewis G. Pray; ward 9, Benjamin Russell; ward 10, William Sturgis; ward 11,
Daniel Messinger; and ward 12, Gerry Fairbanks. Also see, James Mascarene Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings, and First City Election" Bostonian Society Publications, vol. 6 (Boston: Old State House, 1910), 93, which states that Town Meeting demanded the drafting of a city charter.


27. Josiah Quincy, A Municipal History of the Town and City of Boston, iiiv.-iv. Formisano, Transformation of Political Culture, 182. Also see, Edel, at. el., Shaky Palaces, 198-205, for wealthy Federalists employing Boston municipal government for their economic interests, especially in real estate.


29. For examples of the Buckingham's editorial position on ward voting see, "General, alias Central Committee," New England Galaxy, April 4, 1820; and New England Galaxy, April 20, 1820; and "Communication," New England Galaxy, March 17, 1820, all from APSmicro.


Susan Quincy to Justin Winsor, July 17, 1880, Winsor Family Papers, Quincymicro. William Sullivan to Harrison Gray Otis, Jan. 6, 1822, Otismicro. Also see, Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 393, for Otis's tactics to become governor.


34. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, Jan. 8, 1822, Otismicro.

35. For limited biographical material on Roulstone see, John T. Price, "Boston's Lanes and Alleys," Bostonian Society Publications, vol. 7 (Boston: Old State House, 1910), 23-26; for Roulstone's position on the committee see, Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, March 21, 1822, Otismicro. See Thomas H. Perkins to Harrison Gray Otis, April 5, 1822, Otismicro, for the central committee's opposition to Strugis; also, McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 102.

36. Gerry Fairbanks to Harrison Gray Otis, Dec. 26, 1822, Otismicro. My analysis of why Fairbanks threw-in with his traditional political enemy, Harrison Gray Otis, is conjecture, but one must ask why he would have done such a thing. If the future growth of the Middling Interest is any indication, Fairbanks (as well as all of the Republican leadership in Boston) should have worried about their party's vulnerability to a populistic third party. Once the Middling Interest developed a coherent platform, it filled with traditional Republicans. In the mayoral election of 1822 and 1823, the Middling Interest candidates garnered significantly more votes than the Republican candidates, making Republicanism a totally insignificant political identity in Boston during those years. Also, the Middling Interest coopted Republicanism's traditional role as critic of Boston's elite and exploited such class-based animosity much more effectively than the Republicans. Also, a coalitional party, consisting of ex-Federalists and ex-Republicans, proved that it could win. The Republican party could never muster enough force in Boston to even come close, even before the formation of this third party; thus
Republican voters had found a third party where their vote would not just be thrown after a losing cause. With the Middling Interest, their issues not only were addressed (as they had been by the Republicans), but they could actually gain offices within Boston. For most Bostonians who were traditionally Republicans, party realignment made good sense.


38. For "observer's" and Oliver's account of the debates see, Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 94.

39. For Adams and Clough's involvement in the Town Meetings see, Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 95-98.


41. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, Jan, 8, 1822, Otismicro.

42. Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 156.


44. Adams on ward polling stations, as quoted in, Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 101; and, Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 157, which proved the best analysis of the various forces and interests involved in the debates. For William Emmons's opposition to a charter see, William Emmons, "Mr Emmons' Speech, Delivered at the Grand Caucus, held in Faneuil Hall, on the Evening of the Third of March, 1822, upon the Acceptance or rejection of the City Charter" (Boston: Published by the Author, 1822), AAS.

45. Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 100.

46. Clough as quoted in, Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 158-159.

47. Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 100.

48. The total voting in the city charter issue: 2,811 (1805 for a city, 1006 against). The total voting in the ward voting referendum: 4806 (2611 for ward voting, 2195 against), see Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'"


52. Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 104-105. Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 160, which provides a less detailed account of the chartering debates in the General Court. "Section 30," in The Charter of the City of Boston, and Ordinances Made and Established By the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, with such Acts of the Legislature of Massachusetts, as Related to the Government of Said City (Boston: True and Greene,--City Printers, 1827), 20, which provides the section in the charter that gives all authority for amendments to the charter to the General Court.

53. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, Jan. 8, 1822, Otismicro. For William Tudor's role in guiding the charter through the general Court see, Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 104. For Tudor's loyalty to Otis see, Thomas H. Perkins to Harrison Gray Otis, April 5, 1822, Otismicro.


55. Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, Quincy Report, 251, 246. Town Meeting, on Oct. 22, 1821, diverted $6000, previously allocated for the creation of a new vegetable market to be built in Boston, toward Quincy's House of Industry. Quincy's committee estimated the whole project would cost $20,000. Considering the large amount instantly diverted to the proposed project, Quincy had garnered significant support for his plan in Town Meeting--support he certainly did not want to lose once the authority of Town Meeting was invalidated by a new governmental system. Although Quincy never explicitly stated that he feared the formation of a city government due to the tenuous financial position this may have placed his project, a city form of government might have challenged his plans by reallocating monies that Town Meeting had already designated for the House of Industry. As we shall see, if Quincy did not worry about this, he should have. During his first and second terms as Mayor of Boston, he battled with powerful city officials over the funding of his project, stalling the project for years.

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59. William Emmons, "Mr. Emmons' Speech, Delivered at the Grand Caucus, held in Faneuil Hall, on the Evening of the Third of March, 1822, Upon the Acceptance or rejection of the City Charter," (Boston: Published by the Author, 1822), 2, 3, *AAS*.


CHAPTER V
"TEN-FOOTERS," ZEALOTS AND "LORDLY NABOBS:"

THE MIDDLING INTEREST LEADERSHIP AND COALITIONAL UNITY

"These lordly nabob['s]...object is to keep the mechanics and labourers in eternal servitude."
--Joseph T. Buckingham, 1822

"THE PEOPLE...are not only the real but also the acknowledged fountain of all authority."
--Francis Wayland, 1825

"a band of murmurers...a parcel of demagogues"
--Ralph Waldo Emerson on the Middling Interest, 1822

Less than one month before the city charter reached the General Court for approval, on January 16, 1822, Josiah Quincy resigned his position in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. "I relinquish this chair," Quincy announced to his congressional colleagues, "with a reluctance, which I cannot conceal and yet, which I cannot express." He assured the House that his experience as its speaker had been "a source of unqualified delight and satisfaction." Speaker Quincy proudly acknowledged he had earned bipartisan support which he deeply valued and congratulated both sides of the House for their nonpartisan allegiance to him. "From every gentleman of every party, I have, at all times, received and reciprocated the greeting of a friend and a brother." Reinforcing this position, Quincy endorsed Republican Levi Lincoln Jr. as his replacement as House speaker.1
"On the motives of my resignation," Quincy cryptically stated, "it is not suitable for me, in this place to speak. I may be permitted, however to assert, that it has proceeded from a sense of duty, distinct and unequivocal; and in the existing relations of my mind--irresistible."

Providing no specific designs for his future plans, Quincy, nevertheless, proclaimed his expectations that the bipartisanship he had cultivated in the House would continue and grow once he established himself "in another sphere." In the foreseeable future, Quincy challenged Federalists and Republicans "to join my labours with yours, in promoting the interests of the people of this great Commonwealth."²

As the tone of Quincy's mysterious resignation speech suggests, and as his daughter confirms, the "irresistible" position that persuaded Quincy to relinquish his influential seat as House speaker lay in his ambitions for higher office. Specifically, Quincy had set his sights on the governorship of Massachusetts. His daughter, Eliza, recalled that Quincy "thought that some of the Federalists of that day were on a wrong track." His opposition to Maine separation and his consistent defiance of the Federalist party leadership, Eliza argued, made him "generally known & justly appreciated throughout the State & his new friends [wanted to] run him for Governor."³ Such lofty aspirations would squarely pit him against Harrison
Gray Otis, and the bipartisan support Quincy earned in the
General Court had the potential to seriously divide and
disrupt Massachusetts Federalism. Also, foreseeing future
controversy in the upcoming legislative session, Quincy's
resignation as Speaker of the House in January proved
highly pragmatic, timely, and politically advantageous. By
absenting himself from the General Court one month before
the proposed city charter reached the legislature, Quincy
avoided having to take a legislative stand on the most
divisive issue the General Court faced that year. When the
Middling Interest publicly attacked Boston's
representatives "who not only opposed the wished of their
constituents, but joined in the votes which...defeated the
purposes of the large majority of the town" over the ward
voting issue, Quincy could not be castigated for "utterly
disregard[ing]...the people of Boston."4

Instead, Quincy evaded the controversy and lobbied to
obtain an appointment as a municipal court judge in Boston-
a position he received and accepted later that month.
Ironically, Quincy's adversary Governor John Brooks awarded
him the judgeship. Why is not clear. Perhaps, from the
Governor's point of view, Quincy would be less troublesome
to him and the central committee as a municipal judge than
as House Speaker. During Quincy's tenure as a municipal
judge, he would consolidate power within what was rapidly
becoming a divided town in the midst of a dramatic struggle to upset Federalist political hegemony in Boston.\textsuperscript{5}

The news of Quincy's resignation from the General Court baffled Harrison Gray Otis. "Mr. Quincy's movement does indeed surprise me," he admitted to William Sullivan on January 19, 1822 from Washington. "It is a sort of practical bathos, to jump from the speaker's chair into that of the Boston old Bailey." Concluding that Quincy's "zeal for his friends and party have hurt his popularity, he probably expects the reward of neglect, which his friends and party first or last are apt to show towards those who are too zealous...--and as he gets nothing by being a great man among gentlemen, he will try his hand by showing himself a good one among whores and rogues--Good luck to him say I."\textsuperscript{6} Otis clearly was unaware of Quincy's more ambitious intentions and had all too quickly written him off as an insignificant force within the state, let alone a serious political adversary within Boston. As future events would show, Otis's swift dismissal of Quincy was shortsighted.

Despite the optimism of his sponsors, Quincy's bipartisan power-base did not have much endurance beyond the boundaries of Boston--and for good reason. By 1822, the Republican party's power had grown throughout the state. Although Federalism commanded Suffolk, Essex, and Hampshire counties, the party of "good men and good
measures" faced decisive and growing opposition elsewhere in the state. The treasonous legacy of the Hartford Convention continued to haunt Massachusetts Federalism, providing Republican candidates with an easy, effective, and engaging line of attack in many parts of the state. The rural interests of town's like Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, and counties such as Norfolk, Berkshire, Hampden, and Worcester voiced opposition toward the mercantile and manufacturing interests so endemic to the Federalist party platform. In the fishing communities of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, Republicanism consistently was the party of choice.7

Led by a popular and articulate leadership, men like Levi Lincoln Jr. of Worcester, David Henshaw of Leicester, and William Eustis of Boston scrupulously sowed the seeds of Republicanism throughout the state. Although Federalist governor, John Brooks, won seven consecutive elections, often by wide margins, his Republican challengers, Henry Dearborn, Jacob Crowninshield, and William Eustis still captured significant numbers throughout the state, demonstrating Republicanism held substantial appeal. Clearly, the Republican party of Massachusetts represented a viable opposition, perfectly capable of challenging Federalism on the state level.8

Indeed, the key to John Brooks's political success within the Commonwealth was his moderate, nonpartisan
stance. Since his first victory in 1816, Brooks had disingenuously praised Republican leadership in Washington while masking his predisposition to Federalism's most elitist doctrines. So pronounced was Brooks's nonpartisan image that President James Monroe, while visiting the Bay State, reciprocated the governor's flattery of the "Virginia Dynasty" by applauding Brooks's seemingly nonpartisan leadership of Massachusetts. As the Federalist organ the *Boston Palladium* confessed, Brooks publicly restrained his excessive Federalism and followed a much less offensive course of "moderation and candour towards his opponents." Most importantly, Brooks took great care to avoid being identified as a member of the Federalist Central Committee. This was no more apparent when, upon Brooks's first gubernatorial victory, the Massachusetts House of Representatives greeted him, proclaiming that the new governor came from "the same school" as former Republican governor, Caleb Strong. Brooks swiftly appeased his Republican critics by appointing them to public office. According to one student of Federalism, Brooks "beat back successive Republican challenges with a policy of moderation," which according to another exemplified "his artful dodging [that] belied a carefully contrived electioneering image of a simple-soldier-in politics."¹⁹

After the Hartford Convention, even in Massachusetts, campaigning as a staunch advocate of traditional Federalist
principles would be political suicide. Understanding this, Brooks adopted the image of a sincere patriot who exemplified the nonpartisan tranquility of the Era of Good Feelings. His "artful dodging" consistently quelled Republican challenges to his administration and helped maintain Federalist dominance in the state. His re-election numbers steadily rose between 1816 and 1821.  

If the Federalist party nominated a candidate with less bipartisan proclivities as Brooks, the Republican party could offer numerous creditable candidates who could run, perhaps even successfully. For Quincy, competing in a state that held a Republican party that, given the chance, could strongly dispute the dictatorial character of Federalism's backroom leadership in Massachusetts, a viable bid coming from an independent third party like the Middling Interest for the governor's seat was unrealistic. If reform in the manifestation of an anti-elite, anti-federalist platform was to successfully evolve and break Federalism's traditional, yet increasingly tenuous stranglehold on Massachusetts, the Republican party could do the job.

By the early spring 1822, Quincy abandoned his plans to run for governor and devoted his political ambition toward the more reasonable goal of becoming Boston's first mayor. In this quest, the bipartisan support Quincy had garnered and was known for in the House, and his reputation
as a highly independent politician and staunch foe of the Federalist Central Committee would serve him well. Unlike the political situation in the state, party organization in Boston soundly favored Federalism. Despite increasing hostility toward Federalist elitism, because of tradition and the party's highly organized machine, Federalism remained the only viable party in town. The Republican party continued to be weak in Boston while Federalism remained ascendent. Thus, unlike reformist impulses in the state, Boston reformers could not look toward Republicanism as their savior. Any significant challenges to Federalist hegemony in Boston necessarily had to develop from a third party with the ability woo regular Federalists into insurgent political activism.

By the beginning of 1822, such an insurgency was refined into a polished and highly defined third party that gained clarity from a controversial local issue that spoke to the direct concerns of many of Boston's lower to middle class voters. Beginning in 1821, many Bostonians were growing upset with an old 1803 fire law that restricted the building of wooden structures higher than ten feet within the town's limits. The anger that middling and lower orders first expressed over state issues such as the militia laws, the debtor's laws and oppressive tax codes was reinforced and heightened due to the inability of many Bostonians to build affordable decent housing. The town's
restrictive building codes severely confined the expansion of low-income housing in Boston. These restrictions forced many poor to middling Bostonians to become dependent on landlords who easily sustained high rent rates by exploiting Boston's tight housing market. Also, the wooden building law limited work for many Boston master carpenters and journeymen, as well as profits for emerging entrepreneurs interested in raising cheap row housing. The 1803 fire law forced Boston's poor to search for inexpensive housing in Boston's poorer, more decrepit neighborhoods like the notorious North and West Ends. For the "respectable" mechanic or master carpenter, the law greatly obstructed his ability to erect a home or a lodging house that was affordable. This seemingly innocuous issue localized anti-elite, anti-Federalist sentiments for many disgruntled Bostonians whose backs were already bent and pocketbook's empty—or close to it—because of the depressed economy.  

Boston's popular classes experienced a meaningful victory over the town's "betters" during the city chartering dispute while also sustaining a struggling embryonic, yet vocal oppositional third party called the Middling Interest. Seasoned by past political action, they developed a unified group-identity of sorts that clearly and forcefully would exhibit its class interests in the once forbidden realm of local politics. As insignificant
as the wooden building issue perhaps seems, it functioned as the first test-case in public policy for a newly energized Boston electorate—one freed from the bonds and obligations so inherent in Boston's past deferential political structure. The wooden building issue served to clarify insurgent third party activism by grounding earlier, somewhat inexplicit calls for reform to a precise local public policy concern within the specific confines of Boston.

In 1821, South Boston resident, Lot Wheelright petitioned Boston Town Meeting to exempt South Boston for five years from the town ordinance that restricted the building of wooden structures higher than ten feet. In May, Town Meeting voted to grant Wheelright his request, stating "[i]t was Voted, That the Town consent that the Laws, restricting buildings of Wood, more than ten feet high, may be suspended for the term of five years, so far as it relates to that Section of the Town." Taking advantage of Wheelright's successful petition, Boston resident, Josiah Jones presented his own petition that asked Town Meeting to appeal to "the Legislature to alter or repeal the Law prohibiting the erection of Wooden buildings...more than ten feet high" throughout the whole town. Unlike Wheelright's, Jones's request covered all of Boston and demanded the total abolition of the 1803 law.
On June 6th, the town committee charged with considering Jones's petition presented its recommendation to Town Meeting. Committee chairman and reformer, Stephen Codman explained that "it is the opinion of the Committee, that the existing Law may now be modified without any injury [to the town]; and inasmuch as it appears to be the general wish so to modify the Law, as to meet the wants and means of a large portion of respectable citizens, who have not the ability to erect buildings entirely of Brick or Stone[,]...[t]he Committee...recommend[s]...its desire that the Legislature should be requested so far as to modify the existing Law." 14 Codman's proposal overwhelmingly passed Town Meeting by "a majority [vote] of four to one" and the town's petition moved to the General Court for final approval. 15

The legislature responded to Boston's petition by granting South Boston the right to raise wooden buildings above ten feet, but denied the same privilege to the whole of Boston. 16 Bostonians responded with immediate disdain. "Mill Creek Wharf" wrote to his fellow "mechanics of Boston," "how astonished were the petitioners, to hear, when the bill was brought in, that it was entirely contrary to the expectations and wishes of a great majority of the town. This astonishment was not diminished when it was found that the greater part of the representatives from Boston chose to be absent on this occasion." "Mill Creek
Wharf" explained that "after the bill had received the signature of the...Speaker of the House [Josiah Quincy]," further qualifications were imposed by Boston Representative, Nathan Hale that basically neutralized any changes distinguishing the 1821 bill from the original 1803 fire law. "It is difficult to conceive," reiterate the editorialist, "why, after the petition had been approved by the town, any of our representatives should have been so much interested as to object....MECHANICKS!," heralded "Mill Creek," "keep your eyes well to the right--and steady--and at the next election of representatives, send such men to the general court as will do their duty without fear and trembling." 

Less than a month later, on July 13, a fire broke out in a wooden boarding house on Union street destroying at least eleven buildings after spreading to Salt Lane and Creek Square. One week earlier, another fire ravaged Charlestown, incinerating at least $20,000 worth of property before being extinguished. Such outbreaks seriously diluted, at least momentarily, Boston's outrage toward the General Court's behavior. Any significant reform in Boston's fire laws would have to wait until the summer fires in and around the town faded from public memory. This would not take long.

In January, 1822, while the chartering controversy simultaneously raged in Town Meeting, John H. Wheeler
raised the wooden building issue to the town once again. This time, not only did the petition reiterate earlier demands for reform in the fire laws; it also directly charged that Boston's "Senators & Representatives be directed to use their influence in procuring the passage of a Bill by the Hon. Legislature conformable to the...vote [on wooden buildings] of the Town." As with the Jones's petition, Wheeler's easily passed Town Meeting and was sent to the General Court for approval. As the petition's addendum ordering Boston legislators to follow the town's instructions suggests, the reformers, this time, left nothing to chance. The petition would arrive at the State House supported by a town committee hoping to persuade Boston's legislators to vote in favor of the town's request. If Boston's representatives in General Court snubbed the town once again, there would be serious consequences.

Upon hearing the news of the second petition's overwhelming support and passage, Harrison Gray Otis, from Washington, shot off orders to his operatives to block the petition. "I see with dismay, the vote for wooden buildings," Otis anxiously wrote William Sullivan on January 19, 1822. "It seems incredible--Cannot you check it in the legislature befor[e], 'Uculegon burns next.'" Being a landlord and having an extensive land and property holdings in Boston, the abolition of the fire law would
directly effect the value of Otis's properties. With a greater risk for urban fires, insurance rates would soar while property values would decline. Also, if the rental market in Boston expanded due to the erection of cheap wooden apartment buildings, Otis would face new competition. His rent rates would decrease and his income would fall.  

Accommodating Otis's directive, Sullivan orchestrated an effective counter-attack. By stacking Town Meeting with anti-reform, established landlords, Sullivan forced through the passage of a formal grievance refuting the legitimacy of the Wheeler petition. According to Sullivan's remonstrance, Wheeler's proposal was invalid because it had not been presented in a referendum. As a result of Sullivan's parliamentary tactics in Town Meeting, the General Court would first have to rule against the grievance before it could even address the town petition. By employing such a strategy, the central committee crippled reform by complicating the wooden building issue once it reached the legislature. The Federalist leadership seemed to be using its political influence to halt any competition to its economic interests in Boston.

Buckingham was furious. "Certain people," he fumed in an editorial, "who never trouble themselves to attend town meeting,—thinking it rather beneath their honorable and dignified characters to meet in the same hall with
mechanics and labouring men,—have presented a remonstrance against the petition." Attacking reform's opposition, Buckingham stated that "[i]t is, in short, a mere question of self-interest, in which the purse-proud landlord is arrayed against the mechanic. The remonstrance would never have existed, had not the large owners of real estates, seen in the success of the petition, a reduction of their already overgrown incomes from cruel and exorbitant rents. They would have no objection to wooden houses of two stories, provided they had the exclusive privilege of erecting and leasing them." Without reform, Buckingham explained the "present interest and future prospects of the middling and poorer classes," would remain bleak. "[T]here are mechanics, who, with the savings of a few years labour, might live in decent houses of their own, and look forward to a comfortable competency—perhaps to independence: and this is the reason, why the petition is so violently opposed. These lordly nabob[']s...object is to keep mechanics and labourers in eternal servitude....It remains" Buckingham challenged, "for the legislature of Massachusetts, to say whether the mechanics and labouring people of Boston shall be allowed to participate in the rights of privileges, which any form of government professes to guarantee to all, or whether all the lands and houses shall eventually become the property of a few landlords—whether a mechanic may be a freeholder, or
whether he must be a tenant."25 Despite Buckingham's appeal, the General Court agreed with the Sullivan grievance committee and rejected the town's request. Otis's strategy had worked. Expansion of the housing market would, temporarily at least, be stopped and existing rental rates maintained.

The town was again outraged by their legislature's behavior. So vocal was the criticism that many of town's representatives grasped for the first time the power and immense popular support the issue wielded within Boston. Fearing defeat in the next elections because of their anti-reformist stance, some Federalist representatives broke with the central committee's standing orders and scrambled to reposition themselves on the question. As one Boston newspaper reported, "a representative from Boston, who lately remonstrated against the petition for leave to erect wooden buildings has set his name at the head of the new petition for the same object. What can have operated so potentially on his mind, as to induce him now to advocate a measure which three weeks ago he considered fraught with mischief and destruction to the town? Is it possible," queried the editorial "that the fear of losing his seat in the legislature at the approaching election can have wrought such a miracle, as unstopping the ears of the deaf, opening the eyes of the blind, unloosing the tongue of the dumb, and convincing the understanding of the dull and
By the end of February, the central committee's traditional authority in the legislature buckled under the weight of overwhelming popular support for reform in fire laws. Even obedient and traditionally loyal Federalists operatives found themselves turning their backs on Otis and the Federalist leadership out of political necessity. A number of Boston legislators perceived that to block this particular popular reform would be an act of political suicide. For Boston's popular electorate, the wooden building issue came to represent much more than simply the freedom to raise more affordable housing or to reduce rents. By February, the issue came to embody all of common Bostonians' objections with what their city's wealthy Federalists leaders. However modest the reformer's goals, the wooden building issue became the urban proletariat's symbolic stand against what the electorate viewed as an elite, Federalist hierarchy.

With a petition signed by a staggering 4,500+ Bostonians, on March 6, Asa Lewis reintroduced the issue at Town Meeting and, after written ballots were taken, the measure passed by an awesome majority of 2,263 out of 3,411 votes. This time not only would the town selectmen lobby Boston representatives, but Town Meeting also granted "the petitioners [themselves to] be empowered to appear...on behalf of the Town or City, to advocate, and defend the petition before the Hon. Legislature." Buckingham's
Galaxy commended Lewis and the petitioners while scolding Sullivan for having blocked the provision. "This result," Buckingham snorted, "will stop the clamour which was made at the former meeting on the same subject, because the vote was not decided by ballot. It is incontestably proved," claimed Buckingham, "that a large majority of the voters (of those at least who care any thing about the business [of Boston]) are in favour of the present unreasonable, unjust, and oppressive restrictions being removed."

Broadening his critique of the wooden building issue, Buckingham squarely fused reformist goals with the plight of "the poorer classes [who] are hungry and homeless."28

Fearing further defections, the Federalist press downplayed the issue as trivial. According to Boston's leading Federalist organ, the Columbian Centinel, reform in the old fire laws was of "no great significance to either party."29 By so misreading the salience of the wooden building issue, the Federalist press and its masters, unlike dissident Federalist legislators who switched their position, were oblivious to the third party activism that had been smoldering for so long within the town's less affluent wards. This third party movement would finally coalesce and ignite over the wooden building issue. Also, the Federalist leadership's response revealed to the town's insurgents Federalism's vulnerability--its brazen arrogance.
The Federalist, *Daily Advertiser* squarely illustrated the party's temerity when it smugly argued that Boston mechanics, struggling with high rents, should be happy with their prospects and stop complaining. "As to the rent paid by the mechanics," the *Advertiser* asked, "would it be better for them to have the price greatly reduced?" Of course not, answered the *Advertiser* because "high rents are a mark of prosperity." Such insolent and insensitive logic infuriated a Boston working class that continually grappled to put food on the table, pay rent, avoid militia duty and stay out of debtor's prison. An incensed Joseph Buckingham responded to the editorial, stating that "[i]f [h]igh rents are a mark of prosperity,' so are thefts and robberies. A pick-pocket steals your purse and justifies himself by this convenient logic--'It is a mark of your prosperity; for if you had not a purse, I could not have taken it.' Another rogue breaks into your house; and this too is a mark of your prosperity, because if you had no house, he could not have committed the burglary, and a third murders you--all for your good,...proof that you had life, and you might not have known it had you never swallowed his arsenic or felt his dagger." Making matters worse, the "writer in the Daily Advertiser," charged an incensed Buckingham, irreverently insulted all who had signed the petition. The *Advertiser*, Buckingham claimed, "intimates that many of the signatures to the petition were
procured in grog-shops. This is altogether in keeping with the general tone of the writers in that vehicle of aristocracy. It is meat and drink to them to libel the mechanic, and middling interests." Indeed, the Centinel claimed the "tenfooters," as the wooden building reformers were called, had "designing intentions, or to say the least the intemperate zeal of a few, to create out of an honest difference of sentiment on this minor topic, a general feeling of hostility which may...divid[e] a party [Federalism]."

Although this undoubtedly was the intention of the Middling Interest, the Centinel boldly underestimated the insurgency's broader foundations. Although the insurgency remained inadequately organized, it had not developed on a whim as the Federalist press suggested. Nor was the movement predicated solely on the wooden building issue. Reforming Boston's fire laws only provided the Middling Interest with one highly charged and popular plank to be added to its overall reformist platform. As Buckingham explained, the insurgency's principal agenda was to wage a protracted battle against the aristocratic and elitist course Federalism had recently taken--to fight against those who "see none of [the poor's] miserable tenements, [and] bears none of their gleanings--for them, he [the greedy Federalist] has no sympathy, with them he has nothing in common, but [collecting from] them rent."
According to Buckingham, unlike the Federalist party, the Middling Interest championed "[t]he mechanics of Boston as intelligent, and as respectable in every thing, except the respectability of wealth, as any body of men that ever gave strength, support and security to any city or nation on earth."  

For ordinary Bostonians, Federalism's covert and consistent opposition to the "ten footers" seemed symptomatic of the party's larger intentions: to maintain a ruling political and economic aristocracy at their expense. Two earlier attempts to reform the wooden building laws by functioning within established political guidelines were crushed by the central committee. By the spring of 1822, there was little doubt among the majority of ordinary Bostonians that the political system was being manipulated to sustain elite hegemony against the ascension of the honest and respectable plebeians. By restricting the upward mobility of Boston's respectable laborers and mechanics while exploiting their labor, extracting excessively high rents, taxing them through the militia laws and inequitable property assessments, forcing hardworking Bostonians into debt, while, simultaneously, demanding and pompously expecting deference, the majority in Boston lost all respect for the party of "good men and measures." As Buckingham asked Boston's ordinary voters, "shall they [the mechanics and laborers] be forever cowed
down and kept out of countenance by a contemptible minority of overgrown landlords, and speculators, who were originally as low--aye, and much lower,--in the world than themselves?" These "haughty lordling[s] and the princely nabob[s],...possess no feeling in common with other men and [their] sympathies are never awakened but by the jingling of dollars." Because the legislature had disbanded for an extended vacation, this question, according to Buckingham, would finally be decided upon in Boston's upcoming mayoral contest. The hostile sentiments of the town indicated that the Federalist nominee would not run unopposed.34

The prospect of having the wooden building issue define the city's first mayoral contest certainly did not appeal to the Federalist leadership. Harrison Gray Otis maintained a controlling interest in the Mount Vernon Proprietors, Broad Street Association, and Mill Pond Corporation which had resulted in his commanding a real estate empire. The prospect of loosening the town's fire codes clearly was not in his, nor his various corporation's interests. With the abolition of the fire laws, Otis's empire would be jeopardized by more affordable building.35 Also, although Otis and his operatives underestimated the strength of the insurgency, by March, he and his handlers came to understand that the populist rhetoric of the "ten footer's" potentially threatened the Otis campaign. Quickly responding to the central committee's new insights
on the election, the Federalist press no longer totally dismissed the "ten footers" as irrelevant, but instead attempted to appease and quiet the dissident factions of the electorate by calling for party unity. "[I]t can hardly be thought good policy," wrote the *Columbian Centinel*, "to endanger the peace and harmony of our city" over the wooden building issue. "Let us not...in the name of common sense, permit the evil spirit of discord to preside at the first election of our city officers." "Let us not...create out of an honest difference of sentiment on this minor topic, a general feeling of hostility...[which will] divid[e] a party who have hitherto acted with no less union than success."\(^36\) But the call for party unity came too late.

Much to the astonishment of the Federalist leadership, the wooden building controversy so vividly illuminated Federalism's aristocratic intentions that the party had, in fact, suffered serious desertions as Boston mechanics and laborers broke for the Middling Interest. Even worse, Boston Republicans had been first to rally around the issue and were swelling the insurgency's ranks. Finding itself on the defensive, the central committee was forced to acquiesce on the wooden building question. In an attempt to preserve Otis's mayoral prospects and salvage Boston Federalism from the menace of popular insurgency, the Federalist leadership reversed its position. As he had done in the past, Harrison Gray Otis managed damage-control
from Washington. "From the signs of the times," he wrote Sullivan on March 21, "I infer that if you mean to prevent the triumph of the revolutionary movement manifested in the new city, you ought to let the advocates for wooden buildings or the Roulstone party or who ever they are, understand that your opposition will be withdrawn....I go upon the supposition that the wooden project cannot be resisted for any length of time: and as in the case of other popular hallucinations, the mischief must be yielded to, or others will follow the train." Concluding that the insurgency must be halted or "the Devil will break loose," Otis arranged for Boston's leading Federalists to publicly support the "tenfooter's" agenda in the upcoming Federalist caucus. He believed such a preemptive strike would effectively absorb the political potency of Boston's recent third party activism. By coopting the insurgency's most dynamic issue, the Middling Interest would be crushed while the vitality the third party had garnered by pressing the wooden building issue could be exploited to reinvigorate Federalism among the Boston masses.\(^{37}\)

Initially Otis's strategy seemed to work. During the March Federalist caucuses for the state senate, loyal Otis-Federalists who recently switched their position on wooden buildings, gained their party's nomination with little opposition. Yet, Otis's cunning did not go unnoticed by Joseph T. Buckingham who saw through Federalist strategy:
"We had hoped," Buckingham observed in the Galaxy, "that the good sense of the mechanics would have triumphed over the shallow schemes of those who pretend to be their friends, when, at heart, they are the most thorough-going aristocrats in the town. We did hope that the wholesale dealers in soft-soap, who harangued the people at the late caucus, and daubed the middling interest an inch thick with that slippery commodity; and those who acknowledged their sudden conversion to the expediency of the city charter, (when they found it getting into popular favor) would receive from the mechanics the neglect to which their unstable, vacillating, toad-eating policy so eminently entitles them. We still hope that those, who are in favour of wooden buildings, have not pledged themselves to support the election of these men, beyond the power of reconsideration. Anything is better than a weathercock senator--who signs petitions one day and remonstrances the next--who, to gain a vote, will undergo a miraculous conversion, to the will of the people--and who wheedles with the oily tongue of a republican, though every drop of blood in his veins curdles at the approach of anything that is mechanical."  

By the end of March, insurgent leaders seemed to have reached the same conclusion as Buckingham. In a "large and respectable meeting" held at the Warren Hotel in Boston, two veterans of the wooden building reform movement,
Michael Roulstone and William W. Blake, presided over the Middling Interest's first formal caucus. It was from this meeting that the Middling Interest first developed a skeletal program that, in the months to come, would evolve into a highly articulate, refined and popular manifesto capable of providing an alternative to Federalism.

The insurgents adopted three primary resolutions. In keeping with its anti-aristocratic foundations, the Middling Interest attacked the central committee, resolving that "no man nor corporation or association of men are better than the community in deciding leadership in Boston." Then, squarely confronting the deferential nature of Boston's existing political culture, the insurgents decreed that "all men...are in danger of being led by party names to act contrary to their true interests" and that this practice must stop. Finally, the caucus challenged the Federalist nominees for state senate with its own nominees. Six office seekers came from both Federalist and Republican ranks, yet what each held in common was a deep distrust of the central committee. Heading the insurgent's list was Josiah Quincy's first cousin, fellow Federalist dissident and loyal friend, John Phillips.

The Galaxy heralded the alternative caucus as an important triumph over "the nomination by the [Federalist] Grand Caucus, in which every puppet moves as the grand council of dictators pulls the wires." The Middling
Interest's nominations, Buckingham explained were, "[a]ll of them[,]...men in whom the mechanics and Middling Interest men have confidence." Although the third party slate threatened Federalism, the insurgency could not muster enough support for its senatorial candidates. The roots of past deferential behavior, though weakened, remained deep. Despite having amassed notable support, the Middling Interestmen lost to the Federalist slate.

To some extent, the third party's loss was to be expected. Since the beginning of March, the Middling Interest primarily focused its efforts on Boston's first mayoral race. More than any one issue, the insurgent struggle for ward voting during the chartering controversy distilled and largely shaped popular, anti-aristocratic dissidence into a compelling, deviant political force within Boston-proper, but had inspired little activism beyond Suffolk county. Although anger over state laws concerning debt imprisonment and militia laws fueled populist discord within the town, little could be done to reform these laws on the local level. Against significant opposition, the town had successfully forced ward voting through the General Court, demonstrating that the state could be moved toward limited reform, if only on the local municipal level. By mid-March and under siege, the State House seemed to be warming-up to the idea of significantly reforming the city's fire laws, but, again, this only
touched within the parameters of Boston. To achieve sweeping statewide reform, without an established political organization and a sophisticated network throughout Massachusetts, would be impossible. At best, the insurgency could and did exploit these state issues and, more importantly, Bostonian's anger over them, to solidify a local coalition of interests; but to actually change state policy with the limited authority given to municipal Boston, was as unrealistic as Josiah Quincy becoming governor. Also, the initial leadership for the movement stemmed not from the state, but the local level. Michael Roulstone and William Blake had little influence or experience in state politics. Their concerns were predominately municipal in nature, and as such, they limited their ambitions to winning the mayoralty. 43

Others in the Middling Interest held more inspired goals. Francis Wayland arrived in Boston in August, 1821 to head one of only three Baptist churches in the city—the North End's First Baptist. As cleric to one of Boston's poorest wards, Wayland rose to a leadership position within the Middling Interest party in less than a year after his arrival to Boston. Wayland's activist proclamations expanded the insurgency's ideological foundations by illuminating what he believed was the inseparable relationship between Christian theological doctrine and American citizenship. Christian duty and democratic
citizenship held tangible social responsibilities that were inseparable and required devout citizen-stewards to organize and act against crimes to democratic principles. The result was a doctrine that justified Middling Interest-style democratic and social reform by blending it with Christian doctrine. "[I]f the church is faithful to herself, and faithful to her God," Wayland preached, "what are now called the lower classes of society will cease to exist....[The] middling and lower classes of society understand the nature of liberal institutions, and those who are groaning under the weight of civil and religious oppression. The question at issue is, whether a nation shall be governed by men of its choice, or by men whose only title to rule is derived from hereditary descent." As Wayland revealed to his North End, working class parishioners, "[w]hatever we would do for our country, must be done for THE PEOPLE...[for] the people are not only the real but also the acknowledged fountain of all authority." In Boston outsider, Francis Wayland, the Middling Interest found a dynamic, intelligent and independent voice that offered ordinary people the self-determination to confront and abandon their traditional deferential voting behavior. The health of American democracy, Wayland pronounced, depended on an independent electorate freely voting its conscience unencumbered; not one entangled in a web of class spun by an economic elite.
As a political leader Wayland could be trusted. He had come from a poor mechanic's family and had pulled himself up by his own initiative. He was born in New York city and raised within a staunchly Republican working class family. As a tanner and an itinerant Baptist preacher, Francis's father fell in and out of debt. During the War of 1812, the family went bankrupt. At age twenty, Francis was accepted to Andover Seminary as a "charity case," and was the school's only Baptist student. After graduating from Andover, he wanted to continue his education at Princeton, but because he could not afford tuition, was forced to serve as a tutor at Union college to make ends meet. In 1821, he secured the Boston parish at the age of twenty-five. 

When Wayland arrived in Boston he was poor and the parish he shepherded was even poorer. Indeed, the North End of the early 1820s was second only to Boston's West End for its number of brothels and dance halls. The town's most famous whorehouse, the "Beehive" stood only blocks from Wayland's church. The neighborhood also housed a large proportion of Boston's mechanics, small shopkeepers, laborers, and artisans many of whom worshipped at the First Baptist. As with Boston's lower-to-middling class of all denominations during the early 1820s, Wayland's parishioners struggled during the depression. The young Baptist preacher soon became renowned for helping people
struggling with debt. Plying his powers of persuasion to get credit extended or dispensing what little discretionary funds were available to him, Wayland aided northenders threatened with debt imprisonment. His popularity grew within months of his arrival in Boston and those who followed him became known as "Waylandites." "Waylandites" were mostly young men who proved as politically defiant and zealous as Wayland. Following Wayland's teachings, they maintained that religiously defined aspects of social justice should direct secular social policy. "Waylandites" composed the core cell within the Middling Interest, while Wayland himself emerged as the insurgency's most charismatic leader.46

Embracing the Middling Interest, Wayland distinguished himself from other insurgent leaders like Roulstone and Blake by carefully assembling a sophisticated three pronged political program that appealed to a beleaguered, working electorate that felt unfairly exploited by what it viewed as an uncaring and self-serving aristocracy. First, Wayland passionately believed Christian duty demanded popular democracy. Without a government by the people, human progress could not evolve. According to Wayland, if the rich and wellborn continued to control the government, the democratic promise of universal freedom could never be reached. The future of the country "lay in the hands of 'the middling class of citizens, that portion of men who
unite intelligence with muscular strength—the farmer, the mechanics," and not the wealthy, the connected or the gentrified. In this sense, Wayland was a democratic idealist who strongly believed that the voice of the people echoed the voice of God. Secondly, Wayland attacked both the Federalist and Republican parties, claiming that neither represented the true interests of their constituencies and served only the needs and desires of party officials. As he wrote to his friend, Mark Tucker, "[t]he longer I look and think, the more I am convinced that I am right. I will not be...the subject of a party." By distinguishing the Middling Interest from both established parties, Wayland's anti-partyism allowed the nonpartisan insurgency to draw membership from both Republican and Federalist rolls. And finally, like his insurgent colleagues, Wayland quickly came to dispise what he identified and distinguished from the rank-and-file as Boston's oppressive Federalist aristocracy.

While Joseph T. Buckingham persistently utilized the Galaxy to expose the impact of Federalist elitism on the ordinary citizens of Boston and the state, and consistently demanded specific reforms, Wayland simultaneously attacked the corrupting influence of the two party system on the human soul. "The spirit of party," he reminisced in 1826, "pervaded all ranks of society, and mingled its bitter waters with all the relations of civil and domestic
life....[It] infused its hateful influence into the services and devotions of the sanctuary of God....The salvation of the soul itself seems unimportant, in comparison with the all absorbing question, which of these two political parties should be uppermost."49 Although publicly Wayland assaulted both parties equally, privately he confessed his rhetoric was designed to tear down Federalism.50

Orthodox Federalists throughout Massachusetts balked at the insurgency's public pronouncements. Recent Harvard graduate and loyal Otis partisan, Ralph Waldo Emerson clearly illustrated his contempt for the insurgency. Writing to John Boynton Hill in March 1822, Emerson explained that the third party was "a band of murmurers...a parcel of demagogues, ambitious...of being known, [and] hoping for places as partisans which they could not achieve as citizens."51 The Federalist Central Committee viewed Wayland's party and his diatribes in a similar light. How else could Federalism's leadership interpret such threatening statements being issued from the North End like: "the great changes in a nation must always be commenced [by] the common people?" or "[t]he question at issue is, whether a nation shall be governed by men of its choice, or by men whose only title to rule is...from hereditary descent."52 Wayland even went after the newly revised state constitution, stating that it was "utterly
worthless" because it was not "written on the hearts of a people." With Wayland's vital contributions to Middling Interest doctrine, Federalism faced an energized political force inspired by moral righteousness.

By the winter of 1822, the disparate and often fragmented voices of Boston discontent found a viable home in the Middling Interest party. Armed with a litany of meaningful state and municipal issues, a sympathetic organ, the New England Galaxy, from which to disseminate party ideology and positions, a leadership that held a distinctly democratic doctrine zealously fortified by Christian principles, and a disgruntled electorate eager for reform, the Middling Interest party in Boston had rapidly developed into a mature, viable alternative to Federalism. In March, the insurgency leadership began searching for a suitable candidate to pit against the "aristocracy's" chieftain, Harrison Gray Otis.
Notes


3. Eliza Susan Quincy to Robert C. Winthrop, June 30, 1879, Winthrop Family Papers, Quincymicro. Eliza Susan Quincy to Justin Winsor, July 7, 1880, Winsor Family Papers, Quincymicro.


5. Edmund Quincy, Josiah Quincy, 289. Walker, Memoir of Josiah Quincy, 112-113. McCaughey, Last Federalist, 94-95. For a public announcement of Quincy's appointment to the Boston Municipal Court see, "Municipal Court," New England Galaxy, Jan. 18, 1822, APSmicro. Appointments to the municipal courts were done by the governor see, Charter of the City of Boston, chapter 15, 81.

6. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, Jan. 19, 1822, Otismicro; also see, McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 94.


8. For gubernatorial election returns see, Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 2, 240, from which my percentages are culled. In 1816, Brooks won by his smallest margin (51%), beating Dearborn by just 2194 votes out of a total of 96,962; in 1817, Brooks won by 8,031 out of 84,289 (55%); in 1818, Brooks faced Crowinshield and won by 9,497 out of 69579 votes (57%); in 1819, Brooks won by 7,604, out of 78,146 votes cast (55%); in 1820, Brooks faced Eustis and won by 9,144 votes out of a total of 53,000 votes (55%); again facing Eustis, Brooks, in 1821, won by 8,340 votes out of a total of 48,876 (59%); and in his final election, he beat Eustis in 1822 by 7,310 out of a total of 49,664 votes cast (57%).
9. *Boston Palladium*, Feb. 6, 1816, as quoted in Livermore, *Twilight of Federalism*, 35; for Brook's tenuous position in Massachusetts and his pragmatic decision to support of the Virginia Dynasty see, ibid, 81, where Livermore explains that Brooks "beat back successive Republican challenges with a policy of moderation, smooth and continuous praise of the national administration, and constant reminders of his fine Revolutionary War record." Also see, Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 63-65, for a thumbnail sketch of Brooks's political life that confirms that for Brooks to win elections in Massachusetts he had to "'disarm party spirit with talismanic power,'" 64. Fisher, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 246, which also offers a thumbnail sketch of Brooks's involvement in the Federalist party.

10. See above footnote #8 for election returns.


21. For Harrison Gray Otis's significant property holdings in Boston see, Edel, et. al., *Shaky Palaces*, 198-205. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, Jan. 19, 1822, Otis\textsuperscript{micro}. I have not discovered the meaning behind Otis's reference to "Ocalegon."

22. For Otis's holdings in real estate and rental properties see, Matthew Edel, et al., *Shaky Palaces*, 198-205; and Lewis Rohrbach, comp., *Boston Taxpayers in 1821*, passim, which provides a listing of all rental properties, owners, rental rates, and tenants who paid taxes in 1821. As evidenced by the tax records, Otis collected rent from significant numbers of Boston rental units.


25. "Wooden Buildings," *New England Galaxy*, Feb. 1, 1822, AP\textsuperscript{micro}. For the damage high rent was having on middling Bostonians during the depression, see, editorial, *New England Galaxy*, March 8, 1822, AP\textsuperscript{micro}. Also, "Wooden Buildings," *New England Galaxy*, Feb. 18, 1822, AP\textsuperscript{micro}.


27. *Boston Town Records*, 1814-1822, 265-266. Lewis's petition was widely publicized before it arrived at Town Meeting see, "City of Boston," *New England Galaxy*, March 1, 1822, AP\textsuperscript{micro}, where Buckingham predicts the petition will come to Town Meeting with over 4,000 signatures.


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32. "Wooden Buildings," Columbian Centinel, March 16, 1822, AAS. Also see, "Wooden Buildings," Columbian Centinel, March 10, 1822, AAS.


37. Harrison Gray Otis to William Sullivan, March 21, 1822, Otismicro. Otis claims in the same letter that he had already written to Thomas H. Perkins to do the same.


39. "Electioneering," New England Galaxy, March 22, 1822, APSmicro. For Roulstone and Blake's connection with the wooden building reform movement see, Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 202-204, which identifies both as serving on Town Meeting committee's that approved Josiah Jones's 1821 wooden building reform petition.


42. Formisano, Transformation of Political Culture, 185.

43. Both Roulstone and Blake's political careers were strictly local. Both had served on various Town Meeting committees since 1821, see, Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 167, 177-178, 203, 254, 202., but neither were involved, from what I've found, in state politics.

44. Francis Wayland, "The Duties of an American Citizen, Two Discourses, Delivered in the First Baptist Meeting
House in Boston, on Thursday, April 7, 1825, the Day of Public Fast," (Boston: James Loring, 1825) 8, 17, 35-36, AAS.


49. Francis Wayland, "The Death of the Ex-Presidents," July 4, 1826, as quoted in, Theodore R. Cane, "Francis Wayland and Brown University," 171.

50. For example see, Francis Wayland to Alonozo Potter, April 8, 1822, Francis Wayland Papers (1796-1865), John Hay Library--Brown University Archives.

51. Ralph Waldo Emerson to John Boynton Hill, March 11, 1822, as quoted in McCaughey, Last Federalist, 102.

52. Francis Wayland, "Remarks on the Quarterly Review of Mrs. Judson's Account of the American Baptist Mission to the Burman Empire," May, 1826, as quoted in Crane, "Francis Wayland and Brown University," 148-153. Francis Wayland, "The Duties of an American Citizen, Two Discourses, Delivered in the First Baptist Meeting House in Boston, on Thursday, April 7, 1825 the, Day of Public Fast" (Boston: James Loring, 1825), 17, AAS.
53. Francis Wayland, "The Duties of an American Citizen, Two Discourses, Delivered in the First Baptist Meeting House....," 30.
CHAPTER VI
THE MAYORAL ELECTION OF 1822 AND
THE TRIUMPH OF THE MIDDLING INTEREST

"The wheels of revolution are in motion."
--Joseph T. Buckingham, 1822.

"The magic of the many which sets the world on fire."
--Harrison Gray Otis, 1822.

By late spring 1822, a broad and fractious coalition came together under the Middling Interest's reformist banner. "Ten footers" united with frustrated debtors and angry militia men. Ward voting advocates and tax reformers joined-in as well. Boston's dissenting electorate concluded that neither the Federalist leadership, nor the ineffectual Republicans could or would satisfy its demands for reform. Thus, it looked elsewhere. Possessing a new political awareness, ordinary Bostonians moved beyond past partisan rancor and embraced the insurgent vision put forth by Francis Wayland and other Middling Interest spokesmen.

The depression of 1819 initiated a charged atmosphere of social and economic reform that gave rise to political unrest in Boston. As the reverberations of the depression spread throughout the city, popular resistance to the political status quo erupted. Under the weight of depression, required militia service no longer seemed an act of patriotism, but an oppressive tax. Imprisonment for debt seemed excessive when so many Bostonians were
unemployed, or working harder than before only to avoid the debtors' gaol. Boston's fire laws no longer seemed practical when they helped maintain high rents and stifled the "small man's" prospects of ever owning a modest home to insure a secure retirement. Small property owners condemned a tax code that taxed thrice-over for no other reason it seemed than to fill the pockets of unscrupulous judges.

Even the 1780 state constitution seemed stale and in need of change due to a myriad of new developments within the state and the people's consistent calls for reform. Adding to popular frustrations, once a constitutional convention met, the reformists were swiftly silenced. Slick lawyers and unscrupulous judges had rigged the convention before it had even convened to quell reformist impulses within the state. On the local level, Boston's voting majority no longer revered the small band of Federalists elites who controlled Boston's traditional town meeting system of governance. Instead, the majority demanded a representational system where all could vote in the privacy and security of one's own neighborhood, far from the prying employer's or client's eyes.

These were the issues and battles—both won and lost—that helped bind the Middling Interest coalition together in 1822. The single most resonate chord among the variety of interests within the coalition was a unifying and
impassioned hatred toward a common enemy—the Massachusetts Federalist Central Committee. For many Bostonians, the Federalist leadership of Harrison Gray Otis, Thomas H. Perkins, William Sullivan and their lackeys—those "purse-proud devils," as Joseph T. Buckingham called them—no longer were viewed with deference, but, instead, outward contempt. The adherents of the Middling Interest viewed this leadership as having betrayed the people's trust. From the central committee's stubborn defense of the militia system to its hidden role in blocking any significant constitutional reforms in 1820-1821; from its stand against ward voting to its neglect of the debtors' plight, the central committee faced an increasingly hostile citizenry. Voters began to detect a pattern in the central committee's actions. To Boston's insurgents and their followers, the Federalist establishment rigidly quashed any popular challenges to the deference it had for so long enjoyed.

The anti-deferential stance toward Boston's traditional economic, social and political establishment (as represented by the central committee) led to a class confrontation in Boston. This political and cultural rebellion challenged the patterns of dominance traditionally exhibited by the established Federalist elite. Specifically, the insurgency exposed the central committee for what it had become: a prejudicial, closed
fraternity that promoted and perpetuated, through political manipulation, its own power and class interests. At the same time, the central committee continued to claim a disinterested and paternal devotion to all the people within Commonwealth.

With the committee's cynical responses to popular demands for reform between 1819-1822, many disgruntled Bostonians became skeptical of the "honorable" intentions, if not the very honor of Federalism's leadership. The deference ordinary Bostonians once voluntarily bestowed upon leaders like Harrison Gray Otis and William Sullivan turned sour in the wake of depression. With the Boston elite's paternal intent under fire, a political and cultural mutiny arose among the city's rank-and-file electorate.

Like 1814, Bostonians in 1819 endured a depression. But, in 1814, the Federalist establishment's prompt political and economic response had attended to the needs of the public. This was not the case in 1819 and ordinary Bostonians took matters into their own hands calling for a variety of political reforms to ease spiraling economic hardships. Elite leadership replied to such grass-roots activism with obdurate resistance and an insensitive attitude of upper-class superiority. Drawing support from both Republican and Federalist ranks, the result was the
formation of an aggressive, coalitional insurgency, unified in its common resentment toward the upper class's behavior.

For the central committee and the interests and class it served, the development of such a dissident political body held profound implications for its dominance of Boston, if not the state. For Boston's "commoners" to so overtly defy the will of their "betters" demonstrated the fragility of elite-class political and cultural hegemony in Boston. In this sense, Harrison Gray Otis's fearful characterization of the Middling Interest as a "revolutionary movement" was not without foundation.

In the Spring of 1822, the insurgency formally introduced its populistic manifesto, reinforcing Harrison Gray Otis' fears. In a widely distributed pamphlet, the Middling Interest declared, "[w]e claim from our Constitutional agents deference to the known will of the majority." In a thinly veiled condemnation of the central committee, An Exposition of the Principles and Views of the Middling Interest announced, "we deprecate the secret influence of a FEW" who ignored the authority of the majority. Focusing its outrage on the central committee's recent political intrigue in blocking various Boston reforms, the Middling Interest claimed that the people "have been denied in measures. They have been utterly disregarded by those, whom the people of Boston elected into the last Legislature....Our senators and
representatives not only opposed the wishes of their constituents, but joined in the votes which in one instance defeated the purpose of a large majority of the town.... We allude to the petition for wooden buildings, and the provision in the city charter, for election of State and United States officers in wards." Ward voting, the Middling Interest explained, was essential because "the majority are, and of right ought to be, sovereign; and that there is not, nor can be danger intrusting to the majority, when every voter in the Commonwealth is left free to form, [to] express and act upon his own opinion of men and measures." Holding that the majority "were treated with contempt," the Exposition assailed those class interests that the "FEW" represented and the specific business ventures which had helped make Otis, Perkins and Sullivan wealthy and prominent men in Boston: "We hold it preposterous to admit that a high prize in a lottery, or a successful speculation in land or merchandize, confers knowledge and understanding, and still more admit that any man can or ought to have influence on any other qualification than the soundness of his judgement, the fairness of his mind, and his ability to be useful."

Adding a touch of anti-partyism into the Middling Interest platform, the Exposition stated that insurgents "pledge[d] themselves to nothing but the suppression of party spirit, and the violence and overbearing domination
of those, who seek power for the gratification of possessing it, and use the influence it gives, to control freedom of opinion and independence of suffrage."

Addressing the hyper-critical and obviously threatened Federalist press, the pamphlet concluded, "[i]t has been sneeringly said, that the Middling Interest is an array of the POOR against the RICH. On the contrary, the Middling Interest are as ready to admit the just influence of the rich as the few, who affect to enroll all of them in their ranks,...[yet] we know many rich men who have not a particle of political influence." These men, according to the Exposition, would be welcomed into the insurgency.⁴

If anyone in Massachusetts politics seemed to have "not a particle of political influence," and had rebuffed "enroll[ment]" into the "ranks" of the "FEW," it was Josiah Quincy. After twenty-years in politics and at the age of fifty, Quincy's professional life seemed a profile in political decline. In just nine years, he had fallen from prominence as a nationally known figure in the U.S. Congress to a inconsequential municipal judge. Indeed, Harrison Gray Otis, in January 1822, had written Quincy off as a tired, political has-been. Having fallen out of favor in the central committee, Quincy found a renegade urban constituency ready to welcome him. In his role as a municipal judge, Quincy first courted and then captivated this dissenting element in Boston's political landscape.

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The man on the outs with the central committee, was now the champion of the Middling Interest.

While "trying his hand...among whores and rogues," as Otis disparagingly characterized Quincy's departure from the State House to the municipal court, the new justice promptly distinguished himself as an activist committed to reforming what he charged were obstacles to the "just distribution and wise execution of the principles of justice." Quincy understood the enmity the populace felt toward the judiciary. As a judge he would use this animosity for his own purposes. Beginning with popular frustration over judicial exemptions from militia service, and extending to countless charges of judicial corruption, judges of all stripes bore vigorous popular onslaughts to their character. Since the depression's beginning, judges were attacked for their excessively high salaries. Their attempt in Boston to maintain their taxing powers by preserving the Court of Sessions had raised the ire of most Bostonians. "The truth is," wrote Joseph Story to his fellow judge Jeremiah Mason in January 1822, "the Judiciary in our country is...open to attack from all quarters....Its only support is the wise and the good and the elevated in society." It was just this segment of society that the Middling Interest had declared war on. As a judge, Quincy's quickly differentiated himself from the rest who
were routinely perceived as unscrupulous and money-grubbing.  

Within two months of his appointment and with an eye towards gaining the "mass of the community's" support, Judge Quincy launched a two-pronged attack on the same judicial system he had so recently joined. First, he criticized the practice of judicial sentencing. Because Boston maintained only one jail, all convicted of a crime within the municipality, no matter the severity, were confined to the Leverett Street Jail. There was little, if any, segregation of inmates. Women, children and men—the violent, the deviant, and the disturbed—all who were convicted, ended up on Leverett Street; violent criminals freely co-mingled with debtor's and poverty-stricken children guilty of petty theft. Such integration outraged Quincy, for, as he stated before the Suffolk County grand jury, within a month of Boston's first mayoral contest, "society itself does little else [under such a system] than plot the ruin of every juvenile offender, and every novice in crime, when it provides no other alternative for punishment, than confinement in gaol." "Why should not," Quincy asked, "a power be invested in the judges," to separate criminals on the basis of "age, or sex, or degree of offense?" Joseph Buckingham's *New England Galaxy* concluded that by "degree of offense," Judge Quincy was referring to debtors and their imprisonment. Having
consistently criticized the malady of debtor's, the Galaxy heralded Quincy as "entertaining such rational and philanthropic views...[as] to produce a reformation" in judicial sentencing. The Boston Recorder, a non-partisan Congregationalist magazine, praised Quincy's charge asserting, "we have long felt, doubtless in common with the mass of our fellow citizens, that there are great defects either in the laws themselves or in their execution."

Quincy's second salvo revitalized long-standing popular grievances stemming back to the Constitutional Convention that accused the judiciary with inefficiency and corruption. In his March directive, Quincy denounced his judicial brethren for making "gain from their [the people's] vices: as making profit by their [the people's] passions; and as interested to enhance their [the people's] losses and miseries, by multiplying, or lengthening out their [the people's] controversies [trials]," while steadily accumulating excessively high court fees. Echoing complaints first issued by reformers during the 1820-1821 Convention, Quincy charged the judiciary with serving its own selfish interests at the tax payer's expense. After scolding his fellow judges for their blatant economic opportunism, if not out-right corruption, Quincy declared, "everywhere the robe of justice should be spotless," for it was the poor who suffered most under a fraudulent judiciary.10
Quincy's widely publicized demands for judicial reform undeniably added to his popularity. As Boston editorialist, "LABEO," commented, Judge Quincy "enlarge[d] his argument before the grand jury] with much force and eloquence upon the manner in which justice is administered to the lower classes of society by the inferior judicial tribunals. And he very properly adverts to that disgrace of the Statute Book, the act by which the compensation of Justices is made to depend upon the number of cases they decide; an act that gives them direct interest in the stirring up of petty suits, and embroiling the whole mass of society." This same criticism of the judiciary's compensation had been raised by Stephen Codman in Town Meeting one year earlier.\(^{11}\)

As the Codman committee reported to the town, $1,366.45 was paid "to one Justice between February and October," while, that same year, three more had divided the tidy sum of $3,100.63 between themselves.\(^{12}\) Justice Joseph Story estimated the average salary of a state judge stood at $2,400, not including fees rendered in court.\(^{13}\) When the average wage of a common laborer rested at 80 cents a day, a carpenter at 89 cents a day, a printer at $1.22 at day, and a blacksmith at under $1 a day, the justices's base salaries of $7 a day (not including their fees) seemed excessive.\(^{14}\) Considering that in 1822, a gallon of Jamaican rum cost $1.25 a gallon, a cord of wood went for
$3.86, and a gallon of lamp oil sold for $1, the high cost for life's most basic necessities combined with their modest incomes placed great financial burdens on the average working Bostonian.\textsuperscript{15} Popular resentment toward the judicial branch's lucrative earnings remained high in 1822 and probably grew as the lingering of depression undermined the average Bostonians's ability to pay off debts, rents, and taxes. Once in the court system, the common debtor all too often watched as lawyers, judges, and plaintiffs walked away with his hard-earned money, leaving him deeper in debt and facing jail-time.\textsuperscript{16}

Certainly, concerns over debt imprisonment weighed heavily on the minds of many Bostonians who would vote in the April mayoral election. The call for the law's abolition was as vigorous and incendiary as ever. In the spring of 1822, Middling Interest spokesmen seized the issue stressing it as an essential component in the upcoming mayoral contest. Days before the mayoral election, the Galaxy, now fully committed to the insurgency, joined the outcry against the law. "[I]t is much to be deplored," wrote Joseph T. Buckingham, "that some kind of law cannot be made to give relief to a very numerous and very respectable class of people" who, in unprecedented numbers, were being sent to prison for indebtedness. "[A]bolishing imprisonment for debt...is demanded on every principle of justice and humanity."\textsuperscript{17}
Other insurgent partisans concentrated their wrath on the hypocrisy that Josiah Quincy had identified in judicial sentencing. As Middling Interest spokesman William Emmons asked, "how long shall we inflict a cruel, unholy, and unconstitutional punishment on the unfortunate of our land, while we treat the felon with less severity than we now treat poor unfortunate Debtors!"  

Although Quincy had not directly championed the debtor's movement, his condemnation of sentencing "respectable" offenders to the same "gaol" as "vicious" criminals, combined with his assault on the integrity of the bench, earned him the support of the debtor's wing of the Middling Interest. This support only intensified when, one month before the election, he proposed a solution for minor crime such as debt delinquency which he claimed society was responsible for: How "strange" it was, Quincy declared "to prosecute and punish crime,...[when] there is little...in our public institutions of the character of prevention." According to Quincy, crime—though endemic to humankind—could be curbed if all of society faced itself and took responsibility for its uglier sides. Quincy believed in the organic nature of community. Therefore, to stop crime, all citizens held a moral obligation to work towards its prevention through social reform.
Quincy's successful promotion in Town Meeting for the House of Industry in 1821 was predicated upon such conviction. It was the duty of the organic whole to distinguish between the "vicious" and the "virtuous" poor.  Both could be reformed, Quincy believed, but each required dramatically different types of disciplinary instruction. In 1821, despite criticisms leveled upon the exorbitant cost of the House of Industry, Quincy argued that segregation of the "vicious" and the "virtuous" was the "moral duty...in a republican form of government,...connected intimately with the very principle, on which its preservation depends. In such a form of government, the great object of attention is the character and condition of the mass of the community. What ever tends to contaminate, to corrupt, or to demoralize the mass, has a direct effect, not only on the happiness and prosperity of the state, but also its safety; on the security of property, of life, and of liberty; all of which are...directly dependent upon the moral character and condition of the people....[This responsibility] cannot be tested by any narrow scale of pecuniary expense and saving." As a municipal court judge, this philosophy informed Quincy's decisions in sentencing criminals he faced in his courtroom.

Faced with what he viewed as an unreasonable dilemma of having to sentence both debtors and murders to the same
prison, Judge Quincy distinguished himself from his judicial brethren by publicly lashing out at the prison system. According to Quincy, the "moral character and condition of the people"--the very foundation of "a republican form of government"--depended upon the benevolent role of an activist state which held the power and duty to prevent the demoralization of the masses which would lead to social chaos. Such an essential obligation of the government outweighed any private concerns over the cost or expense because both social order and democracy hinged on "the character and condition of the mass of the community." The mixing of the "virtuous" debtor with the "vicious" criminal amounted to a dangerous betrayal by the state to the people. Such integration, according to Quincy, would naturally lead to the contamination and corruption of society. Remaining true to his convictions, Judge Quincy served uncharacteristically light sentences to those whose only crime was their poverty. Furthermore, Quincy's March pronouncement on the judicial system adequately distanced the potential mayoral candidate from the entrenched judicial establishment, helping him forge an independent course from which to run for mayor.

When, in the spring of 1822, the Middling Interest deliberated on a viable candidate to stand against Harrison Gray Otis and the central committee, Josiah Quincy seemed a exemplary prospect. First, he desired the position.
Secondly, Quincy had a long political association with some of the insurgent leadership going back to his involvement in the Washington Benevolent Society. One of the Middling Interest's founders, Michael Roulstone had served on the same 1812 Standing Committee that had asked Quincy to join the WBS and function as its first vice president. Also, while in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Quincy earned the Republican minority's respect, especially from those representatives from Boston who had become recent converts to the insurgency like Rev. Francis Wayland's deacon, representative of Boston's Ward 1, Heman Lincoln. Lincoln had been a loyal Republican before shifting to the Middling Interest cause and, like Wayland, advocated a Quincy mayoralty.24

Middling Interestmen who had stood against city chartering, like Joseph T. Buckingham, a dissident Federalist, and William Emmons, a converted Republican, supported Quincy as well. This faction within the Middling Interest remained leery of the charter due to the excessive authority over the city section 30 surrendered to the General Court.25 Accurately regarding section 30 as a Federalist Central Committee ploy to control its interests in Boston, the anti-charter bloc still viewed the charter with great suspicion. Because Quincy shared precisely the same misgivings, this wing of the insurgency believed if anyone could be trusted as mayor, it was Quincy. As
Buckingham explained, "Mr. Quincy's opposition to the charter may, with some persons, be a objection to his eligibility to the Mayoralty. We think otherwise. He opposed it because he saw...mischief in the section which gives the legislature unrestrained power over the charter. He is...still of the same opinion; and...will be still on the watch to see that we are not made the foot-ball of a foolish legislature, and [he will] be ready to repeal the danger when it approaches." Emmons agreed. Also, it was remembered that in one of his last acts as Speaker of the House, Quincy had endorsed the original bill to reform Boston's restrictive fire laws. Although the Federalist legislature overwhelmingly struck down the reform bill, Quincy had supported the Middling Interest's most publicized policy stand against the "haughty lordling[s] and princely nabobs." The prominence of the wooden building issue in the insurgency's laundry list of policy reforms held equal value as ward voting in defining the movement. It was a reform that would have a consequential impact on hundreds of carpenters, renters, and ascendent entrepreneurs.  

Although Quincy's position on the divisive issue of the militia laws remained ambiguous, his speech before the Massachusetts Peace Society in late December 1820 attacking "military fanaticism which was pervading the country," indicated Quincy's sympathy toward militia reform. Quincy
believed war resulted from the two-pronged evil of an unreformed society where poverty and entrenched military establishments necessitated war. Why would the poor choose peace over battle when they "go...to war beggars, [and] return from it nabobs," their pockets filled with "plunder," Quincy asked. With the maintenance of organized military establishments, "fighting and killing one another," Quincy argued, "is, no longer...a matter of blood, but a matter of business." Though he did not directly vilify the militia laws, clearly he viewed them as barriers towards "improving [the] moral and intellectual condition of mankind," which, according to Quincy, was the only course society could take to achieve peacefulness.27

In many ways, the connection Quincy had made between poverty, military organizations and creating a peaceful society, harmonized well with the anti-militia movement's message. The movement had never been based on pacifistic principles, but, instead, on the growing economic insecurities of ordinary militiamen who regarded mandatory service as yet another oppressive tax being heaped upon them by the elite to protect the monied interests. Forced militia service drove them into poverty. Thus, the movement's rhetoric emphasized class inequity within the unreformed militia laws. As with the debt reformers, after the militiamen's petitions to the legislature were ignored or voted down and their voices in the constitutional
convention silenced, they rejected past partisan loyalty and united with the Middling Interest.28 Like the tax reformers, the debtors, and the "tenfooters," the militiamen searched for a candidate who hated the manipulations and political intrigue so often employed by the central committee. In Josiah Quincy they found their man.

Indeed, as early as April 1821, Quincy had accepted his ostracism from the committee and began publicly distancing himself from the Federalist establishment as a whole. His speech chastising the committee for "turning [him] overboard [in the state senate] and making sharks' meat of [him]," clearly was a well-timed jab at the party leadership meant to help redefine his political image.29 A year later, with his independent stand as a municipal judge, Quincy had completed his own personal process of political transformation. To the delight of Middling Interestmen, not only did Quincy seem perfectly content with his ostracism from the central committee, but he seemed happy with it. Freed from the central committee, Quincy thrived, putting forth his own reformist vision that served as a distinct political alternative for dissident factions in Boston's electorate.

In early March 1822, according to Eliza Quincy, "a number of Citizens...sent a Committee to his [Quincy's] house in Hamilton Place, headed by a Master Carpenter to
ask him [Quincy] to stand [as] their candidate for the Mayoralty." Because of Quincy's highly publicized opposition to the Boston city charter he hesitated at the request stating "it would be like choosing Guy Faulkes [sic.] for mayor, for he had done all he could to blow up the city." Nevertheless, now that the governor's office seemed beyond his grasp, Quincy undertook a personal campaign to reposition himself in his race against Otis for the mayoralty. Despite his false modesty, Quincy immediately accepted the delegation's offer to lead the insurgency.30

Having found a candidate, Middling Interest strategists formed a scheme to capture the mayoralty. The insurgents planned to raise a floor fight at the Federalist nominating caucus and thus, displace the central committee's candidate, Otis, with Quincy. On April 4, the caucus met at the Boston Exchange Coffee House. William Sullivan served as both caucus moderator and Otis's emissary. Many men were nominated for Mayor, but after a number of ballots were taken, the contest came down to Quincy and Otis. The Middling Interest strategy seemed to be working. However, in the final balloting, moderator Sullivan insured that Otis received the majority by allowing some Otis supporter's to cast their votes after the balloting had officially ended. Holding only five more
votes than Quincy, Otis was declared the Federalist mayoral candidate.\textsuperscript{31}

Middling Interest delegates immediately rejected the decision charging that the caucus had been rigged. The insurgent delegates, according to the Boston press, "contend[ed] that persons [Otis supporters] had been permitted to mark after the vote had passed for the closing of the marking." The insurgency's charges were valid. As early as January 18th, William Sullivan had guaranteed Otis the Federalist nomination. He assured the Senator, "[p]roper measures will be taken [during the caucus]" to secure the ticket. Indeed, as the Galaxy later exposed, the caucus had been controlled by "the exclusive and one-sided policy [of the central committee]." In an attack on Sullivan, the Galaxy went on to explain that "[t]he moderator of [the] caucus has convenient ears; he never hears the name of an independent man; but he can hear whispers from the well known, tried and faithful servants of the aristocracy, or he can, upon an emergency, take nods and winks for a nomination."\textsuperscript{32} For the insurgent reformers, the central committee's conduct in caucus recalled past unscrupulous indiscretions experienced during the Constitutional Convention and the Town Meeting debates over the charter.

Even before the caucus, the Middling Interest forces were at a distinct disadvantage. Sullivan had been hard at
work consolidating Otis loyalists. Beginning in March, the full weight of the Federalist machine had been set in motion to promote the Otis ticket and crush any other challengers. On March 19, 1822, the "fanatical" Federalist editor, as Joseph Buckingham described him, John Russell, heartily endorsed Otis for mayor in his *Boston Evening Gazette*. The *Boston Daily Advertiser*, which Buckingham declared existed solely to "support a monied aristocracy," followed suit as did the "irritable in the extreme" Benjamin Russell, in his *Columbian Centinel*. Not only did every Federalist organ in Boston predictably sponsor Otis, but the entire Federalist press in Boston refused to even acknowledge Quincy as a candidate. Only on election day did John Russell's *Gazette* grudgingly recognize the Quincy candidacy. Though declining to even identify the Middling Interest nominee by name, Russell, in one short and dismissive sentence, unequivocally opposed Quincy's bid for the mayoralty. As "citizens and federalists," Russell wrote, "we feel impelled to resist the nomination of this gentleman."^{33}

Only Joseph Buckingham's *Galaxy* supported Quincy against the machine. On March 29, the *Galaxy* formally endorsed the Middling Interest-Quincy ticket stating, "[o]ur mayor should be a man who will consider himself the chief officer of a large and respectable republic--not the favored child of [the] junto--a man, who, in executing the
laws, will not know a Tyrian from a Trojan; and who in nominating candidates for subordinate offices, will be free from the shackles of favoritism. Such a man is the Hon. Josiah Quincy....[I]f a course of honest and independent conduct through evil report and good report--if experience in the deliberative assemblies of State and nation--if courtesy to political opponents, and the exercise of gentlemanly deportment to all, whether high or low, rich or poor, are to be of any avail, Mr. Quincy is pre-eminently entitled to be the first Mayor of the City of Boston"³⁴ Despite the Galaxy endorsement, Quincy and the Middling Interest still faced overwhelming odds.

What the Middling Interest proposed was a grassroots challenge to a hostile Federalist leadership that viewed Otis's ascendancy to the mayoralty as the first crucial step in its ultimate goal of placing the committee chieftain in the governor's mansion. As the Federalists caucus indicated, the central committee proved willing to go to extreme lengths to achieve its final objective. In this sense, the central committee wagered that the bonds of deference that had maintained the party's rank-and-file in the past would hold, despite its conniving behavior in the caucus.

It was within this context that the Middling Interest delegates broke with the Federalist caucus on the night of April 4, 1822. Furious and embittered by the blatant
scheming of Sullivan and the central committee, the insurgents stormed out of the Boston Exchange Coffee House to hold their own independent caucus the next evening in Justice Quincy's own courtroom. On April 5, the "Middling Political Interest" caucus unanimously nominated Quincy as their candidate. Quincy, in turn, heartily accepted the nomination.35

"Of course," Eliza Quincy recalled in a somewhat bridled statement, "the nomination of Mr. Quincy was a great surprise to [the central committee]....Boston it was said had never been thrown into such a state of excitement."36 To be more accurate, Quincy's acceptance of the Middling Interest nomination sent a chilling shiver throughout the Massachusetts Federalist establishment that proved to have devastating political, personal and cultural implications.

Having been notified of Quincy's betrayal just hours after the Middling Interest caucus disbanded, Thomas H. Perkins dashed off an agitated letter to Otis who was still in Washington. "Quincy has thrown himself into the 'Middling or Medling Interest' and has suffered himself to be put up as Mayor....As I gave him my mind very freely on the subject, we are of course at Swords points....[H]e will have the high gratification of having split up the federal party....Wm Sturgis has been his great 'slang wanger,' and he carries with him the 'ten footers,' and a portion of the
Democracy [Republicans] which is always the most opposed to the most conspicuous of the federal party—Webster, Lowell, Tudor, all the Judges and those whom I know you to feel a high respect for, are ardent in the expression of the wish that your name should not be taken from the list.... But for this most improper conduct of Quincy, the Election of the Mayor would have been unanimous."  

From far-away Salem, Federalist chieftain of Essex county, Leverett Saltonstall frantically wrote to his Boston friend and fellow Federalist, William Minot, "What are we coming to—or rather what are you coming to in Boston? Quincy v. Otis! This is too bad. There must be something in this business of which we at a distance are wholly ignorant....[T]hat Quincy should swell the triumph of a wooden building faction—and of a party who have abused him these past 20 years.... Is he fascinated," Saltonstall asked, "by the miserable vapor—popularity.... Good Lord deliver us!... There must be extensive jealousies among you." Explaining to Minot that the insurgent tide was spreading into his own county, he wrote, "I found yesterday master Chander deeply infected—he thought Otis unfairly nominated—talked of intrigues, &c.... I am glad, I do not live in Boston. It would not do for my temperament," Saltonstall confessed.  

Daniel Webster was no less frantic. The day after the Middling Interest convention, he anxiously informed Joseph Story of
the news from Boston: "We are in a deplorable state here....Mr. Q[uincy] has opposed the City from the beginning! He now wraps himself up in mystery, & importance--none of his old friends can get [an] audience with him--tho I have no doubt a very active communication exists between him, & a certain other quarter."39

Clearly, the Federalist hierarchy felt politically threatened by Quincy's stand. As Leverett Saltonstall, somewhat hysterically, pronounced on the eve of the election, "the Federalists are all dead--dead--dead! I hope the first election of the City of Boston will not portend its fall."40 But, as these letters also suggest, the betrayal affected Federalism's leadership on a personal level. For Quincy to have so publicly betrayed the central committee not only proved a political embarrassment, but it held profound cultural meaning for men like Otis, Saltonstall, Perkins, and Sullivan, as well as for those, like Daniel Webster, who worked so hard for them.

Partisanship, class affiliation and cultural identity were all tightly wrapped-up together in the minds of these nineteenth-century elites. To be a Federalist was to culturally distinguish oneself from others. In a letter to William Sullivan on January 19, 1822, Harrison Gray Otis's summed up this sentiment when he wrote that one of the major reasons for his coming home to govern Boston was "to train the young leaders of my own breed." As one historian
of Boston explains, "[o]ffice holding elevated Brahmins status [in the first decades of the nineteenth-century] through the highly visible symbols and rituals of the political process....[T]he Boston political and economic elites merged and government service advanced class power as well as class...honor." Another explains, to be a Federalist meant one "was expected to adhere to the Federal standard and acceptable conservative creed. To renounce one's [party] was tantamount to admitting a serious character flaw." Thus, when the Federalist Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics offered an explanation to its New Hampshire Federalist readership for the "unhappy division of parties [that] prevails in Boston," it concluded Quincy's betrayal must have been motivated by "personal considerations."41

Quincy's conversion to the Middling Interest discredited patrician honor and, by extension, weakened the class's cultural power that the Federalist establishment reinforced and championed. His political alliance with those whom Ralph Waldo Emerson disparaged as "a band of murmurers...a parcel of demagogues...[those] hoping for places as partisans which they could not achieve as citizens," demonstrated Quincy's political inclusiveness while also illustrating that he disagreed with Otis's reliance on the Lancastarian system of governance and the deference it demanded. In other words, for many ordinary
Bostonians, Quincy's actions de-legitimized the structure of political dominance used by the political and economic elite of the region. In this sense, Quincy challenged the legitimacy of elite-class rule by undermining its manifestations in politics.

Also, this act of political heresy exposed a fissure within elite-class solidarity. Pierced not by the dreaded mob of the masses as the Federalist establishment had always feared, but by one of its own, the Boston aristocracy was taken by complete surprise. Its reaction to such apostasy was one of disbelief. Indeed, most Otis-loyalists believed Quincy, at the last minute, would withdraw from the race, rather than "be made the 'instrument of disunion and disorganization of the Federal party'" which would condemn him to the peripheries of Boston's elite-class society. As Thomas H. Perkins proclaimed to Otis, "Quincy has done himself up by the course he has pursued....[H]e will have the high gratification of having soiled up the federal party and if he succeeds in his object[,] will lose the place to which he has pretended so much devotion." Let the election "turn as is may," Perkins explained because there would be cultural retribution. "[T]here is no doubt," he concluded, "that Quincy loses, tho he may gain the majority."

Saltonstall was utterly confused when he wrote to William Minot: "I have had, as you know, a great regard for Mr.
Quincy, and regret that he should do anything injurious to himself," but "that he should be willing to disappoint friends who have stood by him firmly,...is truly mortifying."

The Middling Interest challenge and Quincy's betrayal shocked loyal Federalists up and down the eastern seaboard. Philadelphia's leading Federalist organ, the National Gazette and Literary Register, reported on the severity of Quincy's dissidence. "A new division of parties has taken place in the good city of Boston, which threatens to destroy the political supremacy of the old 'federalists of the Boston stamp.'...[The insurgency's] object...[is] to show that they have the power of making a selection. It is probable that they aim at taking the nomination and choice of public officers, from the particular circle to which it is alleged to have been hitherto confined." According to Daniel Webster, the world seemed upside-down "when [one] sees Mr. Quincy the very darling of the Boston Democracy!" Harrison Gray Otis judged Quincy and the insurgent party in apocalyptic terms. "They cry out, desert your old friends and leaders & come into our tabernacks! Sir,...desert your friends! [It] is the same which since the world began[,] corruption speaks to weakness and treachery--which seduction holds to virtue....[It] caused sin into the world and death by sin....It is the magic of the many which sets the world on fire."
For his part, Quincy seemed to thoroughly enjoy the stir he was causing among Boston's Federalist hierarchy. When Thomas H. Perkins scolded him for leading the Middling Interest out of the Federalist caucus, Quincy, according to a shocked Perkins, simply responded with "a formal bow, and a stately 'good morning,'" having totally dismissed him and his censure. The day before the election, Quincy and his daughter Eliza were walking down Summer St. after church, when they observed Harrison Gray Otis's son, Harry, "hurrying along." According to Eliza, "Mr. Quincy called after him saying, 'Where are you going so fast, Otis?'" A red-faced Harry replied, "'working against you Sir, as hard as I can.'" Quincy laughed and waved him on stating, "'Very well, only take care you don't work too hard.'" According to Eliza, while "Mr. Otis's partisans were very angry [with Quincy's]...interference," and Otis's "sons and sons in law distributed voters" throughout the city in "every effort" to get the crusty old Senator elected, Quincy remained very relaxed and satisfied about the upcoming election results.

Not only had Quincy infuriated his old colleagues, as Webster fumed, by "wrapping himself up in mystery & importance...[so] none of his old friends c[ould] get [an] audience with him," but he seemed to be rubbing their noses in it. Worse, he did not seem to acknowledge or care about the disruption he was causing. According to Webster, "the
dirty squabble of local politics," was subverting "her [New England's] proper character and consequence....I feel," he confessed, "the hand of fate upon us, and to struggle is in vain. We are doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water....What has sickened me beyond remedy is the tone and temper of these disputes. We are disgraced beyond help or hope."46 Middling Interest founder, Francis Wayland, viewed the situation quite differently. Writing to his friend Alonzo Potter, the day of the election, Wayland optimistically explained, "[i]n all probability there will be a revolution in politics....Boston it is thought will be democratic shortly, and this will give a strong impulse to the state[;] this will produce a mighty stir in the [country]."47

Realizing that its candidate, George Blake, had little chance in Boston because the Middling Interest coalition drew significant support from Republican as well as Federalist ranks, Republican party strategists took the only course open to them. They tried to coopt the anti-aristocratic platform of the insurgency for themselves by claiming Quincy was a charter-member of the "aristocracy." Characterizing both Quincy and Otis as elitists brothers, the Republican press argued, "Upon what American principles, upon what American feeling can such men be worthy of the suffrages of American citizens? In the memory of many a Bostonian such men would not be tolerated in
Boston. They would, like the Tea, be thrown into the bay, by a parcel of Indians, or they would be habited in such suits of domestic manufacture, that their dearest friends would shrink from their embraces." 48

The glaring problem with this strategy was that Quincy, since 1820, had established strong connections within the Republican party. Some of state's most prominent Republicans, like Levi Lincoln Jr., graciously had accepted Quincy's legislative help, friendship and even his leadership during the Maine statehood debates in the General Court. Also, Quincy's involvement in the Constitutional Convention of 1820-1821, further solidified his relationships with Republican leaders Lincoln and James T. Austin. Thus, likening the reformist Quincy to the chairman of the Massachusetts Federalist Central Committee seemed totally erroneous and only played into the anti-partyism of the insurgency. Indeed, the Republican strategy proved a complete failure. Out of the 1,200 Republicans who voted in the mayoral election, only 157 marked their ballot for Blake. Josiah Quincy stole the vast majority of the Republican vote, seducing a remarkable 802 Republicans into the insurgent fold. Although the Republican party had always been ineffective in the Boston, with the city's first mayoral election, Boston Republicanism reached a new nadir. 49
But what loyal Otis Federalists wondered was whether their party too would meet the same fate. The Middling Interest could bank on 600 firm third party partisans, but the number of regular Federalists and Republicans persuaded by insurgent precepts remained unknown. Two days before the election, Daniel Webster privately offered his gloomy prediction to Joseph Story, confessing that "[n]othing seems practicable but to go forward and support Mr. O[tis] & probably be beaten." Undoubtedly, the central committee's behavior at the Federalist caucus had increased the insurgency's numbers. Other Otis Federalists rejected Webster's pessimism. Far too much was at stake.

Foreseeing a Middling Interest victory, in a last minute ploy to insure a third party defeat, the central committee agreed to throw another candidate's name into the race. According to Eliza Quincy, because "Mr. Quincy...[clearly] was ahead," the committee hoped to fluster and confuse insurgent voters by introducing another Middling Interestman, Thomas L. Winthrop's name onto the ballot. As Eliza recalled, "Mr. Winthrop was put up without his knowledge, to divide the voters & at least defeat Mr. Quincy." The sabotage succeeded.

Unbeknownst to him, this "other" Middling Interest candidate, captured a total vote of 361. Ninety-two came from disaffected Federalists, 90 from Middling Interest partisans and 179 from converted Republicans. The vast
majority of Winthrop's votes, presumably, would have gone to Quincy if the central committee had not added him to the race. Despite this, Quincy gained the majority, with a total of 1,736 votes. Remarkably, his strongest support came from traditional Republican partisans. Without doubt, Republicans identified Quincy as their candidate. As mentioned earlier, Quincy earned the lion's share of their votes, with 802 out of 1,200. Predictably, of the 600 Middling Interest voters, the vast majority of 510 went with Quincy. If there was any weakness in Quincy's popularity it came from the Federalist party. Out of the 1,900 Federalists who went to the polls, only 424 cast theirs for Quincy. The overwhelming majority of those who still identified themselves as Federalist in 1822, had remained loyal to Harrison Gray Otis. Nevertheless, in a political culture that maintained three parties, that proved insufficient. Otis only appealed to Federalist loyalists, garnering 1,384 votes. Not one Republican or Middling Interestman had cast a vote for the venerable Senator. The remaining 62 votes went to a scattering of nominal candidates. 52

Clearly, the extra-legal manipulations and partisan zealousness of the central committee spoiled any possibility for the Otis campaign to appeal to either the Republican or Middling Interest rank-and-file. However, the central committee had offset the worst. Webster's
ominous prophecy had been avoided. Winthrop drew just enough votes from Quincy to deny him a quorum as the charter required. If the "other" insurgent candidate had not been brought into the race, Quincy would have received 785 more votes. Armed with a cumulative vote of 2,521, instead of his 1,736, the Middling Interest and Quincy would have easily captured the mayor's office. Yet, because of the election rules and the complicity of the central committee, the Middling Interest candidate would not ascend to the chief executive position. Despite the loss, the insurgency found significant solace in the fact that it had successfully blocked the "servant of the aristocracy."

Thus, after the initial balloting for Boston's first mayor on April 8, the Middling Interest and the Federalist Central Committee had reached a stalemate. Each had stymied the other and both candidates withdrew from the race. For ordinary Bostonians, the visible difference between the two parties was clear. One had employed dirty tricks to check the opponent; in stark contrast, the other rejected such partisan scheming and adopted an honest campaign the insurgency had promised--one based on integrity and the authority of "the people." The contrast did not go unnoticed by the Boston electorate. In the second election on April 16, the central committee once
again would find itself on the defensive, but this time it would have to acquiesce to the coalition's demands.

In the meantime, Buckingham viciously railed against the central committee. Outraged at the central committee's recent clandestine behavior, the Galaxy, three days after the election, charged that "[i]t is this kind of management which has produced a divisions in the ranks off federalism, and sown the seeds of a new party, which, like the fabled teeth of the giant, will soon spring up and become an army that will overpower it predecessor. The party is the middling interest, and comprises the men who are so far below a state of overgrown wealth, as not to be able [to] live without labour, and so far above mendicity [sic.] as to be too proud or too honest, to live by trimming and fawning. It has been said that there is no such thing as a middling interest—-that the rich have no interest separate from that of the labouring and poorer classes. This assertion is false....The rich are in league to put down, and keep down, the mechanic and the tradesman. They have trampled upon the worm till it turns, and the mechanic and the tradesman would deserve still to be trampled to the dust, if they did not turn, and at least endeavor to curb these purse-proud devils of their will."

The public outcry against the central committee's "managements" before and during the election proved so overwhelming and hostile after Quincy dropped out of the
race that Thomas H. Perkins was forced to deliver an "explanatory address" to the people of Boston. Perkins's address only roused them more by insulting the Middling Interest and Quincy. With this address, Perkins, who had maintained a low profile during the election, sealed his fate as, in Buckingham's words, one "of the crafty politicians." "It is not as...easy," Perkins explained, "to heal party dissensions, as to ferment...them--let the responsibility of the latter rest where it ought." "Amen," Buckingham retorted, but "the question is," Buckingham stated, "[w]here ought the responsibility...rest? Most undoubtedly on those [in the central committee], who, at the [Federalist] general caucus, after the marking for candidates was declared to be closed, persuaded others to come and mark for their favorite candidate, thus turning the scale against the candidate [Quincy] who had the majority of marks."

Buckingham then turned his wrath on the Federalist press which, he reminded his readers, had not even "deigned to mention that [Quincy] was a candidate." "Our ideas of duty and impartiality," Buckingham mocked, "may be very unsound and absurd; we know they are very unfashionable...; but, such as they are, we feel 'impelled' to maintain them; and hope we shall never feel impelled to adopt that narrow-minded, exclusive sort of policy, which would seal up the press of this free and enlightened country, against the expression of the will and
sentiments of a majority of citizens, and open it only at
the will and pleasure of a cabal."

In the interim between the first and second balloting
for mayor, Boston's Federalist press tried to sort out what
had happened. The Boston Daily Advertiser explained that
"the failure of Mr. Otis's election" has arisen from the
peculiar combination of the parties into which Boston is
'unhappily divided."

Philadelphia's National Gazette and
Literary Register, accused Quincy of turning "democratic"
and causing Otis's defeat. "The mechanics and other
classes allied to [Quincy],...formed an independent
interest, the Middling Interest." The Portsmouth Journal
of Literature and Politics of New Hampshire, assessed the
insurgency's social composition in more detail. Although
the Portsmouth Journal's editor seemed utterly confused by
the specific "local...considerations" that had motivated
such activist third partyism in Boston, he concluded that
"[i]t is well known that a party has for several years
existed in Boston consisting of Insolvent Debtors and those
who feel connected with them by interest, or
feelings....Federal and Democratic, and Wooden-building"
partisans combining with "Insolvent Debtor[s]...constitutes
a considerable portion of that which has lately assumed the
name of Middling Interest."  

Considering the economic environment of Boston at the
time, the Portsmouth Journal's tentative identification of

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the specific interest groups that formed the insurgency's rank-and-file members seems highly accurate. The depression that first sparked popular political activism in Boston had not ended by the mayoral election and continued sending many poor and overextended, middling citizens to Boston's debtor prison. Just weeks after the April 8 election--beginning in the middle of May and continuing into June--Boston faced a severe shortage in specie. Banks were "compelled...to demand immediate repayment of their debtors, for such notes have fallen due. In many case," reported Boston's Evening Gazette, "such compulsion has been attended with extreme hardship, and has required numerous sacrifices." The blighted economic atmosphere that originally fostered the insurgency was not getting better.

On April 12, the Middling Interest forced an open caucus to nominate an acceptable nonpartisan, compromise candidate. Meeting once again in the Boston Exchange Coffee house, and led, this time, by a humbled Thomas H. Perkins, insurgents, Republicans and Federalists congregated to announce a nominee tolerable to all Bostonians. When John Phillips was chosen, clearly the Middling Interest held the upper-hand at the meeting. Having been outraged when the central committee punished Quincy by taking his state senate seat away from him in 1820, Phillips, ever since, had proven a strong political
supporter of Quincy. Personally their relationship was beyond question. They were first cousins, life-long friends and had suffered through Phillips Academy together. More significantly, John Phillips had stood as a Middling Interest candidate during the March state senatorial race despite his past Federalist partisanship. During that race, Joseph Buckingham bolstered the Phillips candidacy, stating that Phillips was the sort "whom the mechanics and middling interest men have confidence." Since then he had served as the President of the Senate and was described by Republicans there as a "moderate, intelligent, independent man." On the April 16 election, Phillips ran unopposed and overwhelmingly won by 2,467 votes out of the total 2,661 cast.

With Phillips's victory the Middling Interest declared victory. As Joseph Buckingham gleefully announced to Boston: "The cabal which has so long managed the federal party has received a blow from which it will not...recover, and will never again carry on its purpose with undisputed sovereignty." When Otis began the long journey home from Washington in May, 1822, he must have been filled with despair. He had actively maintained a hand in local Boston politics since he had offered to sacrifice himself in the senate as an "ambassador of peace and good will from Massachusetts," and now the Senator could not even get elected mayor of his
hometown. He had consistently attempted to manage damage-control for his party from a far, but "Boston federalism of the old stamp" lay in shambles despite his best efforts. He had publicly offered to "yield to the wishes of his fellow citizens," and become the city's first executive because his "humble services," he thought, "might be useful in the organization of the new government," yet he had been attacked as an elitist, "purse-proud devil." Also, he had indulged the luxury of envisioning himself seated in the Governor's mansion, but now that too seemed out of reach.62

On May 12, when he rose to the floor of Faneuil Hall to address the city of Boston, his despair seemed to have turn to self-pitying rage. "I wish that every man of the middling interest was within reach of my voice, when I ask," bellowed Otis, "where are the tenants whom I have ejected--the Debtor's I have sued--the Labourers whom I have pinched....The poor whose faces I have ground."

Providing Boston with his version of the trickle-down theory, Otis-style, he explained that "[i]f the stream of wealth sets in one channel it runs out by another, and the reservoir between both is connected with each other," therefore, "there can be no permanent middling interest." Because of the flow of wealth from rich to middling and the rise and fall of personal fortunes, "[t]he people who a few years ago composed the middling interest now live in homes of brick," and have become rich. The "middling interest,"
Otis argued was not a real party, but a rabble of malcontents—"warm opposers to an imaginary privileged order"—"a mere name, calculated to break down [Federalism] and to build up its adversary." Arguing that "[t]hree parties can no more continue in a country, than three men can continue to fight in a single combat," Otis pleaded with his ex-Federalist brethren who had joined the insurgency to return home. Otis maintained that the interests of the insurgency and Federalism were "essentially the same." If he had sacrificed the mayoralty to bring this misunderstanding to the attention of all Bostonians, then so be it. "I ask not a return of popularity. I lament not its loss," Otis firmly explained. "But your esteem is a vested [right]—I am entitled to...having earned it for good consideration—This you ought not withdraw without good cause—If you do so, you rob me [of honor]." Then in a quite melodramatic statement, which, according to the Galaxy, provoked muffled laughter from certain quarters of Faneuil Hall, Otis declared, "I feel it might be the last time in which I shall ever address you from this place—I am no longer a Candidate for any office—My race is run—I am delighted to give way to other com[er]s of higher, middle and better speeds."

Otis's speech provoked the Nile's Weekly Register correspondent in Boston, to sardonically report back to his
Washington office, "never...shall I meet with any assembly comprising so much private worth and such elevated patriotism and the HARTFORD CONVENTION!!??" Joseph Buckingham was astonished by the speech. "Mr. Otis," the Galaxy reported, "took leave of his fellow citizens...on Sunday evening." Explaining the Senator rose before the crowd "evidently embarrassed," Buckingham continued by addressing every point Otis had made and trouncing it. "When Mr. Otis pretends to see no cause for a disruption of the Federal party, he pretends to a degree of mental blindness....His arguments against [the Middling Interest] were altogether inconclusive and absurd....Why should," Buckingham asked, "the middling interest be forever chained to the car of the monied interest....Why should not the middling interest do everything they can do, to overthrow the power, or at least, to neutralize the operations of a monied aristocracy, who's[p] patriotism is nothing but selfishness and the love of power, and whose public spirit is deposited, for safe-keeping, in the vaults of the bank?"

Addressing Otis's appeal for Middling Interestmen who had once been Federalist to come back into the fold, Buckingham predicted that this would never happen because "[t]he materials are [now] too discordant to amalgamate." "[T]he wheels of revolution are in motion," Buckingham declared and nothing could now stop it."
Notes


3. An Exposition of the Principles and Views of the Middleing Interest in the City of Boston, (Boston: ?, May 1822) 1-8, AAS, emphasis added by the author. It should be note that during the 1810s and 1820s both Otis and Perkins were involved in speculations not only in real estate, but "merchandize." For their investments in land development see, Matthew Edel, et al., *Shaky Palaces*, 198-205, which concludes that Harrison Gray Otis and his partners (one of whom was Perkins) earned an "excess of $311,115 of sales [in real estate and development] over purchases of $543,199, a gain of just under 60 percent." For investments in mercantile speculation, see, Seaburg and Paterson, *Merchant Prince of Boston*, esp. 284-289, which cites Perkins stating his philosophy on speculation in the China trade as, "[t]he speculator does not wait for the event which would frustrate his views; he anticipates it, and if his anticipations are warranted he makes a profitable speculation." In 1819, Perkins and his partners invested $765,000 in the China trade and expected to double their initial investment. For further evidence of Otis' and Perkins' involvement in business ventures that directly benefitted from their involvement in government see, Carl E. Prince and Seth Taylor, "Daniel Webster, the Boston Associates, and the U.S. Government's Role in the Industrializing Process, 1815-1830," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 2 (Fall 1982), 283-299; and Francis W. Gregory, *Nathan Appleton Merchant and Entrepreneur, 1779-1861* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1975), 194-200.

4. An Exposition of the Principles and Views of the Middleing Interest in the City of Boston, (Boston: ?, May 1822) 1-8, AAS.


7. For popular animosity toward judges of all kind see, Chapter 4 of this manuscript which discusses the perceived corruption on the county level, (ie.) within the Justices
of the Peace and the Court of Sessions; for charges of corruption in the Massachusetts Supreme Court, see "The Chief Justice's Charge," New England Galaxy, Oct. 20, 1820; and "The Convention," ibid., Jan. 5 1821, both in APSmicro, where Buckingham first contends that Supreme Court justices have traded in justice for political expediency and second, argues that circuit court justices are being paid too much. (See Chapter 4 of this manuscript for a fuller discussion of these charges and the political ramifications of them.)

8. Josiah Quincy, "Remarks on Some of the Provisions of the Laws of Massachusetts, Affecting Poverty, Vice, and Crime," (Cambridge, 1822), as quoted in "Crimes and Punishments," Boston Recorder, May 25, 1822, APSmicro. Also see, Richard G. Hewlett, "Josiah Quincy: Reform Mayor of Boston," New England Quarterly, 24 (June, 1951), 181-182, 187-191; and "Poverty, Vice, and Crime," New England Galaxy, April 25, 1822, APSmicro, which, like the Recorder, provides selected portions of Quincy's charge. Some modern historians interested in forms of institutionalized social control will take exception to my favorable characterization of Quincy reformist stance. In particular, Peter C. Holloran, Boston's Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children, 1830-1930 (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989), 24-31; and Eric C. Scheider, In the Web of Class, 32-37, describes Quincy's later "reformist" actions as mayor as simply a means by which to clear Boston's streets from roving poor children and the poor homeless, while at the same time "inviting all groups, regardless of class, to join in opposition to pauperism, and to divide the world between the respectable and the vicious." Although this view of Quincy may, in fact, be perfectly valid, for the average jailed pauper, to be segregated from hardened, violent criminals certainly must have been a relief.

9. "Poverty, Vice, and Crime," New England Galaxy, April 25, 1822. "Crimes and Punishments," Boston Recorder, May 25, 1822, both in APSmicro. Although both of these editorials came out after the 1822 mayoral election with the public printing of Quincy's charge to the Suffolk County grand jury in March, 1822, due to the fact that his charge to a jury was published at all, clearly indicates that Bostonians were aware of his statement on prison reform before the April mayoral election. Unfortunately for Quincy's mayoral ambitions, the tract was not published until after the election probably due to time constraints. For Buckingham's opinion of debt imprisonment see, chapter 3 and Buckingham, Personal Memoirs, 102-104.

11. "Judge Quincy's Charge," Portsmouth [NH] Journal, June 1, 1822, as reported from Boston by "LABEO," AAS. For Codman's criticism of the judiciary see, above chapter 5.


14. For wages in Massachusetts during the early nineteenth-century see, Carroll D. Wright, Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1889), 54, 48, 59, 47.

15. Carroll Wright, Wages and Prices, 128, 125, 136.


18. William Emmons, "The Inaugural Speech of William Emmons, delivered on the Morning of General Election May 31, 1826. By particular Desire of his Fellow Citizens," (Boston: Published by the Author, 1826), 5, AAS. It should be noted that Emmon's speech was given in 1826, but he was recounting the rise of the "middling interest and the poor...for the last twenty years," in his 1826 oration. Emmons, like Quincy, had spoken out against the city charter; see, William Emmons, "Mr. Emmons' Speech, Delivered at the Grand Caucus, held in Faneuil Hall, on the Evening of the Third of March, 1822, Upon the Acceptance or rejection of the City Charter," (Boston: Published by the Author, 1822), AAS, where he states stand with the "intelligent decisions of a Quincy...." Also, the Portsmouth [NH] Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, AAS; and the [Philadelphia] National Gazette and Literary Register, May 18, 1822, AAS, connect the debtor's movement to the Middling Interest agenda.


24. For Roulstone's involvement in the WBS see, "Journal of the Washington Benevolent Society of Massachusetts," leadership lists, Washington Benevolent Society Records: 1812-1824, MHS. Background on Lincoln see, Formisano, Transformation of Political Culture, 158. Heman Lincoln as a member of the General Court in 1821 while Quincy was also there see, Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 199-200; shows Lincoln receiving 484 more votes than Quincy. Roulstone's involvement in Boston politics see Boston Town Records, 1814-1822, 167, 178, 203, 254, 275, 276. For both Wayland's and Lincoln's support of the Quincy candidacy see, Eliza Susan Quincy to Robert C. Winthrop, Oct. 29, 1879, Winthrop Family Papers, Quincymirco.

25. For Quincy's anti-chartering position see Eliza Susan Quincy to Justin Winsor, July 7, 1880, Winsor Family Papers, Quincymirco. For Emmons's similar position see, William Emmons, "Mr. Emmons' Speech, Delivered at the Grand Caucus, held in Faneuil Hall, on the Evening of the Third of March, 1822, upon the Acceptance or rejection of the City Charter," (Boston: Published by the Author, 1822), AAS, where Emmons states, stand with the "intelligent decisions of...Quincy," against the charter. For Joseph T. Buckingham's anti-chartering stance see, "City of Boston," New England Galaxy, March 1, 1822, APSmicro.

26. "Wooden Buildings," New England Galaxy, Feb. 1, 1822, APSmicro. For an example of popular criticism of section 30 see, "Unalienable Rights," New England Galaxy, April 19, 1822, APSmicro. "Who Shall be Mayor of the New City," New England Galaxy, March 29, 1822, APSmicro. For Quincy's position on the fire law proposal see, above chapter 5 and "To the Mechanics of Boston," New England Galaxy, June 29, 1821, APSmicro, in which editorialist "Mill Creek Wharf" reports that the "bill...received the signature of the...Speaker of the House," a position, which at the time, was filled by Josiah Quincy.
27. See, "Massachusetts Peace Society," New England Galaxy, Jan. 5, 1821, APSmicro, which gives portions of Quincy's speech and favorably reviews it. Also see, Hewlett, "Josiah Quincy: Reform Mayor of Boston," 180-181, which interprets Quincy's speech as a reformist statement.

28. For the activities of the militia reform movement see, chapter 3.

29. "Mr. Quincy," New England Galaxy, April 6, 1821, APSmicro. See chapter 3 and 4 for a full description of Quincy's break with the central committee.

30. Eliza Susan Quincy to Justin Winsor, July 7, 1880, Winsor Family Papers, Quincymicro. For more on the Middling Interest delegation that Quincy received into his house see, "Impartiality of Editors," New England Galaxy, April 12, 1822, APSmicro.


34. "Who Shall be Mayor of the New City," New England Galaxy, March 29, 1822, APSmicro. Also see, Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 110, emphasis added by author.


36. Eliza Susan Quincy to Robert C. Winthrop, Oct. 29, 1879, Winthrop Family Papers, Quincymicro.


38. Leverett Saltonstall to William Minot, April 9, 1822, in Robert E. Moody, ed., The Papers of Leverett
Saltonstall, 1816-1845 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1978) 97-98.


29, 1879, Winthrop Family Papers, Quincymicro.

46. Daniel Webster to Joseph Story, April 6, 1822; and Daniel Webster to Joseph Story, May 12, 1823, Papers of Daniel Webster, vol. 1, 312 and 325.

47. Francis Wayland to Alonzo Potter, April 8, 1822, Francis Wayland Papers (1796-1865), John Hay Library--Brown University Archives.

48. Remarkably this quotation comes from the Philadelphia Democratic Press, as cited in Hubbard, "Boston's Last Town Meetings," 114. Although the source is from Philadelphia, there is no reason to believe the Boston Republican's response was any different.

49. Portsmouth [NH] Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, AAS, which provides a numerical break-down of the election results.


51. Eliza Susan Quincy to Robert C. Winthrop, Oct. 29, 1879, Winthrop Family Papers, Quincymicro. For Thomas L. Winthrop's affiliation with the Middling Interest see, "Electioneering," New England Galaxy, March 22, 1822, APSmicro, which shows Winthrop as the Middling Interest nominee for the state senate. Also see, Mary Caroline Crawford, Romantic Days In Old Boston (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1910) 8, which presents Winthrop being thrown into the race as a spoiler.

52. Portsmouth [NH] Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, AAS, provides a remarkably detailed break-down of how various partisans voted. It is particularly important to note, considering earlier historical interpretations of the insurgency's social composition, that the Middling Interest gained its largest support from ex-Republicans. Clearly, the party appealed to more than disaffected Federalists as, Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 2, 238-239; McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 100-106; McCaughey, "From Town to City: Boston in the 1820s," 203-204; Formisano, Transformation of Political Culture, 186; Cayton, "Fragmentation of 'A Great Family,'" 439-442 (which is the most perceptive analysis of the Middling Interest), all have argued.

53. For Quincy's statement see, New England Galaxy, April 12, 1822, APSmicro.


56. "City Elections," New England Galaxy, April 12, 1822, APSmicro, which offers a section of Perkins's speech and then blasts it.


58. Boston Daily Advertiser taken from the [Philadelphia] National Gazette and Literary Register, April 13, 1822. Ibid., April 15, 1822, and May 18, 1822, AAS. Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, AAS.


"THE SIEGE OF BOSTON IS ONCE MORE RAISED":

THE BETRAYAL OF THE THIRD PARTY'S MAYOR AND

FEDERALIST DEATH SPASMS

The "aristocratic band has been abolished, but a more oppressive and more horrible, and more odious one...has arisen to fill its place."

--"Agricola," 1822.

Before an over-flow audience in Faneuil Hall on May 1, 1822, Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, Issac Parker, swore into office Boston's first mayor, John Phillips. Resting on a table before the speaker's platform sat the newly written Boston city charter enshrined in a silver case. After taking his oath of office, Phillips rose to deliver Boston's first mayoral inaugural address. The speech took less than ten minutes and foreshadowed the naive and often disinterested course that the Phillips administration would take in guiding Boston through its first year as a city.1

Like his cousin Josiah Quincy, Phillips held serious misgivings about the charter. But unlike Quincy, Phillips lacked neither the will nor the political dexterity to remedy any piece of it. John Phillips had served Massachusetts Federalism for twenty-five years, first as Suffolk county's state Senator, and then as a fair-minded public prosecutor in Boston. After observing the central committee's treatment of his cousin Quincy, Phillips had
become highly suspicious of the Federalist leadership and, by 1822, was a Middling Interest insurgent. Despite his alliance with Boston's insurgency, the Phillips administration proved to be extremely conservative and timid. "Prudence, caution, and conservatism," according to Josiah Quincy, "were [his cousin's] predominating characteristics."

Employing a literal interpretation of the charter, the new mayor proved powerless to mend its deficiencies. Although Phillips happily had accepted the mayoralty to placate both the Middling Interest and the Federalist parties, he had neither the inclination, nor the apparent legal power as mayor to engage in a municipal administration of activism. The insurgents who elected him expected a mayor who would proceed aggressively to fulfill their aims. Less than three months into his term, Phillips faced severe criticism for his lackadaisical and ineffective approach to his new position, and his administration fell under fierce criticism from his former followers. "For what was our town government exchanged for that of city, but to break the bonds of an aristocracy, and relieve the oppressed?" asked a thoroughly disappointed Middling Interestman who had supported Phillips's candidacy. "[W]e protest against [the city's] arbitrary laws by which the free born citizen is oppressed and his rights wrestled for him." Reflecting back on Phillips's
tenure, another argued that Boston's first mayor had done little accept "slept on his post," while receiving a salary of $2,500. Clearly, this was not what the insurgency wanted, or expected in its first mayor.

Phillips faced two principal barriers in fulfilling the activist role that Boston's insurgents expected of him. The first was personal. Phillips had entered the mayor's office severely ill and weary of politics. After serving on the General Court for twenty-five years, the fifty-two year old statesmen mistakenly viewed the mayoralty as a non-confrontational, nonpartisan position of honorable retirement. He assumed the city would largely run itself—turning to its executive only for benevolent facilitation during occasional minor squabbles.

Also, Phillips had contracted a mysterious disease that would kill him one month after he left office, exhausted in 1823. As the course of his administration would show and as his inaugural speech suggested, Phillips trusted in an archaic notion of Boston's Christian character and benevolence. Inflicted with a terminal illness, Phillips, because of these factors and the compromise that put him in power, was not inclined to foment significant changes in Boston. Besides, extensive restrictions in the city charter also impeded the new mayor's ability to employ executive power even if he had wanted to. In his inaugural address, Phillips explained
that order and welfare would be maintained under his administration through the "[p]urity of manners, [the] general diffusion of knowledge,..., [and] above all," he added, "a firm, practical belief [in] Divine revelation." Harkening back to Winthrop's Puritan "city upon the hill," "love of order, benevolent affections, and Christian piety," Phillips explained, "distinguish...the inhabitants of this city." And, thus, the city government, according to Phillips, held little, if any, new responsibilities.¹

Instead, Phillips extolled the virtues and memorialized the old town meetings as "testimon[ies] to the wisdom...[of] our ancestors." Deeply troubled by the changes represented in Boston's abandonment of the Town Meeting system, Phillips placed Boston in stark contrast to "[m]ost of the towns in this Commonwealth [who] may...continue to enjoy the benefit[s] of those salutary regulations" inherent in town meetings. Only because of "the great increase of population in the town of Boston," Phillips sighed, was it forced to become a city. In this new city, Phillips explained, "[d]ifference of opinion must be expected, and mutual concessions made, in...the interests of a large community," but the new mayor made it explicitly clear that he would take no responsibility over how those "concessions" would be mediated. "I will not encumber you with unnecessary forms," Phillips promised the City Council, "or encroach on your time.....[B]revity will
be carefully studied." With this statement and after placing the overseeing of Boston in the hands of the "Holy Spirit," the mayor of Boston stepped down from the podium and abandoned any leadership role in the new City Council.5

Adding to Phillips's passive approach toward his new job, the charter also restrained executive powers. During the charter debates, Middling Interest spokesmen on the chartering committee had feared a strong executive largely because of democratic sentiments and because their opponents on the Federalist Central Committee had pushed so hard for one. Indeed, Harrison Gray Otis, on December 17, 1821, instructed his operative in the chartering committee, William Sullivan, to give the mayor the "veto upon some of the... laws (such as relating to taxes and taking away private property)" and then followed up a month later with a letter demanding that the mayor be "give[n]...a right [to widespread executive authority], without imposing [on him] an obligation to ask advise" of other city representatives.6 Insurgent leaders, Michael Roulstone, Isaac Winslow, George Blake, and William Sturgis, who served on the committee, balked at such demands and crushed the Sullivan/Otis initiative in Town Meeting. Although, at the time, the Middling Interest counted this as a victory, by so limiting the authority of the executive in the revised charter, the insurgents had gutted from the document any practical function for the mayor's office.
Even after a charter change in 1854 and various subsequent amendments in 1885, Boston mayor during the early-1890s, Nathan Matthew Jr., still bitterly complained that "the mayor was little more than a figure head" due to limitations imposed on the executive that were left over from the original 1822 charter.

Mayor Phillips could neither appoint city officials, nor could he fire them; he had no power to veto city legislation or control the finances of the city. The only direct powers solely allocated to the mayor consisted of summoning meetings of the eight member, elected at-large, Board of Aldermen, and the Common Council, a group of forty-eight elected officials who represented Boston's twelve wards. After 1822, these two municipal branches had taken-over the responsibilities of the Town Selectmen and Town Meetings. The mayor could appoint committees that would report their findings to the City Council (the Board of Aldermen and the Common Council in conference) and he served as chairman to the Board of Aldermen, but received no special veto or voting powers over it. In January 1822, Sullivan had assured Otis that the aldermen would be "nothing more than...an advisory council to the executive," but this too had not come to pass as hostile insurgents insured that the popularly elected aldermen would have significantly more power than the mayor. Making matters worse, five independent town government boards, the Board
of Health, the Surveyors of the Highways, the School Committee, the Overseers of the Poor, and the Board of Firewards, had survived the chartering process and stood as autonomous municipal agencies that zealously protected their traditional municipal domains. Because these were elected boards, the City Council held little authority over them. The council could cut off their funding, but had no prerogative under the charter to then fulfill the municipal functions of these agencies. Almost immediately after the establishment of the new government, the City Council found itself hopelessly dependent on these independent municipal boards to oversee many of the basic functions of the city. 6

Despite the weakness of his office and the decentralized, dysfunctional nature of the city's organization, the mayor remained the symbolic leader of the new city government. In the people's eyes, responsibility for the city's legislation and how it affected them, rested with him. They had fought hard for a city charter and wanted significant results from their first mayor. Far from being a tranquil position from which to honorably retire from a life of active political life, as Phillips had hoped, the mayoralty left him exposed to levels of popular criticism that he had never before experienced. Worse, because of the limitations of his office, there was little the chief executive could do about it. Unfortunately for Phillips, during his tenure, the mayor's
office essentially functioned as a sounding board for numerous gripes and complaints made by the city's citizens. By July 1822, Boston's first mayor began to discover the true nature of his job.

The small and ordered, puritan Christian community that Phillips had referred to in his inaugural address clearly no longer existed. As Josiah Quincy understood, Boston had become a city, and not just by legal title. Not only had Boston grown to over 44,000 people by 1822, but it contained a socially and economically diverse population most of whom were hard-pressed by economic depression. By the late teens, many English Protestant and Catholic Irish farmers, financially ravaged in their native land by Parliament's passage of the Corn Laws and the Acts of Enclosure, escaped to Boston. According to historian Thomas H. O'Conner, by 1820 Boston held some 2,000 poor Irish Catholics and by 1825 the number had risen to exceed 5,000. Historian Peter Knights estimates that newcomers to Boston composed the majority of the city's growing population of poor during the early-nineteenth century. Most in-migrants to the hub came from the country-side unskilled and "drifted into and out of a variety of low-level jobs." 9

The demographic changes that occurred in Boston during the first two decades of the nineteenth-century shocked shoemaker, Robert Twelves Hewes when he returned to his
hometown of Boston an old man in 1821. "The place where I drew my first breath and formed my most endearing attachment," Hewes reported, "had to me become a land of strangers. Not only had my former companions and friends disappeared, but the places of their habitations were occupied by those who could give no account of them." In their place had come mostly young men from the hinterlands of New England like Moses Adams from Ellsworth, Maine. In 1816, Adams arrived in Boston seeking his fortune. After apprenticing for a merchant and a blacksmith, he worked on the docks and eventually signed on as a common seamen to the merchant ship Atlas in 1820. Upon his arrival in Boston as an outsider, Adams quickly forged alliances of comradeship and fraternity with other outlanders who held similar menial jobs and were also new to the city.¹⁰

Within such an evolving urbanized world that grew in size and complexity from year to year, Phillips's approach to the mayoralty must have seemed archaic to most ordinary Bostonians. The Middling Interest had supported him to curb the unbridled power of Harrison Gray Otis and the central committee. Less a decision based on Phillips's qualifications as a insurgent and his disposition, and more a reactive move, the insurgency had not anticipated Phillips's antiquated vision of Boston and municipal governance. Although sympathetic to insurgent charges of an uncaring and selfish political and economic aristocracy
that bastardized Boston's character, the new mayor clearly would not provide strong leadership in the struggle against the "FEW."

One of his first acts as executive foretold his skewed attitude towards his new job. Immediately after his inauguration, Phillips met with the city aldermen to work out future procedure and decide on some various minor municipal appointments. One of the few significant powers the charter bestowed exclusively on the mayor and aldermen was the replacement of the town's elected Board of Health with a less autonomous commission that would be answerable to the mayor and aldermen. The old town Board of Health had fallen under such severe criticism for corruption and inefficiency that the General Court had added a provision to the charter abolishing the board. During the Town Meeting winter debates over the charter, most state legislative alterations to the charter were met with intense suspicion and meticulously scrutinized. The Board of Health amendment received no discussion. Clearly, on this matter, Bostonians agreed that the corrupt board should be terminated. On the day of his inauguration, Phillips inexplicably reappointed the same board members to the Board of Health. Without delay the board successfully reestablished sovereignty over its municipal realm. Having been given a reprieve from extinction, the board
immediately consolidated itself and directly challenged the authority of the mayor and aldermen.\textsuperscript{11}

On June 4, 1822, the mayor and aldermen received a stern order from the board’s secretary, John Winslow, summoning them to stand before the Board of Health and explain why the city had not cleaned up "a quantity of filthy, putrid, and nauseous substances on the premises belonging to you, and under your direction. You will, therefore," the summons read, "appear before this Board on Monday...and show cause, if any exist, why the City of Boston should not remove," the garbage. Although exactly whose obligation it was to extricate the garbage remained unclear, the board laid down the gauntlet and challenged the jurisdictional authority of the Phillips administration and the new city government. The predicament the new mayor and his administration faced was whether they could engage one of the few powerful mechanisms the charter gave them and assert municipal authority over the board, or shrink from the challenge. Would the mayor's office and aldermen claim municipal supremacy or succumb to a subordinate board, and thus, set a dangerous precedent of yielding under pressure to an inferior municipal division?\textsuperscript{12}

Phillips held the letter for a few days before sharing it with the aldermen. Eventually he delivered the summons and the aldermen acquiesced to the authority of the Board of Health. Although the city refused to clean up the
garbage, Phillips had not claimed executive jurisdiction over the matter thereby abdicating the authority expressly given to him and the aldermen in the charter. Garbage continued to rot "on the westerly side of [wharf] T," and the rectified Board of Health affirmed its municipal dominance over the executive and aldermen of the city.\textsuperscript{13}

Because the garbage incident received little, if any, coverage in the city press, Boston's insurgents were kept in the dark about Phillips's bungling. Despite his less than awe-inspiring inaugural, Middling Interestmen remained optimistic about their mayor. And, in fact, early on in the Phillips administration, there seemed to be reason for them to be hopeful--though it had little to do with the mayor's leadership. In late July, Phillips and the aldermen were briefly heralded by the Middling Interest organ the \textit{Independent Bostonian} for supporting a piece of city legislation that dealt with one of the insurgency's most pressing grievances.\textsuperscript{14}

In July, the Board of Aldermen, headed by Phillips, approved a plan to extend prison limits for debtors. Although abolishing debt imprisonment which Middling Interest partisans had advocated since 1820, clearly fell within the General Court's jurisdiction, the city aldermen and mayor decreed authority to decide upon the areas within Boston where debtor prisoners on temporary leave could and could not go. The Overseers of the Poor traditionally
allowed almshouse inmates a certain number of hours during the day to seek employment, visit their families, and pick-up odd jobs in specified areas around the city. These areas, in the past, were designated by the Town Selectmen or the courts and were usually highly restrictive. Inmates on leave were usually restricted to Boston's docks and poorer neighborhoods. Often imprisoned debtors were not allowed to enter the location of their shops or place of employment. With the aldermen's initiative, the whole city opened to the debtor inmates who could now move freely throughout Boston seeking work or plying their trade by day and return to the prison at night. The Middling Interest's Independent Bostonian supported the mayor and aldermen, arguing, "we feel assured that more debts will be honestly paid [this way], than by any system heretofore adopted--at least 'tis worth a trail."\

According to the Bostonian, the vast majority in Boston viewed the extension of prison bounds as sensible. Simply put, more debtors could pay-off their debts under such a system, which pleased creditors as well. Others, however, opposed the ordinance and the city law immediately fell under severe attack. "The extension of the prison limits has caused great excitement among a class of people commonly styled pettifogging lawyers," reported the Bostonian. "After having experienced a severe relaxation in business...[due to] the late humane provision of the
oppressed, they have resorted to the last and only means to place the system in a way most congenial to their own feelings, viz. by remonstrating to, and petitioning the honorable Mayor and Aldermen, to reconsider their vote by which the limits have been extended, and to confine them [debtors] within...Tremont and School streets."16

Until 1807, colonial custom dictated that insolvents in prison had the prerogative to practice their trade during the day to help pay-off their debts. In 1807 Massachusetts Chief Justice Theophilus Parsons struck-down this liberal policy as more sophisticated methods of debt collection became more pervasive in the early nineteenth century and significantly restricted the bounds of debtors.17 Despite claiming authority over the Supreme Court and ignoring the "pettifogging lawyers," editorialist "D," explained that he had "full faith in the integrity, intelligence and humanity of the honorable Board [of Aldermen]" to uphold its recent extension of prison limits. The board had been approved by the Middling Interest and would not acquiesce to "these enemies of humanity [who] have ruled" by "afflicting [the] rod." With the depression of 1819 gutting the Boston economy and more and more respectable, middle class voters falling deep into debt and filling debtor's jail, the mayor and aldermen had unilaterally overruled the Supreme Court's 1807 decision
and returned to traditional custom. When the lawyer's petition reached the aldermen, it was summarily scrapped.18

With this defiant act, the new municipal government and, by extension, Mayor Phillips seemed to have adopted the activist role that the insurgents had so desperately wanted. The aldermen had flexed their muscles and professed supremacy over "trading judges" and "pettifogging lawyers." But there proved another side to prison extensions unrecognized by those who heralded the administration's extension policy. By extending the boundary limits of insolvent inmates, the board strengthened the powers of the Overseers of the Poor. Being exclusively in charge of the Leverett Street almshouse/jail, providing "outdoor relief" to the impoverished, controlling an operating fund of over one hundred thousand dollars, and a second discretionary fund of twenty-eight to thirty thousand dollars that could be drawn from the City Treasury on a need-basis without having to account for it, the Overseers already held commanding power in the city of Boston.19

By extending prison limits, the Phillips administration only enhanced an already powerful independent municipal agency. As David Montgomery has suggested, during the early-nineteenth century these guardians of the poor typically operated more like indentured labor-brokers than benevolent stewards of the
poor. Often they contracted out almshouse inmates en mass as a cheap labor force to local manufacturers. Accused of using their municipal positions to dole-out patronage, restricting geographic bounds of prison labor would undercut the Overseer's powers. Thus, by extending prison limits the mayor and aldermen had inadvertently strengthened the Overseers in Boston.

Reacting against the city's seizure of power, early in 1823 the General Court made overtures to employ Section 30 of the city charter that gave the legislature discretionary veto power over any or all city laws, to override the aldermen's prison extension ordinance. By February the legislature succeeded, claiming sole authority to set prison limits in the city of Boston. Rank-and-file Middling Interestmen throughout the city were outraged. The legislature, charged the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, "has thought proper to take the power from the Mayor and Aldermen of assigning the Jail Limits, and by this measure, have virtually annulled the humane decree of that body, passed last season, fixing them to the bounds of the county of Suffolk....[T]his very state, in 1823, passed an act TO ABRIDGE THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR DEBTOR, HUMANELY GRANTED HIM BY THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF BOSTON." The editorial continued, demanding the abolition of debt imprisonment throughout the state.
The Society for the Relief of the Distressed, which had published the now defunct Debtor's Journal and represented the debtor's interests within the insurgency, took a pro-active position on the recent legislature's decision. Explaining that "[t]he society is composed of some of our most enterprising and respectable citizens, who have in many instances, done much towards ameliorating the condition of the poor but honest debtor, who has been subject to the persecutions of an unrelenting creditor. [Our] object is not to combine against the law and justice...but to use every honorable and justifiable way to get a repeal of those laws, or *abolishment of imprisonment for debt*. To...inform [our] fellow citizens on the subject, and to get such men elected to office in our national and state legislatures as are favorable to an amelioration....The late act of the legislature respecting prison limits, has produced a general excitement and alarm, it is almost universally deemed oppressive and cruel, and has had a tendency to rouse our citizens to action."^{23}

Although the Phillips administration had stood-up to the "pettifogging lawyers," it refused to confront the legislature by petition or by taking the General Court's action to court. Partly because Phillips continued to abdicate leadership to others on the City Council and partly because, throughout the spring of 1823, various members of the city government were in the midst of secret
negotiations with state legislators on another matter. The mayor and aldermen backed off, accepting the authority Section 30 gave the General Court to override this municipal ordinance—and for good reason. The cloaked negotiations that were held between the legislature and some in the city government depended upon the power Section 30 gave the state.

Incredibly and in direct violation of the wishes of Boston's citizenry, in the spring of 1823, city officials sent a secret proposal to the legislature asking it to engage Section 30 to eliminate the ward voting provision from the charter. Although Josiah Quincy had opposed the whole chartering proposal because of the "mischief" he foresaw in Section 30, most Middling Interestmen had not heeded Quincy's warnings and supported the city charter largely because it contained provisions for ward voting. As Boston's Independent Chronicle explained before the city chartering in March 1822, "[t]he chief reason for our friendship towards the city bill...is that it will introduce into power the Middling Interest, an interest among our citizens, which if it had assumed to its due weight [through a fairer democratic system of voting], would long ago have swayed the government of our town." By the end of the Phillips mayoralty, rank-and-file Middling Interestmen's eyes were opened. The ward voting provision was the most important clause in gaining enough votes from
ordinary Bostonians to pass the city charter. As rank-and-file insurgents saw it, the charter held no validity without the guarantee of ward voting. Without it, Boston would return to its old deferential patterns of politics and the "FEW" would continue to dominate the "many." When the news of the proposal by the Phillips regime to abolish ward voting leaked, insurgents throughout the city rose-up in arms against the mayor and his administration.

The Bostonian and Mechanics Journal exposed the scheme and first accused the Federalist Central Committee of being the true force behind the plot. "Among the pitiful shifts resorted to by the FEW, nothing is more contemptible," charged the Bostonian in an article written for "Mechanics!," "than their threats to withdraw their custom from those who may differ from them in opinion....The game has carried on so long in 'the head quarters of good principles' [the Federalist party], that the labouring classes are no longer content submit to dictators." "The old doctrine of passive obedience and nonresistance, has long since exploded," editorialist "Alfred" explained, "and we trust will not be revived by the citizens of Boston....The monied few are yet to learn that wealth alone will not entitle them to honors or distinction in this republican government. The industrious mechanic and the virtuous tradesmen are entitled to equal privileges as the most wealthy, and they are possessed with a spirit that
will prompt them to maintain their rights, not withstanding the growlings and complaints of a paltry, self created nobility....We are not of that servile race," declared "Alfred," "who bow in adoration to the proud aristocrat because he has money."[26]

The Bostonian and "Alfred's" commentary on the city government's attempted betrayal, articulated the rank-and-file insurgent's continued fear of an oppressive, monied aristocracy dominating city politics. As had been the case since the insurgent coalition's inception, those most guilty of perpetuating the "old doctrine of passive obedience and passive resistance," according to the Middling Interest, were the Federalist "junto"--the Federalist Central Committee. But unlike the past, others outside the hated "cabal" were at fault too.

Turning on the mayor and his administration, the Bostonian attacked the city government's betrayal: "How far a change of Municipal officers of this city may be necessary, must be obvious to every elector who is not blind to his own welfare, and to the prosperity of the city charter. Aristocracy or the assumption of power never intended to be delegated to city officers, should be received with extreme jealousy by every Bostonian who is independent enough to think and vote according to dictates of his own reason."[27] The attempt by city representatives
to outlaw ward voting vividly exposed the duplicitous nature of the Phillips administration.

Although the city government had won accolades from many in the Middling Interest for extending prison limits, Phillips and his administration already had weathered significant condemnation for other municipal actions by many in Boston. Even before the ward voting debacle, Middling Interestmen's ire had been raised. Specifically, rank-and-file insurgents had objected to a city ordinance brought forth in the early-summer of 1822 that intended to clear the congestion of Boston's narrow streets. The ordinance severely limited truckmen from plying their trade within the city by restricting where they could and could not go. The truckmen of Boston not only carted products from the docks to retailers throughout the city, but also, sold products directly from their carts at deflated prices. Their role in Boston's local economy was essential to those who could not afford the higher prices imposed by established merchants. When the ordinance also outlawed truckmen from setting up their carts on Boston's sidewalks, it put many of these men out of business and dramatically effected a shadowy, yet vital local economy which many poor Bostonians depended on. Where are they to go, asked editorialist "Agricola," if "they are to be driven from the stands which they have long occupied....This is not only oppressing the truckmen, but the merchants; for they cannot
truck as cheap when two or three miles from the
wharf....[W]e protest against arbitrary laws by which the
free born citizen is oppressed and his rights wrestled from
him."\(^{29}\)

During a period of severe depression, the Phillips
administration's action seemed, as the *Bostonian and
Mechanics Journal* put it, "a bare-faced affrontery" created
"to trample...the honest and industrious citizen." Not
only did the law hurt truckmen, but it crippled both small
merchants, whose costs would increase, and those consumers
who depended on the truckmen to sell goods below retail.
"Why not, before they are forced off," "Agricola" pleaded,
"provide them a suitable place for their stand[s]."\(^{30}\)

The Phillips administration ignored "Agricola's"
suggestion and suspicion toward the mayor rose. Far from
being viewed as the champion of the "industrious"
workingman who would crush the "purse proud devils,"
Phillips began to be seen by some as an enemy to the
"honest" workingman, and those small merchants who had
elected him. From their point of view, he was taking food
from their tables for no other reason than to clear
Boston's streets. Both the *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*
and the *Castigator* ran articles and editorials opposing the
new city law. The *Bostonian* argued, "we can see no reason
why an industrious and hard-laboring man, in this country,
and especially New England, which professes to make no
distinction between the rich man and the poor...should be denied the common right of every citizen, that of walking or standing in the street.--Where is the justice of such a law?" the Bostonian asked. The Castigator approached the issue differently by glorifying Boston truckmen as the back-bone of American citizenry and exposing "gentlemen" who refused to pay for trucking services--all the while, railing against the elitism of "the new City Authorities" who have "grappled...by degrees without [the people's] consent or knowledge" "the privileges" of citizenship.31

Adding fuel to the anti-Phillips fire, the passage of another ordinance by the city revoking a number of liquor licenses to long-time, established bars outraged the Middling Interest. As with the truckmen issue, this action was harshly looked upon as a direct attack against the "respectful and worthy citizen," who was already hard pressed due to the city's depressed economy. Unlike the arguments against the truckmen law, the licensing controversy introduced a surprising new element into the attack against the Phillips administration. "[T]o license foreigners," argued the Independent Bostonian, "and deprive the respectful and worthy citizen of his right, his only measure to support himself and his family, is tyrannical, worse than the arbitrary laws of monarchy."32 Although personally Phillips detested the more cosmopolitan social composition of Boston and pined away for the Boston of
Winthrop, his administration seemed to be issuing patronage in the form of liquor licenses in a much more democratic way than in the past.

Railing against the new restrictions, a frustrated Middling Interestman asked, "[w]ould it be right to pass by the peaceable industrious native born citizen, whose character has ever been distinguished for integrity and uprightness, and patronize the *foreigner* who has not been with us a sufficient time to acquire a character? Shall we continue to support the ostentatious pretensions of adventurers from abroad at the expense and ruin of our citizens at home?...[W]e...hope and believe that our new constituted authorities will ever be guided by patriotism, justice, and *national partiality*." Amazed that the proposal for the ordinance had even come up, the *Independent Bostonian* pleaded: "Where are the Middling Interest men?" 33

In early August, the licensing restriction was passed by the Mayor and Aldermen, and became law, reaffirming for many that they had made a grave mistake with Phillips and his administration. "Is this the harbinger of what our *city* rulers intend to do?" asked an angry insurgent. "[I]f it is, we may expect soon to see [in] Boston...complete anarchy....For what was our *town* government exchanged for that of a *city*, but to break the bonds of an aristocracy, and relieve the oppressed." 34 The *Castigator* went so far
as to charge the city aldermen with overt corruption. Its editors claimed that aldermen were threatening to close down bars in the city if these city officials were not given private rooms to gamble in. Another editorial noted that aldermen who owned retail shops were keeping their stores open past the ten o'clock curfew that the city imposed on retailers, thereby undercutting competing merchants who would have their retailing licenses pulled for breaking the curfew ordinance. 35

There had been harsh criticism leveled on the Phillips administration before the ward voting debacle, but most of the disgrace that might have destroyed Boston's first city government had been deflected by the city's seemingly heroic and selfless stand on prison limit extensions. In early April 1823, with the public disclosure exposing the Phillips administration's attempt to abolish ward voting, any remaining support for Boston's first city government and its first mayor quickly evaporated. 36 The secret proposal to the legislature only confirmed what many Bostonians had already suspected: that Phillips and his administration, the darlings of the Middling Interest in spring of 1822, had, by 1823, sold them out.

On April 5, the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal published a front page spread that not only reiterated the insurgency's political philosophy and its abhorrence of the Federalist Central Committee, but also articulated the
broader consequences of the Phillips administration's betrayal: "We...renounce the assumed guardianship of a self constituted Few, who have usurped and exercised our rights, only to abuse them....We would transfer the sacred rights of political self-government, from the drawing rooms of Aristocracy, to the public assemblies of the Sovereign People....He who...bows to the iron rod and unauthorized proscriptions of a dictatorial Few, we are compelled to regard as our enemy, and hope he may not prove the enemy of himself and the Commonwealth....Intimately connected with the Aristocratic policy of the Few leading the Many, is the fundamental maxim of all Oligarchies, that the People are not capable of instructing, and should not possess the power of controlling their Representatives. It is to be deeply regretted that this anti-republican notion, which grew out of ignorance and venality of the European mob, should be most injuriously applied to the virtuous and intelligent citizens of this country and boldly acted upon, as it has very recently been, in this our native city."37

Connecting the licensing dispute and the truckmen's issue to the recent ward voting affair, in its next issue a Bostonian editorial demanded the Phillips administration's ousting. "The conduct of our city government the last year, with regard to many of the acts, has produced much excitement and claims the attention of the electors. Their conduct with regard to licenses, the Truckmen and the last,
though not least, their unjustifiable exertions in procuring an act to be passed, by the legislature, to prohibit the meeting in Wards," dishonored, the editorialist argued, all who had supported Phillips in 1822. "Mechanics!," heralded another, "[c]omplaint has been made in this part of the country, against southern slaves being entitled to representation in the Congress of the U.S. at the whim of others, although it appears, in this enlightened age, that in Boston the boasted home of Adams, of Hancock, and of [James] Otis, the enemies of oppression and the promoters of the glorious result of the American Revolution, a new kind of slavery is struck out, by those who are ambitious to drive the labouring classes like task masters." "The Siege of Boston is once more raised," proclaimed the Bostonian. "Not only the City, but the whole Commonwealth, will feel the happy consequences of a victory, which will do more to raise us in the estimation of our sister States, than any political occurrence among Bostonians since the revolution."38

For most of Phillips's tenure as mayor, Joseph T. Buckingham's Galaxy, a major Middling Interest paper, remained uncharacteristically restrained. On prison limits, Buckingham reserved judgment, stating only that "[w]hether this will be a measure conducive to the general good, time alone can determine." Concerned with the broad latitude the ordinance gave to "rich rogue[s], who
voluntarily becomes bankrupt, and refuses to make any satisfaction to his creditors, some of whom may be much poorer than himself...ought never," Buckingham concluded, "to have the advantage of any limits beyond the walls of prison." Also understanding that the ordinance "amounts to a virtual repeal of the [state] laws relating to imprisonment for debt," which clearly was not within the jurisdictional authority of the city government, Buckingham remained skeptical of municipal prison reform. On the truckman issue he was mute.39

Throughout the Phillips administration, the pages of the *Galaxy* indicate that Buckingham seemed more concerned with the Middling Interest forays into state issues and national elections than the governance of the city. Buckingham continued his attacks against the state militia law and persisted in calling for the state to abolish the law.40 Also, he devoted much time covering the 1822, Suffolk county congressional race for the U.S. House of Representatives. This particular race intrigued Buckingham because it exhibited both the great strides and the frailties of the Middling Interest movement.

In Boston's November 1822 congressional race, the Federalist Central Committee mounted Daniel Webster to stand as its candidate, calculating a fresh, young face would change the damaging image the party had acquired in recent local battles. Understanding that it had to garner
sizable numbers from ranks of the Middling Interest in Boston to achieve victory, Federalist strategists seized on one of the insurgency's most dynamic issues--antipartyism--and exploited it as their own. Despite Webster's invaluable service to the Federalist party during the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1820-1821 and his consistent loyalty to the central committee's local agendas in Boston, the 1822 Federalist caucus presented its nominee as a disinterested civil servant who "would be above the littleness of party feeling." One caucus member portrayed Webster as a man who "has a head and...a heart," who understood that "the safest place is in the middle;" and, in fact, such a portrayal of Webster was not altogether inaccurate. By 1822, Webster became alarmed by the narrowness and provincial approach to politics the central committee had taken. In a private letter to Joseph Story, Webster confessed that, "[w]e [Federalists] are disgraced beyond help or hope by these things. There is a Federal interest, a Democratic interest, a Bankrupt interest, an Orthodox interest, and a Middling interest, but I see no national interest, nor any national feeling." To Jeremiah Mason, Webster went ever further, proposing that Massachusetts Federalism should drop its party name because it had fallen to such disrepute in minds of so many. To maintain traditional Federalist economic and
political interests, Webster argued the party should change its name and its insular behavior. 41

At their caucus in November, Federalists disassociated themselves and their candidate from the partisan carnage and the divisive course Boston politics had recently taken. It leveled all blame for stirring up Boston's traditional placid political atmosphere on insurgent agitators who had polarized and confused the electorate. Claiming Webster would restore political harmony to Boston, one caucus member explained that the Federalist candidate "would not represent the 'middling interest' merely, but the general interest of the whole." In his statement in favor of Webster, Benjamin Gorham reiterated this theme and expanded upon it. According to Gorham, Webster should be supported not only because he would be "firm and independent" in his decisions and would transcend "local prepossessions, and narrow views" of partisanship; he would understand that his most important role would be to counter "the gigantic influence of the southern states, whose representatives act in concert on all national questions.... The south," Gorham argued, "would never consent to lose her influences by dividing it among a number of candidates," and, therefore, neither should the North. "We want," Gorham continued, "representatives from the north, who cannot be drawn from their purpose by persuasion, nor driven by fear, but who can be heard, and felt, and respected; who...[will] be able

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to beard the southern members in their own way." In its approach to the Webster nomination, the Federalist leadership resurrected a tried-and-true strategy of creating a monolithic, Southern monster ready to gobble-up Northern interests. What was new about its approach was that the Federalist leadership fused this message with the popular and local anti-party principles of the Middling Interest.

The Federalist party leadership realized that it was exposed by insurgents as self-serving, elitist, corrupt and essentially undemocratic. Attempts by the Federalist leadership to counter this popular perception through mind-numbing explanations and defensive partisan tactics that bordered on illegality had proven costly and embarrassing, and also had largely failed. The party could not run and win by allowing local issues to define the campaign. By 1822, Federalism's credibility as a party willing to confront municipal grievances was highly suspect. Therefore, Federalism, under severe popular censure for past partisan improprieties, turned to the only available course open to it--to broaden the political debate to include national issues and thereby exclude the partisan hazards of localism. The Federalist caucus' portrayal of Webster as a nonpartisan defender of regional duty undercut insurgent fervor over local grievances and temporarily weakened Middling Interest dissent and insurgent unity.
The Middling Interest party quickly responded to the Federalist tactic by hammering away at Webster as a Federalist tool who served elitist interests. To portray Webster as an anti-party man, was absurd, the insurgency claimed. Middling Interest operatives reminded Bostonians of Webster's connections to the central committee and his history of avid Federalism. "You have already witnessed," stated the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal in early November, "the commotions excited by measures that are calculated to lull into repose the privileges of the MIDDLING CLASSES [of this city]—measure that are likely to advance into power and eminence, the champion, the idol, in fact, the leader of an aristocratic party—a man [Daniel Webster] who has ever opposed your interests—who would have the basis of your liberties founded on wealth, and who, in the late Convention for the revision of the Constitution, called to action all his eloquence, his rhetoric, and his logic, to promote the ascendancy of the monied aristocracy over intelligence and virtue. This gentleman...would have prostrated the liberties of your State, which may have placed you in the power of a class of beings, who pant to extinguish the spark you hold next to life itself," suffrage. From the Middling Interest leadership's point of view, Webster's recent nonpartisan pose was disingenuous. After all he had been nominated in the Federalist caucus and enjoyed the backing of the
central committee. Nevertheless, Webster's recent adoption of the insurgency's antiparty message, potentially threatened Middling Interest solidarity. Ex-Federalists who had recently joined the insurgent cause out of disgust with the central committee's partisan trickery in local Boston issues and its egregious self-interest, might find Webster's nonpartisan and regional message attractive. Here seemed a very different type of Federalist from what Bostonians were used to.⁴⁴

When the Republican caucus made a remarkably unprecedented and pragmatic move to capture the congressional election by disbanding its own caucus to join the Middling Interest's, ex-Federalist insurgents abandoned the Middling Interest en mass. Although a last ditch effort was made to salvage Federalist support for the insurgency at the caucus by moderate George Sullivan by proposing Webster as the Middling Interest candidate, he was shouted down by the Republican contingent at the caucus. After numerous flattering speeches, Republican stalwart, Jesse Putnam "unanimously" received the Middling Interest nomination. When the speeches were over and the votes taken, the Republican party proved it had successfully coopted the insurgency caucus when it placed its man to head the insurgency ticket.⁴⁵

The Middling Interest *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal* supported the caucus's choice of Putnam claiming he was a
"thorough-going Middling Interest man," "a friend of the MIDDLE CLASSES...who is not biased by ambitious and aristocratic views." Vilifying Webster as a many faced "hydra that has now reared his head against your lawful rights and privileges," the Bostonian condemned the Federalist nominee as a tool of the "aristocracy." 46 Despite the Bostonian's prediction that Jesse Putnam would "unite the whole strength of the MIDDLING INTEREST, in his support," the Middling Interest-Republican nomination had done just the opposite. When Webster thrashed Putnam by a solid 1,081 votes, the insurgency's nomination of Republican, Jesse Putman clearly had alienated a large number of Middling Interest voters who temporarily returned to Federalism to vote for Webster. Even Joseph Buckingham was surprised. "Mr. Webster's majority over the opposing candidate, Mr. Putnam, was...a majority much larger than was expected by his most sanguine friends." 47

Buckingham had reported extensively on Boston's congressional race, but uncharacteristically he offered neither candidates the Galaxy's endorsement. Although the "electioneering contest was warm and spirited," the election was "not acrimonious," Buckingham stated with approval. Buckingham praised both Webster and Putnam supporters for not "resort[ing] to the aid of personal abuse to attain their objects." 48
With the coming of Boston's second mayoral race, the Galaxy editor reengaged in municipal politics and once again became a unifying voice for Boston's insurgents. Perhaps writing more to himself than anyone else, Buckingham urged his readership to begin to "think on their municipal concerns, to see whether they have been managed the past-year with prudence and discretion, and whether the laws have been executed with the promptness and vigor that might have been expected under the new [city] organization." Reestablishing his editorial link with the Middling Interest, Buckingham renewed his attack on the Federalist Central Committee and pronounced the continued need for third party activism in Boston. "While King Log [the Republican party] is despised," Buckingham explained, "let it not be forgotten that King Serpent [the Federalist party] is to be feared [most]. A wise people," Buckingham concluded, "will not invest either with power and supremacy." 

On the Phillips administration, Buckingham aligned himself with the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal arguing that "the general tenor of the measures pursued by the city council has been...--oppressive in many cases to individuals, and in most cases injurious to the public." According to Buckingham, a dramatic shift in the mayor's office and on the City Council was needed to save the city from what he perceived as the prevailing "corruption" of
the Phillips administration. "[T]welve separate, petty oligarchies," Buckingham charged, "in each of which there is enough intrigue as there formerly was in the whole town." On the City Council, Buckingham saved his most scathing criticisms: "[A]s a body, we know nothing they have done to entitle them even to such a poor reward as a vote of thanks for their services. That the genius of intrigue has been busy is evident from a variety of circumstances--witness the famous [suspension of ward voting] bill which was smuggled through the legislature for amending the city-charter." What was needed, Buckingham theorized, was a strong, independent executive who would curb warring partisans and municipal corruption so endemic to the Phillips administration.50

Under such decisive condemnation from those who had supported his election only a year earlier, the Phillips administration's scheme to alter the charter and abolish ward voting failed. Feeling the heat and recognizing that the urban insurgency's message potentially would translate just as well in rural Massachusetts as in the city of Boston, the legislature let the ward voting proposal die. The times had changed and the metamorphosis of Boston's political culture would not sustain such overt oppressive action. Although he probably was not personally involved in his administration's complicity with the General Court, Phillips faced most of the blame for the ward voting
affair. Exhausted, disgraced and disillusioned, he decided not to run for re-election in 1823, citing ill health. The man who inspired the Middling Interest to declare victory over the "dictatorial FEW" in Federalist Central Committee left office viewed as a traitor to the insurgent cause whose followers had elected him. Sadly, he would die just weeks after he stepped down from office, a broken and misunderstood man.\(^{51}\)

Although the Federalist Central Committee's congressional candidate, Daniel Webster, managed to convince enough Bostonians to win a seat in the House, this election would be the last significant victory for the central committee. As Middling Interest leader, Francis Wayland predicted early in 1822, the defiance first expressed by Bostonians toward the Federalist party in the 1822 mayoral contest quickly spread throughout the state. Feeding on Boston's defiance of 1822 and starved by economic depression, the people of Massachusetts in a resounding mandate finally abandoned the Federalist party, leaving it behind to atrophy and die.

Despite Harrison Gray Otis's 1822 declaration that he would never again run for any public office, in 1823 he decided to stick to his original scheme and campaign for governor. Not understanding the depth of popular hatred toward Otis within the state, arch-Federalist John Lowell thought Otis a fine choice and encouraged the Senator.
Lowell believed the average Massachusetts Federalist would have no choice but to vote the Otis ticket, rather than defect to Republicanism. Indeed, it had worked for Webster. Only if a third party candidate emerged like the "memorable treachery of [Quincy's alliance with the Middling Interest] March last," Lowell wrote to the ex-Senator, would he have trouble carrying the state. Lowell calculated that, "the 'oi Polloi' must follow us, because they have one else to follow...." After Webster's victory in the congressional races, Lowell's logic certainly seemed reasonable, especially to the ambitious Otis. "[T]he washy Federalist must act with us, unless a third Candidate shall be run," Lowell counseled Otis less than two months before the election. Even dissident Federalists like Quincy and Phillips would come around Lowell predicted. For "[w]hat would Q [Quincy] & P [Phillips] & all the P's [Phillips's] & Q's [Quincy's] become, if Democracy gets...well seated in the saddle...?," he asked. Besides "we have one hold of them in this Election which appears to me too strong to break. They know, that on ye power of the party their very existence as publick men depends....They will never again be heard of [if they once again betray the party]. They will eat no more Corporation dinners, nor be regaled any longer with the odoriferous praises upon which they have subsisted heretofore."\textsuperscript{52}
Where Lowell's analysis proves sort sighted is in its assumption that the first party system could not mutate into something new—that the Quincy's of the world, had to be either Republicans or Federalist of the "old stamp." Unbeknown to Federalist strategists, the political culture of Boston and Massachusetts had changed. The "oi Polloi" no longer blindly followed the old men of the Federalist party who they now viewed as, at best, out of touch with their needs, or worse, self-serving and corrupt members of an oppressive elite regime. Nor did many of the "higher class," as Lowell called them, care about being "regaled" at "Corporation dinners." The "power of the party" was highly vulnerable in the 1822 mayoral elections and could do little but damage the political ambitions of politicians like Quincy. Indeed, Webster had won his seat in Congress not because of the central committee's support, but despite of it. As Webster understood, his victory had depended on playing the peace-maker among warring local partisan factions--to present himself as a candidate above the narrowness of partisan squabbles. In other words, adapting himself to Middling Interest principles. By redefining the issues from local to national, Webster discovered a viable vehicle to ascend to Congress, even running under the Federalist party name. Portrayed as the nonpartisan defender of the region's survival, the Boston electorate overlooked Webster's affiliation with central committee
like Otis, Sullivan and Perkins. Otis would not have this luxury. By 1823 as Otis would learn, being a Federalist had become a political liability.

After 1822 the Federalist party existed only in name and in the stubborn imaginations of the upper-echelon members of the Federalist hierarchy who were late in perceiving what had happened to them and their party. The realization that the times and rules had changed, and that their proud party, in the end, had been undercut by its own rank-and-file membership's alliance with the Middling Interestmen and the Republicans was a medicine that, at first, refused to go down. The final death-blow to the Massachusetts Federalist party was hastened, ironically, by the party's leadership's own insecurity and stupidity.

Scrambling to salvage the Otis campaign, the Federalist Central Committee botched a covert attempt to undercut the opposition late into the race. With this, most loyal Massachusetts Federalist abandoned the party out of disgust. In the spring 1823, Boston's Middling Interest leadership made significant headway spreading the insurgent message to other parts of the state. Provoked by the Federalist's nomination of Otis, insurgent committees began popping up in communities outside of Boston to stop the central committee's candidate. Such state-wide, Middling Interest organization was exactly what Lowell and other well-connected Federalists had feared. The central
committee aggressively responded to the challenge by undercutting any emerging statewide third party organization. From Worcester, an Otis operative reported to the central committee in Boston that "[s]pies have been [successfully] placed in several of [the Middling Interest] committee's so that almost everything they have undertaken has failed in consequence of the information they have given to our veteran leaders." Unfortunately for the central committee, this letter had fallen from its operative's pocket and been retrieved by a Middling Interestman in Worcester who immediately sent it to the editors of the *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*.

The public disclosure of the letter in the *Bostonian*, horrified the city. "We perceive in th[is] electioneering campaign [of the central committee] the last mad struggle of Aristocracy," explained one infuriated Boston insurgent. "They [the Federalist leadership] call upon us in the most pathetic manner to vote for their candidate--their party. How long is it since they tried to lull us to sleep by singing to us 'their is no party'--this is the 'era of good feelings'....When will the mad ambition of these men cease?" Then articulating the ultimate goal of the central committee, the editorialist condemned the anti-republican political perspective of the Federalist party. "They are striving to perpetuate in a few families their connections and dependents all the 'high places.'" After the 1823
gubernatorial race men like Lowell were forced to absorb new political realities. No longer would the "people" follow the "FEW." By 1823, Federalist elite of Massachusetts lost any remaining political legitimacy still associated with it.\textsuperscript{54}

Otis suffered a devastating loss to Republican William Eustis. For the first time in the party's history, it lost the Federalist strongholds of Hampshire and Essex counties. Boston was no better. With the hackneyed Federalist machine at its breaking point, Otis achieved what he could not the year before and carried Boston. But even in this traditional Federalist stronghold, the once well oiled party machinery clogged with age and rust within the fresh and fertile democratic troposphere of the new urban realities of Boston. Otis won Boston by a meager 108 votes. Out of a total of 5,564 active voters in Boston, Eustis gained 2,728 votes to Otis's 2,836, indicating that the Republicans captured all the Middling Interest and Republican votes, and, perhaps now not so surprisingly, a good number of rank-and-file Federalists. Equally significant, close to two-thousand more people participated in the 1823 gubernatorial race than had in the mayoral race of 1822. According to Samuel Eliot Morison, an Otis descendent, "[w]ith the defeat of Otis, the Federal[ist] party lost its last state."\textsuperscript{55}
Although Morison laments his ancestor's defeat, a Middling Interestman in the *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal* heralded the Republican victory, claiming it for himself and his party: "Certain great men of the city, have asserted, that there is no such thing in existence among us as a Middling Interest. This may be very true, when affirmed of those wretched countries where nothing meets the eye but Palaces and the Mud-Cottages. But that this assertion is not true of Massachusetts, a thousand arguments might be adduced to prove; and the best argument of all is the success of EUSTIS. Had the people been blindly devoted to party, Mr. Otis would have been elected, for the Aristocrats had previously carried a majority....But Mr. Otis was no sooner proposed than the people excersized their Reason instead of their Leader's. They saw their interest and that of the Aristocracy, led different ways. Otis recommended by his subserviency to his Party, but the people preferred a man subservient to their own Interest. And they chose plain sense in a good cause, in preference to splendid talents in a bad one." Calling himself "A friend to Political Equality," another Bostonian proclaimed Otis's defeat a triumph for the Middling Interest, but explained the battle would not be fully won until the "Aristocrats" were driven from the City Council. "The ranks of Aristocracy are broken, and with one effort
"A friend" predicted, "we shall destroy that
dictatorial power which has so long bound us to service."  

Ironically, the mayoral candidate that the majority of
the Middling Interest supported would turn out to be one of
Boston's most dictatorial mayors of all time.

Nevertheless, Josiah Quincy would govern Boston in a
different way than Boston's past leadership. He would not
bind the people "to service," but instead display a respect
for the electorate's power. Unlike the dominant political
order before the Middling Interest movement, deference,
under the Quincy administration, would be earned and not
expected. The course of the city no longer could simply be
determined by a select number elites with mutual interests
in a unilateral manner. Instead, municipal policy would
have to meet with the approval of a highly critical and
politically empowered electorate. Also, despite the future
mayor's autocratic approach to municipal governance,
insurgent, rank-and-file Bostonians would demand an
independent leadership that curried favor to no one
particular set of interests, least of all those set forth
by the central committee. Instead, Quincy would court the
collective interests of the majority in Boston.

The Phillips administration had been a disaster.
Absent of any executive leadership or direction, the city
was left to the bidding of Boston's independent municipal
boards and a City Council determined to gut the people of
their democratic rights. In one year, the majority of Bostonians had gone from extolling the chartering and the Phillips mayoralty as a clear triumph for the "many" over the "FEW," to condemning the administration as a corrupt agency ruled by the "FEW." By the mayoral election of 1823, the Phillips betrayal seemed as sinister as any of the Federalist Central Committee's past actions. Indeed, the duplicity of the ward voting affair struck many insurgents as extraordinarily familiar. As one Middling Interestman put it, the Federalist Central Committee, "[t]hat aristocratic band[,] has been abolished, but a more oppressive, more horrible, and more odious one...has arisen to fill its place."59 In the city's second mayoral contest, Boston's insurgents would purge this new "more horrible...and odious" band, and place their confidence once again in Josiah Quincy.
Notes


Moses Adams, 1803-1837," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 11, (Spring 1991), 19-50. An example of the type of "alternative sub-communities" these men forged can be found in, Rogers, "A Sailor 'By Necessity,'" 30-31, which describes apprentice Adams and his fellow apprentices forming the Gander Club in which members would eat, talk and drink together. Knights notes that these men, once established in Boston, become members of various mechanics associations whose membership composed the dominant share of the Middling Interest, Knights, *Yankee Destinies*, 98-99.

11. Quincy, *Municipal History of...Boston*, 44. "Acts of the Legislature, Section 17," *The Charter of the City of Boston*, 150, 14. Quincy, *Municipal History of Boston*, 60, which outline the charges of corruption the board faced. The chartering debates of the winter of 1821-1822 in Town Meeting were highly charged and any fiddling of the charter by the General Court faced severe criticism. Although some of the amendments made by the legislature did pass the town vote, all except section 17 provoked discussion and commentary in the Boston press. Because of this, I have hypothesized that the measure received the unqualified support of Boston's voters. McCaughey, *The Last Federalist*, 107. Quincy, *Municipal History of...Boston*, 64-65.

12. Quincy, *Municipal History of...Boston*, 64.


14. Note that the *Independent Bostonian*, on Oct. 12, 1822, changes its name to the *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, see *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, Oct. 12, 1822, AAS, for the announcement. Although Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 424, identifies the *Bostonian* as chiefly a Republican organ, clearly the *Bostonian*'s editors viewed their newspaper as solely in the support of the Middling Interest when they decided to change its name once again in June 1823 to the *Mechanics Journal and Middling Interest Advocate*, see *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, June 28, 1823, AAS, for the announcement.

16. Independent Bostonian, July 27, 1822, AAS.
17. Peter J. Coleman, Debtors and Creditors in America, 40-42.
18. Independent Bostonian, July 27, 1822, AAS. Bostonian
   and Mechanic Journal, March 1, 1823, AAS.
19. Josiah Quincy, Municipal History of... Boston, 418-419.
20. David Montgomery, Citizen Worker, 72.
22. "Imprisonment for Debt," Bostonian and Mechanics
   Journal, March 1, 1823, AAS. For further calls for the
   abolishment of debt imprisonment during this time period
   see, Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, March 15, 1823, March
   29, 1823, AAS. Also see, New England Galaxy, Jan. 21, 1823,
   APSmicro.
   and Mechanics Journal, March 29, 1823, AAS.
24. See "Alfred's" editorial in the Bostonian and Mechanics
   Journal, April 12, 1823, AAS, for the city government's
   attempt to abolish ward voting by having the General Court
   use its authority given to it by Section 30. For Josiah
   Quincy's opinion of Section 30 see, "Who Shall be Mayor of
   the New City," New England Galaxy, March 29, 1822, APS.
   [Boston] Independent Chronicle, March 22, 1822, as quoted
   in McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 102. For the importance
   of ward voting to the passing of the city charter and the
   Middling Interest's role in the chartering see previous
   chapter 4.
   12, 1823, AAS.
26. Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 12, 1823, AAS.
27. Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 12, 1823, AAS.
28. [Boston] Evening Gazette, March 22, 1823, AAS.,
   contains an announcement of the new law. "Miseries of Human
   Life," [Boston] Castigator, Oct. 9, 1822, AAS, describes
   the truckmen before the ordinance as already in dire
   financial straits; also provides a brief description of
   what the truckmen's job was.


41. As reported in "The Caucuses," *New England Galaxy*, Nov. 8, 1822, APSmicro. Daniel Webster to Justice Joseph Story, May 12, 1823, in Fletcher Webster, ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster: Private Correspondence*, in 18


43. *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, Nov. 2, 1822, AAS.

44. There is some evidence that Webster was in fact sincere in his nonpartisan position in 1822. One year later, he wrote to Jeremiah Mason about dropping his affiliations with the Federalist party and promoting the "amalgamation" of parties in Massachusetts. See, Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 123.


52. John Lowell to Harrison Gray Otis, Feb. 26, 1823, Otismicro. Also see, Morison, *Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis*, vol. 2, 253-254, which carries the whole letter and is a tribute to Morison's ability to decipher John Lowell's awful hand writing, which I struggled over.

53. "Federalist Conspiracy: Extracts from a letter found upon a snow drift in the town of Worcester, on Monday last," *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, April 5, 1823, AAS.


Voting breakdown by ward 1823 Governor's race:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Otis (Fed.)</th>
<th>Eustis (Rep.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>260</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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Total vote: 5564

(Source: *Columbian Centinel*, April 9, 1823, *AAS*.)


CHAPTER VIII

THE POWER OF LOCALISM:

POLITICAL FRAGMENTATION AND THE "PERSONALITY" OF POLITICS

"'ICHABOD, the Glory is Departed.'"
--Joseph T. Buckingham, 1823.

"We have lost that lay priesthood who were once the accepted models of high living, and who...direct[ed] the State."
--Josiah Quincy, Jr., 1888.

The success of the Middling Interest coalition during the gubernatorial race of 1823 shook the Federalist party to the core. As Joseph T. Buckingham explained, "the federalist party of Boston, signed its death-warrant" by choosing Harrison Gray Otis as its candidate. "Boston federalism," Buckingham revealed, might as well now "'hang out its banners on the outerwalls,' and inscribe thereon, 'ICHABOD, the Glory is Departed.'" Daniel Webster agreed. He had predicted the ruin of Otis would seal the fate of Massachusetts Federalism. Writing to Joseph Story after the election, Webster criticized the "miserable, dirty squabble of local politics," that surrounded the gubernatorial race, and confessed that he was "not disappointed at the result of the election....My 'agony,'" he revealed, "was over before the election took place, for I never doubted the result. Indeed," Webster admitted, "I could have enjoyed the triumph of neither party."

Despite Buckingham and Webster's foresight, Federalism's crushing defeat to the Republican party in the
1823 gubernatorial race baffled most of the city's pundits. Hardly anyone in the Bay State anticipated the degree of damage Massachusetts Federalism incurred in 1823. Even Buckingham described the election's outcome "as unexpected as it was mortifying to the federalist party." "That [Otis] should fall so far behind his adversary in the political race could never have been believed till the fact had been proven."3

Scrambling to make sense out of what had happened, most of the Boston press attributed the upset to what the Republican, Boston Patriot identified as "Sir Harry" Otis's past "treason" at the Hartford Convention. The Republican-leaning Boston Statesmen agreed, but posited that Otis's Unitarianism, a sect "devoted to the propagation of a particular creed, and...exerted an undue and highly prejudicial influence [which] depress other...denominations of Christians," also played significantly in his overwhelming defeat.4 Although both explanations may shed light on why some Massachusetts voters turned on Otis, neither the Patriot nor the Statesmen took into account the turmoil Middling Interest insurgents generated within the ranks and organization of the Federalist party.

Less a matter of past Federalist indiscretions at the Hartford Convention, and more an overwhelming rejection of the "self created [Federalist] central committee of THREE [Otis, Sullivan and Perkins]," 14,909 new Massachusetts
voters turned out in the 1823 gubernatorial race to subdue the "Aristocracy," the "Cabal,"--the "FEW." In Boston, increased voter turn out paralleled the general upsurge in the state. 1,864 new voters went to the polls in Boston, the vast majority of which, the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal claimed, had voted Republican because there was no third party candidate. Clearly, such wide-scale Middling Interest and Republican voter participation in Boston and throughout the state could not be simply attributed to Otis's role in the Hartford Convention. As Buckingham explained just days after the election, "[w]e take no notice of the slang about...the Hartford Convention" as sufficient reason for Otis's loss. Dismissing such suggestions as mere "electioneering tricks" which had had "very little effect," Buckingham advised his readers to look elsewhere to discover the genuine reasons why Federalism had been thoroughly thrashed throughout the state.  

Buckingham credited Federalism's decline to the vital role a new generation of voters played in the election. According to the Galaxy, young voters flocked to the Republican candidate because Federalism's leadership had barred them from any participation within the party. "We apprehend," Buckingham explained "that [the young adopted the Republican candidate because of] the course of favoritism and exclusion which has been pursued by the
federalists." The "great political questions effecting [the] state" had little to do with Harrison Gray Otis's defeat at the hands of this new generation of voters, Buckingham argued. Instead, they had chosen the Republican party over the Federalist because the central committee had contemptuously spurned them. "[W]hat prospect is there for the gratification of [the youthful and ambitious voter] by uniting with the federalist party of Massachusetts?" Buckingham queried. "Not the slightest. When has it been known, within the last ten years, that any young man, whatever may have been his intellectual talents...has attained to distinction in the federal ranks? The leading men in the federal party cling to the honours and offices in the gift of party with an affection stronger than death...Wealth and parentage, (we speak particularly in reference to the Boston federalists,) are the universal and exclusive passports to office and distinction [and are issued by] our old superannuated nabobs and their special favourites."

After its editors mulled over the dramatic political realignment in the state, the Republican, Boston Patriot eventually reached the same conclusion, confirming that a new generation of young voters "who have attained manhood since the termination of the late war [of 1812]" had rejected the Federalist party en mass. Such young men, the Patriot posited, dismissed Federalism as archaic and had
"ranged themselves beneath the banner of democracy [the Republicans]." Indeed, William M. Penniman's newly established, Middling Interest leaning Young Galaxy catered to exactly this new bloc of Boston voters and had squarely endorsed the Republican ticket in 1823 over that of the "aristocracy." To these young voter's Harrison Gray Otis seemed a haughty, old Federalist silk-stockings—hardly someone who would address their growing economic insecurities. Before the election, the Federalist press inadvertently reinforced this perception of Otis by devoting most of its copy defending the Federalist chieftain's involvement in the Hartford Convention. Also, it heralded the Senator's congressional efforts in getting the federal government to reimburse Massachusetts for costs incurred by state militias which had defended the coastline during the War of 1812. For the first-time voter with only vague memories of the War of 1812, these concerns seemed anachronistic and insignificant when compared to the more pressing issues the depression was generating in the state by 1823. Even staunch Federalist editorialist, "Anti-Gracchus," bitterly conceded in the pages of the Columbian Centinel that his party had politically miscalculated and that race had come down to a question of "personality" and not much more.

Fundamentally agreeing with "Anti-Gracchus's" point, the Middling Interest organ, the Bostonian and Mechanics
Journal, claimed that the Republican victory indicated the fruition of the insurgency's hard organizational work, the immediacy of the insurgent message, and ultimately evidenced the firm establishment of the Middling Interest party in the city of Boston. "It is asserted," the Bostonian reported after Otis carried Boston by a scanty 108 votes, "that the results of the late election in this City has converted at least one thousand of the late predominant party. The ranks of the Middling Interest are filling up with unexampled rapidity. It is scarcely possible to find a man who claims any affinity with the crest fallen aristocracy. Yesterday all was party with them, today they belong to no party."10

The political culture of Boston had changed enough to sustain political alternatives to Federalism. With no substantial disagreements on national issues being presented to define and distinguish the Federalist party from northern Republicans, local grievances relating to Boston's economy and management, generational differences, political personalities and partisan style became the predominating factors in determining who Bostonians would vote for governor. Local gripes and resentments were voiced through oppositional politics and took priority over traditional partisan voting behavior. Provincial, single issue, and highly volatile insurgent cells emerged out of past political complacency and partisan uniformity.
For ordinary people, economic depression precipitated mounting popular resentment toward those who seemed untouched and proved uncaring; the politics of "personality" or, perhaps, more accurately, the "personality" of politics, came to redefine political culture in Boston. Underlying and defining the "personality" of politics, rested deep-seeded bitterness predicated on obvious class distinctions between elites and everyone else. As Buckingham explained, "[t]he honour and emoluments of office are fair objects for competition among all classes and professions, and its is right and proper that it should be so." The artisanal class and petty merchants united with their employees with enough property to vote, consolidating against the common enemy. Not excluded from the coalition was the voting independent laboring class of truckman, stevedores, draymen, and peddlers, all of whom rallied against the undemocratic character of the city's traditional, elite elders.

Although somewhat concerned by, what he called, the "distracted state of our politics at this unhappy period," Josiah Quincy enjoyed his independent status as a municipal judge and political pundit. His apostasy from the Federalist Central Committee made him one of Boston's most popular characters. At the Federalist caucus that nominated Otis for governor in spring 1823, the Bostonian reported that Quincy delivered "one of the merriest and
most humorous speeches we have ever heard in the cradle of liberty." Quincy "harangue[d]" the caucus's choice for governor. Exploiting the popular image of Otis as a condescending and rich aristocrat, Quincy sardonically claimed that inflictng the gentle Senator's constitution to the harsh rigors of the governorship would be unfair to the aristocrat's natural disposition. Declaring "a diamond necklace should not be converted into a drag-chain, or an Arabian courser turned into a dray-horse," neither should Otis be forced to toil the bureaucratic rigors and drudgery required in serving as the governor. Humorously reminding the audience of "the failure of Mr. Otis in his struggle" for the mayorality in 1822, Quincy argued that with Otis as the Federalist nominee, the Republicans would easily win the election. He then shocked his audience by denouncing the Federalist party leadership. According to the Bostonian, "Judge [Quincy] concluded by hoping that the Federalists [at the caucus] would [choose] Mr. Otis and thereby give the Democrats [Republicans]" the governor's mansion. Although some Federalists listened to Quincy's speech with outrage, the "harangue" was conveyed in such a amusing manner that the Bostonian concluded "[t]he learned Judge, was, as usual, inveterately popular" when he left the hall. Clearly, this was Quincy's intent.

Ever since becoming a municipal judge, Quincy had consolidated power around himself—often testing the limits
of his judicial authority to reach this aim. The activism of the Quincy court was widely covered by the insurgent press. Hardly loosing himself "among the whores and rogues," as Harrison Gray Otis had predicted, during his tenure as a judge, Quincy remained prominently in the public spotlight. Never having given up hope of becoming mayor, Quincy's decisions on the court, though often criticized by lawyers as dictatorial, were skillfully designed to lay the ground work for his future campaign. His brutal attack on Otis at the Federalist caucus proved a timely maneuver in a well laid strategy to receive frustrated Federalists, Republicans and Middling Interest support. In mid-December 1822, and after dropping out of Boston's first mayoral contest, Judge Quincy ruled on a highly visible case that assured him the continued support of Buckingham. His opinion outraged conservative lawyers throughout the state while it delighted the anti-lawyer sensibilities of many Republicans and Middling Interestmen.

In the fall of 1822, the Galaxy published a number of scathing articles that arguably slandered roving, itinerant Methodist preacher, John Newland Maffitt. Maffitt was a highly popular evangelical whose flair attracted overflowing audiences who often climbed through church windows to hear his sermons. In a series of articles, Buckingham presented the famous preacher as a con man and a lecher whose wanton behavior was "unbecoming a gentleman
and a christian." Maffitt, it seemed, had a strong propensity for strong liquor and underage women, and the *Galaxy* had said so.\(^{14}\)

After the *Galaxy*’s exposes on Maffitt, the Methodist preacher sued Buckingham for libel. The case ended up in Quincy’s court. Maffitt’s lawyer presented *Galaxy* articles that clearly tarnished the minister’s character and argued that the case, therefore, was clear cut. Quincy responded by boldly redefining the libel law. He would allow Buckingham and his lawyer to prove the truth of the *Galaxy*’s articles. If they withstood scrutiny, then, Quincy charged, they were not libellous and Buckingham would be acquitted. Quincy claimed that freedom of the press was at stake and that, under the Massachusetts Constitution, the liberty of the press transcended an individual's right to privacy. On the other hand, Quincy decreed that if Buckingham had fabricated the *Galaxy*’s stories, then they were written with malicious intent only to slander Maffitt, and, therefore, Buckingham should be found guilty of libel. This interpretation of the Massachusetts Constitution was highly unorthodox.\(^{15}\)

According to Quincy’s son, his father "argued that the common-law doctrine, that the truth could not be admitted in evidence under an indictment for libel,—or, as usually put that 'the greater the truth, the greater the libel,'—was overruled by the express provision of the Constitution
of the State, which made a specific reservation for its citizens of the liberty of the press,—a liberty unknown...to the common law,—and declared that all parts of that law repugnant to that liberty are not to be considered law under the Constitution." After two days of hearings filled with witnesses and affidavits, Quincy ruled that Buckingham had written the truth and, therefore, was innocent. "This was the first time," Edmund Quincy explained, "that such a ruling had been made in the case of an ordinary indictment for a libel on a private individual, and it excited much discussion and no little censure at the time." Having acquitted Joseph T. Buckingham using such an intrepid and radical interpretation of the law, Quincy insured the Galaxy's and its editor's loyal support in the future.

Quincy fully understood that maintaining Buckingham's support was even more essential to his 1823 campaign than it had been just a year earlier. Just as the Middling Interest fissured over the Webster/Putnam congressional contest, the insurgency would split over Quincy, and the patient mayoral hopeful knew it. Much had changed in the past year and the Middling Interest's Bostonian and Mechanics Journal refused to endorse Quincy for mayor. Instead, it went with the Republican candidate George Blake and for good reason.
After Otis's dismal showing in the gubernatorial contest, the central committee turned on its renowned chieftain in a desperate attempt to revitalize the party in Boston. To achieve this the central committee focused on winning the mayor's office. The dilemma for Federalist operative William Sullivan was how to appeal to Middling Interestmen on local issues. Running a partisan Federalist within such a hostile political environment would clearly result in defeat. The committee had to find a unique candidate who the electorate trusted. Remarkably and despite Harrison Gray Otis's ardent objections, the committee decided to approach Josiah Quincy to run on the Federalist ticket. As Eliza Quincy explained, Massachusetts "had become democratic [Republican], and Mr. Sullivan and other Federalists came and requested Mr. Quincy to consent to stand for Mayor as the last hope of [the Federalist] party," "as his popularity with the people gave [the Federalists] their only chance." To have, of all people Quincy's arch-nemesis, William Sullivan, come, hat-in-hand, and beg him to save the Federalist party, must have seemed to Quincy a just reward for the party's past betrayals of him. Also, Quincy was clearly not a Republican and the insurgency's recent shift toward that party made it difficult for him not to accept Sullivan's offer. However, Quincy remained highly skeptical of Sullivan's proposition. Hesitantly, Quincy accepted the
nomination, but on his own terms. He stipulated that all members of the central committee would take a back seat in the election. Like Webster, Quincy understood that the strong presence of central committee members in his campaign would severely undermine his chances of victory. Instead, Quincy's campaign would be run by two of his most loyal Middling Interest supporters, insurgents Francis Wayland and Heman Lincoln. Instead of doing the bidding of the central committee, Quincy turned the tables and the committee lay utterly beholden to him as its party's last salvation. The combative insurgents who the Bostonian spoke for viewed Quincy's embrace of Federalism with great suspicion and refused to overlook it, siding with the Republican candidate.¹⁸

Thoroughly embittered by the Federalist choice, Harrison Gray Otis and his partisans were appalled and deeply offended by the committee's nomination of Quincy. How could the committee endorse the same apostate who had so seriously betrayed the party just one year earlier and had publicly disgraced the honor of Boston Federalism's most distinguished standard bearer--Harrison Gray Otis just weeks earlier? For Otis and his partisans the central committee's action proved a betrayal too burdensome to bare. To them, all seemed in chaos and they bolted from the party. Upon Quincy's nomination, Otis broke from the central committee and launched a campaign to destroy the
Federalist candidate even if it meant a Republican sitting in the mayor's office. The politics of "personality" had caused an irreparable fissure within the Federalist leadership. Facing an internal reactionary rebellion within the ranks of its leadership, the already beleaguered and besieged Federalist party could not withstand the pressure. Ironically, those who led the insurrection had been the party's most orthodox leader and its most loyal partisans. Just as the Federalist nominee for mayor splintered the insurgent coalition, Quincy's nomination cracked open the once impenetrable fortress of Boston Federalism--the central committee.19

Otis supporters began zealously searching for a specific issue to discredit and destroy Quincy. In Maffitt vs. Buckingham, they found their dirt and unsparingly exploited Quincy's unorthodox ruling to lead an assault upon his intelligence, legal skill, and character. Before the election a pamphlet rumored to have been written by Harrison Gray Otis, circulated around Boston. The author, who identified himself only as, "A Member of the Suffolk Bar," disingenuously claimed to have been a "bosom friend [to Quincy], his 'council's consistory' in all bright and all dark periods of our nation's history for the last twenty-five years." But after the judge's ruling in the Maffitt case, "A Member" explained, that for the good of the Commonwealth, he was now forced to betray his
friendship and expose Quincy as dangerous to the sanctity of the Commonwealth's law. Charging Quincy with stupidity and "aggravat[ing] evil" while serving on the bench, "A Member" reprimanded the Maffitt decision as "evidence of [only] a superficial acquaintance with the law." According to "A Member," Quincy was so driven by petty personal ambition that he overlooked that fact that his ruling was thoroughly "inadequate" and "illegal." "Determined to override...the supreme court," and make a name for himself, "A Member" charged that Quincy had not only botched the decision, but had broken the law. The invective portrayed the municipal judge as a ambitious amateur--a dangerous incompetent. Due the timing of the pamphlet's release, the clear intent of Otis partisans was to discredit Quincy's mayoral campaign by attacking his character. If it could be shown that Quincy had proven corrupt and inept--an utter failure as a lowly municipal judge--certainly Boston's electorate would not vote him into higher office.\textsuperscript{20} Otis partisans wagered that in the wake of Middling Interest charges that the Phillips administration was corrupt and incompetent, such indictments against Quincy would be seriously considered by Boston's insurgent voters.

The Federalist press took a neutral stance over the controversy. In a quandary over which faction to follow, Federalism's organs decided not reprint or report the reproach as Otis partisans presumably wanted. Realizing
that "A Member's" charges were as much an indictment of him as Quincy, Joseph T. Buckingham rushed to his candidate's defense. The Galaxy addressed each of "A Member's" points, squarely dismissing them as either illogical and/or selfishly motivated by petty personal partisanship. Buckingham urged Bostonians to disregard the pamphlet as simply an "ungentlemanly attack of an anonymous writer...destitute of good manners...and quite derogatory to the character and official duty of Judge Q" who had served the court admirably. Harrison Gray Otis was accused of authoring the assault out of petty personal vengeance and the dispute immediately became politicized. Catapulted from the realm of judicature into the broader sphere of Boston's personality politics, the Maffitt decision helped define the mayoral campaign of 1823. In his own pamphlet which enjoyed a reprinting in the Galaxy, "A Citizen" explained that the legal controversy was driven by personal partisanship and nothing else. Squarely identifying Harrison Gray Otis as the first pamphlet's author, "A Citizen" revealed that "[w]hen the rancorous zeal of party shall have subsided, when the vindictive violence of personal enmity shall be spent, and when the voice of the false, insidious friend [Otis] shall be silent, [only] then will his title to applause be admitted." Realizing their ploy had back-fired, Otis operatives vigorously denied that their leader authored the denunciation of Quincy's decision
in the Maffitt case, but few in Boston believed them. Although the anti-Quincy invective was, in fact, written by the old Federalist chieftain's impulsive son, Harrison Gray Otis was held accountable. The impact of the pamphlet wars only added to Quincy's popularity among wavering insurgents and rank-and-file Federalists who were appalled by the unscrupulous and hostile nature of the Otis pamphlet, although Boston cynicism toward such methods of politicking had risen to such a level that few were surprised.21

Quincy's past record as a vocal Boston citizen and jurist also reinforced the sense in Boston that he was driven not by personal or elitist interests, but by an incorruptible love of Boston. Though the provision (section 30) within the city charter endowing the General Court power to unilaterally alter local Boston law and its municipal structure had not been a burning issue during the city's first mayoral contest, after the Phillips administration's attempt to repeal ward voting using section 30, middling Bostonians fear of the provision magnified in 1823. Bostonians had learned from the Phillips administration to dread the potential power section 30 gave to the General Court over their lives. At any time and for what ever reason, the General Court could usurp the autonomy of the Boston citizenry.

By the 1823 mayoral race, anxiety over section 30 proved one of the few remaining cohesive chords that bound
insurgents together. Although the *Galaxy* and the *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal* represented the two opposing wings of the insurgency and could agree on little, both printed scathing attacks of section 30 before the election. Identifying section 30 as an undemocratic strategy implemented by the General Court to impose its mastery over the city, some Middling Interest pundits went so far as to recommend that whole charter be revoked and replaced by the old town meeting system. Quincy had advocated this since 1821 and his spokesmen were sure to remind Boston's electorate of their candidate's stand. Insurgent leader, William Emmons evoked the "intelligent decisions of...Quincy," when he railed against the charter in an crowded Faneuil Hall. Indeed, as Joseph Buckingham explained, Quincy had consistently fought the charter because "he saw...mischief in the section which gives the legislature unrestrained power over the charter." As mayor, Buckingham posited, Quincy "will be still on the watch to see that we are not 'made the foot-ball of a foolish legislature.'" 22

Between Quincy's 1822 and 1823 mayoral campaigns, he appealed to insurgent sensibilities on other matters as well by using his position as a municipal judge to address pressing local concerns. As a judge, Quincy had shown sympathy towards the truckmen's grievances. The case of the Commonwealth v. Solomon M. Levengston is representative
of Quincy's disposition toward this group of independent petty merchants. Levengston was arrested and charged with hawking his products directly to the public and shopkeeper below retail and established wholesale rates—something he did not have a city license to do. Also, because of the city's new truckman law passed by the Phillips administration, Levengston had broken the local ordinance by selling his products openly from his cart.

Levengston's attorney and Republican partisan, Andrew Dunlap, argued that, in his client's case, the local ordinance was unconstitutional because it restricted an individual's right to earn a respectable living and gave an unfair advantage to well established retail merchants within the city. If "[a] man has a right to earn an honest livelihood by trade in his shop, fixed to a certain spot," why, Dunlap asked, should his client "not have this same right" even if his shop is his cart? Claiming that the licensing law did not apply to his client because Levengston's "case was not at all analogous to the restrictions upon innholders and retailers of liquor; for those restrictions are imposed and required from a regard to public morals; but no such grounds existed for the support of th[e] law" that Levengston was charged with breaking. All his client had done was sell products to individuals and shops below competing retailer's and
wholesaler's prices. Certainly, there could be no harm with that, Dunlap maintained.24

Summing up his plea, Dunlap placed the case squarely within the political storm that had circled Boston for the past four years. The law Levengston was charged with breaking "gives an exclusive advantage to one class of citizens, and imposes a partial burden then upon another; and, therefore, is unconstitutional." Judge Quincy agreed. "[T]he law," according to Quincy's ruling, "was certainly of a dubious character" and Levengston was acquitted. As the Galaxy explained, because the Levengston case "was the first case, which had arisen upon the law since its enactment," Quincy's charge authenticated him as a friend to the truckmen and petty merchant.25

On the eve of Boston's second mayoral contest, the Federalist party was racked with factionalism. Joseph Buckingham had been precisely right when he, in retrospect, pronounced that "the federalist party of Boston [died], when it voted for a city charter." Indeed, in the end, local municipal issues first introduced and then stubbornly pressed and doggedly pursued by the insurgent coalition facilitated internal party feuding within the Federalist Central Committee. Tormented by the abolition of deferential voting behavior, surrounded by growing numbers of voters with louder voices demanding a political leadership devoid of "aristocratic" pretention, exposed as

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"political zealots and party inquisitors," and besieged by the democratic principals of "measures, not men; the People, not the Cabal; the Many not the Few," the Federalist party leadership fractured into hostile camps. Under such extreme and mounting pressure, Boston's "lay priesthood," as Otis, Sullivan and Perkins came to be described, splinted into two opposing sects that devoured each other.26

On the eve of the city's second mayoral contest, Boston's electorate no longer could rely on any semblance of a cohesive party system to direct its voting behavior. The mayoral election of 1822 had been complicated enough with four candidates and three parties anxiously vying for votes. In that election voters were asked to choose between, Federalism's Otis, the Middling Interest's Quincy, Republicanism's George Blake, and the mysterious forth candidate, Thomas L. Winthrop, snarling the process. Despite the clutter, each of the local parties in 1822 forged and articulated divergent agendas that represented substantial differences in popular opinion. On the surface, 1823 seemed much less complicated with only the Republican and Federalist candidates making a bid. However, underneath what seemed to be a return to a simpler two party competition lay only the broken hulls of past party structures and organizations.
Flailing about with no particular direction or command structure, and after a battle that bankrupted them both, the Federalist party and the Middling Interest coalitionalist insurgency discovered in 1823 that their fractured organizations no longer represented any meaningful programs for the future. Federalism descended into the petty politics of personalities resulting in its ruin as Webster had predicted. The Middling Interest's hatred of the "FEW" had been successfully exploited by the Republicans to force a schism within insurgent ranks that resulted in the syphoning-off enough numbers so that the Middling Interest had no chance to further develop a viable party structure in the city, let alone the state. Although Republican accomplishment within the traditional Federalist stronghold of Boston seemed impressive, it was not enough to insure Republican dominance in the city. So where would the majority of Boston's voters turn in 1823?

Acting as both a Federalist and a Middling Interestman, Josiah Quincy invited them to come to him and, on election day, the majority of Boston's electorate answered his call. A new coalition formed, this time around the character of one of Boston's leading citizens. With the Galaxy's loyal support and the hard work of Francis Wayland and Heman Lincoln, a broad-based Quincy-coalition narrowly defeated the Republican candidate, George Blake by 325 votes. Quincy had snatched victory
from the hands of the Republicans who had been waiting breathlessly for the demise of Federalism. In the municipal elections for the city's Aldermen and Common Council, Boston spoke even more forcefully. All eight of the Phillips administration's bipartisan aldermen were forced out of office. Of the forty-eight who served on the Common Council only eighteen survived the election. Significantly, William Sullivan who represented Ward 6 during the Phillips administration as a city councilman, watched in horror as his ward turned Republican. In 1823, it had gone with William Eustis in the gubernatorial race and Blake in the mayoral contest. Adding insult to injury, in the municipal elections of 1823, Republican William Wright challenged Sullivan and won.27

Voter turnout in the 1823 mayoral race dramatically surpassed that of 1822, with 1,061 new voters going to the polls for a total of 4,764. Although voter participation in the mayoral race fell short of the number involved in the 1823 gubernatorial race by 881, this proved to be in Quincy's advantage. According to Joseph Buckingham, this number of nonactive voters disproportionately represented "the particular friends of Mr. Otis [who] absented themselves from the polls," rather than casting their votes for the apostate Quincy or the "Jacobin," George Blake. Although Quincy easily won the traditionally Federalist eighth and ninth wards (gaining 63% of the vote in the
eighth, and 65% in the ninth), he had not carried them by the overwhelming margins Otis had earned just weeks before in the gubernatorial race (Otis carried the eighth with 65% of the vote, and, the ninth by 72%). In those wards combined, Quincy lost nine percentage points, which presumably represented disgruntled Otis partisans who stayed away from the polls. But what Quincy had lost in the eighth and ninth, he gained by carrying the twelfth ward—a ward Otis had lost. Where Otis held six of Boston's twelve wards, three of which he had retained by very slim margins (Ward 10, by 48 votes; Ward 11 by 38 votes; and Ward 4 by only 15 votes), Quincy had gained seven and won them with significantly higher numbers (Ward 10 by 84 votes; Ward 11 by 98 votes; Ward 4 by 45 votes; and he won Ward 12 by 72 solid votes). On the whole, in the Republican-leaning wards that both Quincy and Otis lost, Quincy lost by less; and in wards both had won, Quincy had won by more (see Figures 8.1 and 8.2). Throughout the city, Quincy captured 23 percentage points more than Otis (see Figure 8.3).²⁸

Quincy's margin of victory was more than triple that of Otis's (In Boston, Otis won by a margin of 108 votes to Quincy's 325), yet the new mayor's success over Blake remained ambiguous and certainly did not indicate a mandate. He had gambled that the Middling Interest coalition would unite around him despite his acceptance of
Figure 8.1 1823 Gubernatorial Race: H. G. Otis v. W. Eustis. Results by ward, % votes won, # of votes won by.
Source: Abel Bowen, Plan of Boston (1824 map) reprinted in Snow, History of Boston, 1-2. Columbian Centinel, April 9, 1823 and April 16, 1823, AAS.
Figure 8.2 1823 Mayoral Race: J. Quincy v. G. Blake. Results by ward, % votes won by, # of voters won by. Source: Abel Bowen, Plan of Boston (1824 map) in Snow History of Boston, 1-2. Columbian Centinel, April 9 and April 16, 1823, AAS.
Figure 8.3 Comparison, in %, between Otis and Quincy in 1823: Mayoral and Governorial Elections, by wards. Source: Abel Bowen, Plan of Boston (1824 map) in Snow History of Boston, 1-2. Columbian Centinel, April 9 and April 16, 1823, AAS.
the Federalist party's endorsement. This had not happened. In a bizarre and hurried coalition formed from past bitter enemies, distrustful Middling Interestmen and vengeful Otis partisans sided with the Republicans in an unsuccessful attempt to rout Quincy. Although for entirely different reasons, each group, by 1823, viewed Quincy as an apostate. After his acceptance to run on the Federalist ticket and led by the Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, a minority of rank-and-file insurgents refused to deem Quincy a Middling Interest leader as they had in 1822. Supporting Blake, this Middling Interest-Republican bloc of voters demanded that Boston's next mayor be from the middling classes. Articulating this bloc's position the Bostonian stated, "the Mayor of London is a brewer, and the Mayor of Philadelphia is a hatter," why could not the next mayor of Boston be from the middling sort?29

Having impulsively bolted from Federalism, Otis partisans also turned to the Republican party solely to deny Quincy political ascendancy. As Buckingham reported in the Galaxy, "Mr. Quincy was selected at the federal caucus, as the candidate for mayor; but instead of receiving the unanimous support [from] the federal part[y], the particular friends of Mr. Otis...gave their votes for the democratic candidate!" Severely criticizing Otis's followers, Buckingham charged them with "imprudent
stubbornness," having "sacrifice[d]" "patriotism" for "private and personal views."\textsuperscript{30}

Although the opposition held significant strength, the Quincy forces persevered with a similar coalition as the one he and Phillips forged in 1822. Though the Phillips administration's policies had alienated some Middling Interestmen to such an extent that they refused to follow the nominee of their leadership, thereby forcing them into a Republican party that greeted them with open arms, the majority followed Quincy as they had done the year before. Due to his past battles with the central committee, Quincy's recent affiliation with the Federalist party in 1823 could hardly be taken too seriously by knowledgeable Bostonians.

Stressing this point, the Middling Interest's most prominent leaders continued to vigorously work for him. Although Buckingham, Wayland and Lincoln could no longer deliver Quincy one unified insurgent bloc as they had done in 1822, they did hold the majority. Their candidate's unconstrained and independent positions on various municipal policies provided them with weighty material to work with. Quincy had forged his own sovereign course that withstood the electorate's cynicism and disorientation towards Boston's chaotic political environment. Quincy wisely had not precisely categorized himself as a "Federalist" or a "Republican," or even as a "Middling
Interestman." Instead, he ran as an incorruptible outsider—an individual who had taken the nonpartisan ideology first expressed by Middling Interest and lived up to it. When certain cells within the insurgency allowed themselves to be coopted by the Republican party, they betrayed the Middling Interest's founding principles of remaining nonpartisan—beyond the pettiness of party interests. Quincy's actions, it seemed to many Bostonians, were unsullied by local partisan warfare that had destroyed or seriously damaged all three parties in Boston.

Indeed, after the election, Francis Wayland came to Quincy to congratulate him on his victory and offer some advice to the mayor-elect. According to Eliza Quincy, Wayland advised the Quincy "not to lose his popularity, which gave him such...power to be useful.--But Mr. Quincy only laughed," Eliza recalled, "and told him popularity was the last thing he should think of, he should do whatever he considered his duty, & the people might turn him out as soon as they pleased."31 After the baffling and often vengeful provincial politics that had dominated Boston for the past five years, these sentiments were exactly what many jaded Bostonians longed for in a leader.

As mayor, Quincy carved out a place to accommodate the truckmen. His proposal for enlarging Faneuil Hall market place would serve their interests, while also, as Quincy later explained, help to "reduce the prices of provisions,
for the poorer classes." This, coupled with his ruling in the Levengston case, further indicated that Quincy understood the profound impact the city ordinance restricting truckmen had had not only on the truckmen, but also on Boston's extra-legal, urban economy that so many depended on. When the truckmen ordinance was first proposed the Middling Interest demanded that the city at least "provide them [the truckmen] a suitable place for them to stand." The call in 1822 was ignored; it would not be under the Quincy administration. Within his first year as Boston's mayor, under a pall of criticism from established land owners, Quincy single-handedly expanded the market place two-fold. Truckmen were given a central location to sell their wares. These small-time peddlers and the shady urban economy within which they worked were given a new sense of legitimacy and respectability under the Quincy administration. What became to be known as "Quincy's Market" proved such a success for truckmen and minor retailers that the new mayor never lost their support. 32

On other burning issues that had helped to incite political insurgency in Boston, Mayor Quincy quickly proved his administration to be malleable to insurgent demands. During his six year reign as chief executive of the city, Quincy refused to touch the ward voting provision that the Middling Interest had fought so hard for, establishing that
elective system in Boston for future decades. Although Quincy had held misgivings about the repeal of the ten-foot fire law, once mayor he did not try to revoke it. Instead, Quincy professionalized Boston's fire department to deal with the perpetual threat of fires in Boston's congested environment.

Before Quincy's administration, sixteen squadrons of highly competitive volunteer fire-fighter companies contended with each other to gain the honor of putting fires out around the city. Competition between these companies was fierce and proved extremely inefficient. On occasion, two competing companies would meet each other, both rushing to a fire only to engage in street fights rather than lose out to the other. Customary etiquette dictated that the use of water hoses to fight fires was dishonorable. Instead, bucket brigades were used under the volunteer fireman's belief "nearer the fire the higher the honor." Naturally, under such a system, fires often were allowed to spread out of control as contending firemen fraternities waged war blocks away or when "honor" and small pails of water could do little to extinguish a raging inferno.33

According to Quincy, the existence of wooden buildings higher than ten feet within the city proved largely inconsequential to the problem of fires within urbanized Boston. The real problem as Quincy saw it rested with the
city's antiquated fire-fighting system. During his third administration, Quincy consolidated Boston's volunteers, placing them under his authority. He appointed a chief engineer to replace the city's Firewards. Coordination of Boston's volunteer fire fighters would no longer be haphazard. Instead the chief engineer would have direct control over both the professional and volunteer fire fighters. At first, Quincy faced stiff criticism for abolishing the fraternal orders of volunteer firemen's autonomy, yet after the city hired some twelve hundred firemen on either a part-time or full-time basis, censure of the mayor's action quieted. Also, the modernization of fighting fires significantly reduced the ravages of fires in Boston. With twenty engines, a professional "hook and ladder company, eight hundred buckets, seven thousand feet of hose, and twenty-five hose carriages," Boston's semi-professional fire fighters proved much more effective in stopping outbreaks and protecting lives and property.

Quincy's reform in fire prevention represented the fierce activism of his administrations. Not only had he squarely addressed the problem of fires within the city without imposing "oppressive" municipal building codes that threatened middling, entrepreneurial interests like those of the past, but he had also confronted the city's high unemployment rate by establishing a municipal department that offered Boston's lower sort wage-earning municipal
jobs. Needless to say, dispensing municipal patronage on such a wide-scale did not hurt Quincy's annual re-election bids.

In 1822, Quincy had lost the mayoralty by a hair. In 1823, his election proved tough, but he won with a slim margin. After he was well seated in mayor's office, Quincy would run five more times and as his first four elections show, his appeal among the electorate grew. For four years he dominated Boston politics. In 1824 and 1825, Quincy's popularity proved so overwhelming that he ran uncontested. In 1826 and 1827, the Republicans mounted two separate candidates, but Quincy handily routed both of them with ease. He consistently and successfully presented himself as a disinterested municipal leader whose main objective was not personal ambition, but the material progress of Boston and its citizens.35

One crucial element to Quincy's success rested in his ability to wrestle municipal services away from the independent boards that had so bogged down the Phillips administration. By seizing their municipal functions and placing their authority squarely in the mayor's office, Quincy incrementally consolidated power around himself. Contesting the power of Boston's independent municipal boards was a bold move, yet Quincy's various coup d'états during his administrations should not have surprised anyone. In large measure, insurgents who supported
Quincy's election had voiced their disillusionment with the Phillips administration's timid acquiescence to Boston's various boards by voting for the outspoken judge. When Quincy insinuated the abolition of all autonomous municipal boards in his first inaugural address, he set into motion a plan that would establish him as Boston's most powerful mayor of the nineteenth-century.

"In every exigency," Quincy claimed to, "endeavor to imbibe and to exhibit, in purpose and act, the spirit of the charter." Placing his administration in stark contrast to the unassertive Phillips mayoralty, the new mayor assumed broad executive powers that were only implied in the city charter. Quincy pronounced that the "spirit of the charter" accorded him the right to enforce the "laws of the city," evaluate all "subordinate officers," "prosecute...and punish" "all negligence, carelessness,...and violations of duty." The independent municipal boards, Quincy asserted were "great defect[s]" that existed only to shelter one another from any "blame" for problems within the city. "The remedy attempted by the charter," Quincy declared, "is to provide for the fulfillment of all these duties [executed by the independent boards], by specifically investing the chief officer of the city with the necessary powers...for their efficient exercise." Then mapping out his specific jurisdiction, Quincy stated all of Boston's "public
institutions, its edifices, hospitals, almshouses, jails, should be made the subject of frequent inspection" by the mayor. It would be his duty to insure that all "errors corrected," and all "abuses exposed." 36

Quincy then tempered his speech by appealing to the nonpartisan sentiments of Boston insurgents. "Of local, section, party, or personal divisions, [the mayor] should know nothing, except for the purpose of healing wounds they inflict; softening the animosities they engender; and exciting, by his example and influence, bands, hostile to one another in every other respect, to march one way, when the interests of the city are in danger." 37 After this call for unity, Quincy got down to the business of dismantling Boston's entrenched independent municipal boards.

The first to be purged was the Surveyors of the Highways. One of Quincy's initial actions as mayor was to appoint a Superintendent of the Streets whose authority superseded that of the Surveyors. The Superintendent marshalled gangs of laborers that set to work nightly to clean and repair the streets of Boston. Though this directly infringed on the Surveyor's jurisdiction, the Superintendent and his crews assumed responsibility over Boston's streets and did the job much more effectively than the Surveyor's methods. Having proven the efficiency and superiority of this new system, and just two weeks after
his inaugural address, Quincy called a general meeting of
the people of Boston to vote on a referendum to abolish the
board and place responsibility for the maintenance of the
streets under the authority of the Mayor and city aldermen.
Quincy's referendum passed, and on June 11, 1823 the
legislature approved the measure. Quincy had gained
control of Boston's streets. Next to be purged was the
powerful Overseers of the Poor—a board Quincy particularly
disliked.38

Ever since Quincy had proposed the House of Industry
to better house imprisoned debtors in South Boston, the
Overseers had challenged the idea, yet the House of
Industry was not completed until 1823, so conflict had been
avoided during the Phillips administration. By Quincy's
ascension to the mayoralty, construction of the House of
Industry was completed and the new mayor demanded that the
Overseers empty the Leverett street jail of its debtor
inmates so they could be transferred to South Boston. The
Overseers refused to follow the Mayor's executive orders on
the ground that they were popularly elected by the people
and, therefore, did not have to follow the Mayor's order.
Deadlock between the Overseers and the Mayor's office set
in and both sides refused to back down.39

In 1824, Quincy initiated a plan to break the
stalemate. Suspecting the Overseers of corruption, Quincy
ordered city accountants to audit the board's finances.
When the Overseers refused to allow Quincy's officers to examine its books, the Mayor publicly charged the board with corruption and called for a city-wide referendum that proposed altering the city charter to grant the mayor unequivocal supremacy over the Overseers. When the referendum failed, Quincy took matters in to his own hands. He defied the Overseers by selling the Leverett street jail. With that, the Overseers found themselves in the awkward position of having no choice but to move inmates to South Boston's House of Industry. Although the Overseers of the Poor remained a state sanctioned municipal board, Mayor Quincy had undercut all its authority, significantly increasing the power of the executive.40

Quincy ravaged the Board of Health in a similar fashion as he had the Surveyors of the Highway. First, Quincy assumed all responsibility for the health of the city. Under Quincy's directions, the city bought a fleet of carts and horses, and hired a squad of laborers to remove any potential health hazards within the city. Justifying his actions, Quincy explained that, "[i]f the powers vested seem too great, let it be remembered that they are necessary to attain the great objects of the city,—health, comfort, and safety." Then presenting his reasons for taking over the Board of Health's responsibilities in insurgency rhetoric, Quincy argued that "[t]o those whose fortunes are restricted, these powers
ought to be peculiarly precious. The rich can fly from the generated pestilence. In the season of danger the sons of fortune can seek refuge in purer atmospheres. But necessity condemns the poor to remain and inhale the noxious effluvia. To all classes who reside permanently in a city, these powers are a privilege and a blessing." Having successfully justified to Bostonians his cooptation of the board's responsibilities and proven the efficiency of his own system, in 1823, Quincy abolished the Board of Health and placed all its responsibilities upon the shoulders of the city marshal, his appointee.41

By 1824, Quincy had successfully abolished or dismantled the power of three out of the five municipal boards that had ensnared the Phillips administration. When Quincy went after the Board of Firewards it would take an devastating urban disaster to wrestle control away from this powerful and popular municipal board. In 1825, an enormous fire burned out of control, spreading down State and Broad streets. The voluntary fraternal firemen's orders, mentioned above, proved totally ineffective in fighting a blaze of such magnitude. When the fire finally burned itself out, fifty stores were lost and, when the smoke cleared the city of Boston discovered that $1,000,000 worth of damage had been incurred. Although Quincy had tried earlier to abolish the old fire fighting system, his attempts had failed. After the inferno of 1825, in a hotly
debated city-wide referendum, Quincy's proposal for the abolition of the Board of Firewards and the creation of a new, modernized fire department passed.\(^{42}\)

As mentioned earlier, with the adoption of a professionalized fire department that held both volunteers and fire fighting specialists, Quincy further consolidated his political power through his use of municipal patronage. Unimpeded by any structured party organizations to answer to, Quincy single-handedly dictated an active urban policy between 1823 to 1828—-one totally divorced of partisan concerns. These years were marked by a political vacuum that Quincy filled with municipal activism. Bostonians may have questioned the wisdom of their mayor's actions, but they never accused him of being influenced or driven by partisanship.

By 1823, Quincy had established himself as a leader who transcended trivial partyism and partisanship, and proposed to lead his constituents on an independent course for the good and advancement of all voting Bostonians. Clearly, the "Great Mayor," as Quincy would later be called, prescribed municipal policy based upon his own assumptions and prejudices. At least one student of the Quincy mayoralty has described it as a "dictatorship," but that was a gross overstatement.\(^{43}\) Instead, Quincy was centralizing his authority to promote a more modern political system required by the emergence of large urban
centers. Yet, by 1823 and partially due to his past political activism in the Middling Interest, Boston's voters had matured into an independent and self-confident electorate that shed its past deferential behavior. Because Boston's traditional party organizations lay in chaos, each year Bostonians evaluated their mayor from an independent viewpoint, judging his worthiness by his actions—not his class, pedigree or even his party.

Reflecting back on Boston's complex political culture when the Federalist elite's hegemony in the state was firmly in control, Josiah Quincy III, the mayor's second son, wrote in 1888 that "men of the stamp of Sullivan and his friend Otis were more conspicuous for what they were than for what they did. They were predominant men, and gave the community its quality, shaping, as if by divine right, its social and political issues....[W]e have lost that lay priesthood who were once the accepted models of high living, and whose qualifications to direct the State were eminent and undisputed." Although the younger Quincy does not offer an opinion as to when such "divine" authority came under dispute, by 1823 Boston's "lay priesthood" found its authority politically vanquished and culturally overwhelmed by the political will of an unruly congregation which neither liked its imposing political style, nor its elitist culture. To sustain itself, the Federalist elite would have to do something that it could
not--change with the democratic current. No longer would authority simply be bestowed to a leaders because of who "they were." Indeed, it was who Harrison Gray Otis was that largely destroyed his gubernatorial campaign of 1823, taking with him the Federalist party of Massachusetts. Tipping Boston's past political culture on its head, the electorate mandated that leadership and authority be granted to individuals based upon "what they did," opposed to who "they were." Josiah Quincy understood this as his activist reign as Boston's mayor indicates.

Middling class values of hard work, independence, productivity, and accomplishment displaced inherited wealth, leisure, and pedigree in setting the criteria for community authority and leadership. This is not to say that many elites would not still be elected mayor of Boston. But it was because they were politically capable and resourceful men, who understood their authority rested in an discriminating electorate that demanded satisfaction. Indeed, it was not because of their social position, but despite of it. These new values, heralded the working electorate, would give the community its quality, not the "divine right" of a self-ordained "lay priesthood." Harrison Gray Otis and leading Federalists had remained blind to the dramatic shift in popular attitudes toward them. Their ignorance and tenacious dependency on the cultural politics of the past, more than any other factor,
marked their defeat. Politicians coming from the state's economic elite class would now have to pay respectful attention to the voice of a new generation which held very different values from their fathers.

According to Buckingham, the principal responsibility for Federalism's demise in the Bay State rested in the hands of the "great body of intelligent young men in Massachusetts...who are now coming forward in life, [and] do not feel all the excitements, that govern the conduct of their fathers." Because "the course of the federalists' leadership]...is not calculated to perpetuate its existence, by extending the hand of patronage and friendship [to this powerful new electorate]...without distinction of person and family...; and so long as [Federalism is] reserved only for the rich, or the sons of the rich, as a sort of [archaic] hereditary possession," Buckingham explained, "it is not very strange that the power of a party, guilty of such impolitic conduct should be on the wane." 45

Since his involvement in local politics, Josiah Quincy proved sensitive to emerging middling class political sensibilities. As an ambitious local politician rising to a position of great power within the chaotic and highly cynical urban political culture of Boston in the 1820s, Quincy realized his past partisanship to the Federalist party had to be abandoned. Quincy had, for many years
before 1823, set an independent course for himself. In the process, he had helped spark a democratic fire among a growing urban population that felt neglected and ostracized from the corridors of power. Quincy had embraced these concerns and answered them effectively. Whether Quincy's appeals to Boston's lower-to-middling electorate were driven simply by ambitious pragmatism or a sincere respect for ordinary Bostonians is not important. In the end, what makes the story of Josiah Quincy significant is the effective relationship he forged between himself and the Boston electorate. By helping to build a temporary third party in Boston that tore down the Federalist party's viability, Quincy and his allies helped transform the political culture of Boston. He helped alter the rules of the game. Although Boston politics for years to come would remain dominated by Brahmin elites, they could no longer employ the political style of the old Federalist elite leadership. Assumed guardianship no longer was automatically conferred on an economic and cultural elite without suspicion. In Boston, this dramatically altered party structures and strategy. Indeed, for a time in the 1820s it destroyed them.

As Joseph T. Buckingham illustrates, "[o]ur commonwealth and city politics are in a state of...confusion. Every tenth man are the leaders of a party;--the blind leading the blind. Republicans and
Federalists, Jacksonmen, Adamsmen, Linclonmen, administrationmen, freebridgemen, antifreebridgemen, antitarriffmen, and woolen crusaders, are all are thrown together into the political pot. The fire burns and the caldron bubbles; and many are the weird sisters that are practicing their incantations over the ingredients. Whether any thing will rise from this solemn sorcery, except scum, we profess not to foresee." For Buckingham, Josiah Quincy's strong leadership of Boston transcended this political "state of...confusion." The influential editor praised Quincy's brawny and clear sighted command of the city as not only refreshing, but imperative to the stability of the city.46

By 1827, others in the city viewed Quincy's dictatorial-like style differently and, inevitably, the mayor's activism eventually would be challenged. Quincy had operated as mayor without the support of any formal party organization or structure backing him up. For most of his duration as the city's chief executive, this had provided the mayor with significant latitude to operate freely--unentangled by partisan interests. Yet, after winning the 1827 election, new forces emerged to dismantle his administration which may have been stopped if Quincy had been less independent and established a party-based, partisan machine.
When Quincy took on the last remaining independent municipal board—the Boston School Committee in 1827, hostile forces smelled vulnerability and jumped, converging to destroy "the Great Mayor." Having placed himself as its chairman, Quincy had used highly tenuous executive powers to strong-arm the committee into abolishing Boston's only public high school for girls. Quincy's actions were an effort to stem popular rumblings that accused the mayor of spending to freely. The mayor was met by criticism from both sides of the political spectrum. The once Federalist, Columbian Centinel, as well as the Republican, Jeffersonian Republican, and the Boston Patriot, denounced the mayor for overextending his executive powers on the school board. Quincy's various pet projects and municipal reforms had proven expensive. Broadsides appeared in Boston attacking Quincy for being "overbearing and imperious." ⁴⁷

Although old Middling Interest spokesman, William Sturgis tried to rally the mayor's traditional partisan base, Francis Wayland had left the city to takeover the presidency of Brown University, and Sturgis's efforts were in vain. Despite Buckingham's support, with Wayland's departure from Boston, Quincy had lost a vital spokesman. According to Quincy-supporter, George Shattuck, the people of Boston finally "have made the astonishing discovery that [Quincy] is not perfect." During the mayoral election of 1828, Quincy faced a myriad of groups that opposed him.
After three inconclusive balloting where his fragmented opposition ran a number of candidates to deny him the majority, Quincy withdrew his name as a candidate, opening up the field for another to become Boston's third mayor. One week after he had publicly declared he would refuse to stand as a candidate, Quincy's old nemesis, Harrison Gray Otis, ironically, ran unopposed, quietly slipping into the mayor's office to serve three uneventful years as mayor. Eliza Quincy only hinted at the forces that brought down her father's long reign as mayor. According to Eliza, Quincy "was defeated by a combination of private interests & political managements." Surprisingly, Otis's inaugural speech sheds light on who was behind Quincy's defeat.

Otis's inaugural speech first reprimanded the activism of the Quincy administration. Harkening back to the more "judicious" Phillips administration, Otis promised the people of Boston that his would be a passive administration, unlike his predecessor. The new mayor promised "[t]o reconcile by gentle reform, not to revolt by startling innovation," as Quincy had done. Claiming the city had incurred an outstanding debt of over half a million dollars during the Quincy years, Otis declared a reversal of the past mayor's "radical reformation" of Boston and promised his overriding policy would be based on "strict economy...[f]or the gradual extinguishment of this debt." Reassuring his audience, Otis pledged to balance
the city budget and follow John Phillips's example by allowing the city to run a natural course without his interference.50

Secondly, Otis explained that he understood his successful ascension to the mayor's office was largely the result of support he had garnered from past political enemies who remained highly skeptical of the man they had just voted into office. This portion of the electorate had not voted so much for Otis, as they had against Quincy. Realizing his tenuous position, Otis understood his appointment from the people was highly provisional. If he stepped out of line, he would be banished and the old Federalist chieftain knew it. As his speech indicates, the once dominant political figure of Harrison Gray Otis, by 1828, was hobbled. "It is quite apparent to all our Fellow Citizens that the honour of the chair which I now occupy is not the fruit of any party struggle," Otis explained. "With the friends of former days, whose constancy can never be forgotten, others have been pleased to unite (and to honour me with their suffrages,) who hold in high disapprobation the part I formerly took in political affairs. Their support of me on this occasion is no symptom of a change of their sentiment in that particular," Otis confessed, but did confirm only their frustration with Quincy's dictatorial activism. "I...admit," concluded a humbled Otis, "that I am not indifferent to the desire of removing
doubts and giving satisfaction to the minds of any who by a magnanimous pledge of kind feelings towards me, have a claim upon me for every candid explanation and assurance in my power to afford." Finally, stating that he hoped "our beloved city prove an exception" to the partisan "antipathies" and the "torch of discord [that] blazes while the fire of patriotism expires" under the suffocating weight of partisan warfare, Otis called for peace in Boston.\(^51\)

In an editorial on the recent events in Boston, Buckingham chastised the selection of Otis as mayor. Providing insight to those Quincy supporters who remained shocked by Boston's dismissal of its second mayor, Buckingham explained the problem. "The old republican party is divided, and all are acquainted with the inspired maxim, \textit{A kingdom divided against itself cometh to nought}. The old federal party is declared to be defunct, and its odor remaineth only as an offence to a few individuals, who have survived its dissolution. If it be indeed so, we derive some consolation from the hope that, phoenix-like, a new party may arise from its ashes, possessing the wisdom, the magnanimity, the prudence, the disinterestedness, the patriotism, which rendered the original an object of admiration and respect while in its vigor of manhood; \textbf{but} without any of the weakness, meanness, or infidelity to friends and benefactors, that disgraced its decline." Then
in a thinly veiled attack on Harrison Gray Otis's "phoenix-like" reemergence in politics, Buckingham scolded Boston for resurrecting what he believed to be the worst that Federalism ever had to offer. "The dotage of the Sage and the imbecility of the Giant may excite compassion; the affected humility of an aristocrat in fetters, like the morality of a superannuated libertine, produces only disgust."52 Certainly, Josiah Quincy would have agreed.

The year Quincy stepped down from office in 1828, Buckingham stepped into the political fray running successfully as a National Republican for the Massachusetts General Court. From that position which he held for three terms, Buckingham continued to be an advocate for emerging urban entrepreneurs like himself. His hatred of an economic "aristocracy" that confined the ambitions and possibilities of an ascendent middling class, by 1828, had been vanquished. Buckingham, thus, turned to a new enemy--foreign manufacturers who could undercut and destroy emerging American industrial inventiveness, production and acquisition.53

Harkening back to the founding principles of the Middling Interest, but having expanded them into a much more sophisticated, national political doctrine, Buckingham pursued the interests of an acquisitive, urban middling class by demanding protective federal policies. "We cannot so libel the intelligence, sagacity, and god sense of the
middling class,—which includes seven eighths of the whole population,—as to give currency to a supposition that they are ready to abandon the manufacturers of woolens and cottons...the hatters, the tailors, the shoemakers, the cabinet-makers, and those who are employed in almost every trade which furnishes articles necessary for comfort, convenience and luxury, to the mercy of Manchester and Birmingham agent." Speaking to the insecurities of his class, Buckingham called for a rational, regulated economy. He embraced and defended the social transformation the market economy inspired during the Jacksonian era.\(^5\)

In the 1830s, Buckingham followed Daniel Webster in spurning the Workingman's party and adopting the Whig agenda. Rejecting any leveling impulses, Buckingham clearly saw great virtue in a form of capitalism tempered by government regulation that insured an individual's rise to wealth and security would be based on hard work, ambition, and productive creativity, and nothing else. For Buckingham, these ideas spawned from his past political activism and experiences in Boston during the early-1820s.\(^5\)

In sum, Middling Interest spokesmen who cut their teeth in the stormy, depression politics of Boston between 1818 through 1824 provide insight into the painful political, economic and social transformation that American society went through during between the first and second
party systems. The stories of elites like Harrison Gray Otis and Josiah Quincy cannot be fully understood without viewing them in stark contrast to the stories of Joseph T. Buckingham and the middling class he represented. Neither can those who represent an emerging, politically potent, lower-to-middle class be fully imagined without some conception of their profound relationship with established political and economic elites. Each informed and often challenged the other's conception of democracy. The season of social and political disruption and insecurity that this study investigates, set not only the landscape for the formation of an established second party system, but also exposes the changing values that urbanization and urban political warfare provoked in the body politic.

Most everything changed in Boston between 1800 and 1828. It had gone from a provincial town predicated on an organic notion of community to a burgeoning, teeming city. Manufacturing interests took over a past economy based on maritime trade. The urban transformation proved the death knell of a dominant political party and signaled the rise and fall of an incendiary third party that deeply influenced the formation of the National Republicans and Whigs in Boston. These years marked the decline of an elitist based conception of cultural politics and the emergence of perhaps the strongest mayoralty of the nineteenth-century. The most important development can be
found in the activism of a new generation of voters whose political energy was matched only by the intensity of Boston's urban transformation. These Bostonians shook the established political culture and forced a change in political style. These activists challenged the assumptions of their parents. Understanding that their future hopes and dreams—their very security—would depend upon a new economy, they challenged the political status quo to insure their place within the market revolution.
Notes


2. Daniel Webster to Justice Joseph Story, May 12, 1823, Private Correspondence, vol. 17, 325.


5. For the massive increase in Massachusetts voter turn-out in the 1823 gubernatorial race, as compared with the 1822 race see, Morison, Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, vol. 2, 240. "For the Bostonians," Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 5, 1823. "Middling Interest Politics," Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 5, 1823, AAS. For immense increase in Boston voter participation, I have compared the numbers of the hard fought 1822 mayoral race with those of the 1823 gubernatorial race; see, Portsmouth [NH] Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, and Columbian Centinel, April 9, 1823, AAS. "Astonishing Conversion," Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 12, 1823, AAS, which claims 1000 Boston votes went with the Middling Interest endorsed candidate, Republican William Eustis.


9. "To the People of Massachusetts," Columbian Centinel, July 4, 1823, AAS.


12. "Federal Caucus," Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 5, 1823, AAS. It should be noted that Quincy's speech at the caucus was not reported, nor even mentioned in the Federalist press.

13. For one example of Quincy stretching the limits of his authority as a municipal judge see, "Judge Quincy's Charge," New England Galaxy, May 17, 1822, APSmicro.


15. See footnote number 14.


17. Bostonian and Mechanics Journal, April 12, 1823, AAS.


20. James Walker, "Memoir of Josiah Quincy," 113, posits that the author of "A Letter to...Quincy," was not written by Harrison Gray Otis, but his son, Harrison Gray Otis, Jr. "Law of Libel," New England Galaxy, April 25, 1823, APSmicro, suggests the author very well might have been by the senior Otis. "Remarks Upon 'A Letter to Judge Quincy, on the Law of Libel, By a Member of the Suffolk Bar,'" New England Galaxy, May 9, 1823, APSmicro, contains sections of "A Letter to...Quincy," and also indicates Harrison Gray Otis, Sr. author the pamphlet.


24. For Dunlap's political affiliation see, Arthur Darling, Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1848, 42-43; Dunlap had arrived in Boston in 1820 from Salem and would become a Republican leader in the city as an editorial contributor and founder of the Jacksonian Republican Statesman. "Law of Peddling," New England Galaxy, April 25, 1823, APSmicro.

26. Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past from the Leaves of Old Journals (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1888), 323.


28. For the 1823 mayoral election returns broken down by wards see, Columbian Centinel, April 16, 1823, AAS. For the 1822 mayoral election returns broken down by party affiliation see, Portsmouth [N.H.] Journal of Literature and Politics, April 13, 1822, AAS. For the 1823 gubernatorial election returns for Boston and broken down by ward see, Columbian Centinel, April 9, 1823, AAS. "Esprit de Parti," New England Galaxy, April 15, 1823, APSmicro.

Election Returns By Ward Comparison of the 1823 Gubernatorial and Mayor Contests in Boston:

1823 Governor's Race: Otis (Fed.) v. Eustis (Rep.)

Wins by a margin of:
ward 1: Eustis......136 (Rep.) votes
ward 2: Eustis......127 (Rep.)
ward 3: Eustis......140 (Rep.)
ward 4: Otis.......15 (Fed.)
ward 5: Eustis......12 (Rep.)
ward 6: Eustis......67 (Rep.)
ward 7: Otis.......202 (Fed.)
ward 8: Otis.......180 (Fed.)
ward 9: Otis.......160 (Fed.)
ward 10: Otis.......48 (Fed.)
ward 11: Otis.......38 (Fed.)
ward 12: Eustis......14 (Rep.)

1823 Mayor's Race: Quincy (Fed./M.I.) v. Blake (Rep./M.I.)

Wins by a margin of:
ward 1: Blake......106 (Rep./MI.) votes
ward 2: Blake......107 (Rep./MI.)
ward 3: Blake......110 (Rep./MI.)
ward 4: Quincy....45 (Fed./MI.)
ward 5: Blake......2 (Rep./MI.)
ward 6: Blake......44 (Rep./MI.)
ward 7: Quincy....177 (Fed./MI.)
ward 8: Quincy....177 (Fed./MI.)
ward 9: Quincy....95 (Fed./MI.)
ward 10: Quincy....84 (Fed./MI.)
ward 11: Quincy....98 (Fed./MI.)
ward 12: Quincy....72 (Fed./MI.)

Source: *Columbian Centinel*, April 9, 1823 and April 16, 1823, AAS; *New England Galaxy*, April 11, 1823 and April 18, 1823, APSmicro. Please Note: the *Galaxy* and the *Centinel* disagree over the final mayoral vote. The *Galaxy* reports the results were Quincy: 2505, Blake: 2180; where as the *Centinel* reports the results were Quincy: 2504, Blake: 2179. I have followed the *Centinel's* numbers. Also, though both the *Centinel* and the *Galaxy* report the results of the governors race in Boston stood at Otis: 2836 to Eustis: 2728, my own calculations of the *Centinel's* detailed returns conclude the actual vote in Boston stood at Otis: 2839 to Eustis: 2692. The *Centinel* seems to have lost 33 votes in its calculations. I have followed the totals as stated in the *Galaxy* and the *Centinel*, while employing the use of the *Centinel's* breakdown of votes by ward, despite the discrepancy between the given total and the total if added up by ward. Also, see Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

29. *Bostonian and Mechanics Journal*, April 26, 1823, AAS.


37. "Inaugural Address, Josiah Quincy, Delivered May 1, 1823," in Boston, Inaugural Addresses of the Mayors of Boston, vol. 1, 10-12. Also see, Josiah Quincy, Municipal History of...Boston, 58-61.


41. Robert McCaughey, The Last Federalist, 108. For Quincy's quotation on the responsibilities of the mayor toward maintaining a healthy city see, Josiah Quincy, Municipal History of...Boston, 64-66.


44. Josiah Quincy, Figures of the Past, 323.


47. The Columbian Centinel, Jeffersonian Republican, and the Boston Patriot, as well as the broadsides, as quoted in, Robert McCaughey, Last Federalist, 129-131.


49. Eliza Susan Quincy to Justin Winsor, July 7, 1880, Winsor Family Papers, Quincymicro.


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