“The Absolute Destruction of Their Interest”: New England and Jefferson’s Embargo

An honors thesis for the Department of History

Rachel Knecht

Tufts University, 2011

"The time has arrived when every man who values the commercial prosperity of the Northern States, the source of our wealth and strength, of our domestic enjoyments and our political importance, may and ought to join in protecting that Commerce from the unjust, tyrannical, and unconstitutional oppression of Virginia. All minor political controversies, all inferior party distinctions, are absorbed in this great National question between Virginia and the Northern States."

The *Columbian Centinel*, September 21 1808

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

As the year 1807 drew to a close, chaos consumed the western world. Napoleon's wars in Europe had torn the continent apart, and hostilities between France and Britain left no country unaffected. In particular, the struggle had disrupted the commercial workings of the Atlantic system, particularly for the young but commercially energetic United States. Faced with both French and British encroachments on American vessels, cargoes, and sailors, President Thomas Jefferson sought to keep the country out of the chaos, and prevent the corruptive European influence and its wars from infecting his growing and thriving agrarian paradise. But rather than declare war, he asked his Republican Congress to lay a total embargo on American shipping in December 1807. In doing so, Jefferson may have temporarily kept the United States out of a foreign conflict, but the embargo caused fourteen months of domestic strife that nearly provoked a war at home. From its inception, Jefferson's embargo awakened sectional tensions between New England and Virginia that had been kept uneasily at bay since the 1780s. Whereas threats to newly constituted American union had previously seemed to arise from foreign affairs, the real peril now appeared to come from hostilities brewing within.

Despite the crisis the embargo clearly caused, many historians have leapt over its fourteen-month duration to more dramatic destinations, especially the War of 1812. On its own merits, many historians find the embargo interesting insofar as it marked a crippling failure for an otherwise mythically successful president and founding father. Most of these works have attempted to interpret Jefferson's motivation for laying an embargo, or place it within his larger

understanding of politics and international relations.[1] Economic historians have also paid the embargo little attention, as the policy's duration did not influence long-term trends, with the possible exception of providing a minuscule impetus for industrial manufacturing and internal improvements in New England.[2] Political historians have noted the obvious, that Jefferson's Republicans made a serious mistake with the embargo and allowed the dying Federalist party to enjoy a brief resurgence. But even under the effects of embargo, Federalist success came almost exclusively in New England. Politically, though by no means economically, the south and west remained largely unaffected by Jefferson's embargo.

New England had taken up more than its share of the historical literature it by the beginning of the twentieth century, and northern historians dominated American scholarship for decades, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. On the topic of Jefferson's embargo, they did not hesitate to advance the idea that the policy had been a southern attack on New England's virtuous commerce. This tone existed both before and after the Civil War, when the dominance of the slavery question and the northern military victory gave northern historians a supposed moral high ground from which to reprimand Virginia for her sins. At the same time, they brushed aside Federalists' threats of secession. When the embargo appeared in northern histories, it served mainly to illustrate New England's righteous indignation and moral

---

1 For example: Burton Spivak, *Jefferson's English Crisis: Commerce, Embargo, and the Republican Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979); Louis Martin Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo* (Durham: Duke University, 1927); Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 204-230; Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 874-921.

2 Cathy D. Matson: "Capitalizing Hope: Economic Thought and the Early National Economy" in *Wages of Independence: Capitalism in the Early American Republic*, ed. Paul A. Gilje (Madison: Madison House, 1997), 126-27; Christopher Clarke, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 111-12.

superiority over Virginia and the slaveholding South. Meanwhile, these historians quietly passed over almost any complicated discussion of partisan politics. For historians interested in pursuing the idea that the New England states represented the true "America," the embargo provided a useful point of historical inquiry.[3]

As historians' obsession with sectionalism passed, so did interpretations of the embargo as a sectional crisis. In the 1920s, some Progressive historians spurred a renewed, if short-lived, interest in the embargo as an economic policy, taking a class-conscious and materialist historical view. They blamed selfish merchants for Jefferson's failure, and criticized New England for suffering less and complaining more than the South.[4] After the Second World War, historians moved away from interpreting all of American history as sectional hostility, and many noted other relevant aspects of Jefferson's embargo. While the policy rarely received its own treatment, it provided valuable evidence for developments in early American diplomacy with Britain and France, Republican political economy, the executive policies of the Jefferson administration, or American relations with British Canada.[5] Despite varied and useful interpretations of the policy, however, historians have largely set aside the clear sectional hostility of the embargo. Dissent

---

3 Thomas C. Amory, *Life of James Sullivan* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1859); William W. Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851); James Duncan Phillips, "Jefferson's 'Wicked Tyrannical Embargo,'" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Dec., 1945), pp. 466-478; Stephen Nissenbaum, "New England as a Region and a Nation" in *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* ed. Edward L. Ayers et al., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 40-41; Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 90-91.

4 Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*; Walter Wilson Jennings, *The American Embargo*, *1807-1809* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1921).

5 Bradford Perkins, *Prologue to War: England and the United States 1805-1812* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 143-83; Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 217-22; Leonard W. Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties: The Darker Side* (New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Press 1963), 93-141; A.L. Burt, *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 260-66.

emanated mainly from New England, most agree, and the Republican Congress repealed the embargo after only fourteen months and against Jefferson's wishes. But historians frequently skim over how rapidly the United States descended into crisis.

As moralistic and self-righteous as the nineteenth-century northern historians may have been in writing about the embargo, they were at least correct that the embargo caused a miniature sectional crisis in the United States. It is easy for Americans to forget how fragile the new union under the 1787 constitution remained after twenty years, especially with belligerent European powers looming abroad and a diverse collection of interests warring at home. In particular, commerce and political economy had been major points of contention for the American regions, and while the Jeffersonians had tentatively brought together cross-sectional economic interests, cooperation within the Republican party remained dubious. As that party began to win more and more elections in every state, a true national interest did seem to be developing. But the embargo illustrated how easily that fragile coalition could splinter. In 1806, the Jeffersonian Republicans appeared to have conquered New England. By the end of 1808, not only had they squandered their electoral gains, they seemed to have threatened the union of the states. The Constitution had yet to prove itself, and the embargo demanded an answer to the question of whether or not it could protect New England's minority regional interest.

Sectionalism undoubtedly posed a deep threat to the early republic; it was one of the divisions early Americans distrusted most. Believing that the union was the only way to protect Americans' liberties, many feared that the union might break down and destroy the republican experiment. Meanwhile, the two parties, themselves not yet fully legitimate, had undeniable regional hues, creating an additional fear that two antagonistic sectional parties might develop.

Regionalism produced a cultural affinity that existed uneasily alongside American nationalism, both bolstering it and simultaneously threatening to undermine it. Sections were always recognized in political discourse, but never accepted as truly legitimate interests. More often than not, "sectionalism" was deemed the greatest evil in American politics. As such, historians have only periodically embraced the idea that the United States has been defined by its regionalism from the beginning and throughout its history. At times, these regions coexisted peacefully and productively; at others, they clashed, sometimes to the point of crisis, and once to the point of separation and civil war. The embargo crisis did not produce sectional separation, but it did pose a serious threat to the young American union.[6]

This paper seeks to reassert the importance of sectional interests, especially in their relation to partisanship, to the history of the early American republic. While neither party was exclusively regional, Federalism had a strong northeastern tinge and Republicans' power mainly lay with southern and western agrarians, a division made explicit during the embargo crisis. Sectionalism clearly affected partisanship, and vice versa, and while the embargo marked a high point in the confluence of the two, it was hardly an aberration. Moreover, sectional hostility had the real potential to split the early republic on the fault line between New England and the south, and partisanship jeopardized the nation most when magnified through a sectional lens. Jefferson's embargo threatened the apparent minority interests of the northeastern section, and its

6[1] Peter B. Knupfer, *The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 91-94; David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1997), 246-93; David C. Hendrickson, *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 177-93; Peter Onuf, "Federalism, Republicanism, and the Origins of American Sectionalism" in *All Over the Map*, 11-37; Conforti, *Imagining New England*, 92-99.

citizens expressed their discontent by rejecting the legal and political authority of the Republican federal government until their ability to affect national policy was reaffirmed.

Chapter one focuses on the immediate effect of the embargo on New England. The laws pushed the states of that region together and away from the federal government. Commerce proved to be a sectional issue, affecting the entire region, and the Jefferson administration's efforts at enforcement only undermined federal legitimacy. New Englanders believed they relied on commerce more than the rest of the country. The embargo crippled the northeastern economy, especially the seaports but swaths of the interior as well, noticeably in areas near the coast or the Canadian border. Moreover, as Jefferson, Congress, and Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin enacted harsher supplementary embargo acts, they both alienated unhappy New Englanders and weakened the legitimacy of the federal government. The apparent lack of protest from the middle and southern states further convinced northeasterners that they suffered under the embargo alone. Smuggling became a matter of course, as New Englanders increasingly rejected the embargo laws. Violations undermined the embargo's effectiveness and infuriated the administration, and New Englanders responded to harsh enforcement with open resistance, pushing back not only against the embargo but the Virginian-controlled government that enforced it.

Chapter two examines the role of the Federalist party. Federalists had been steadily losing ground to Republicans for years, but now they took advantage of New Englanders' unhappiness and mounted a largely successful campaign against Republicans. They did so by using aggressive sectional rhetoric, threatening to create a single-party New England interest in opposition to the Republican federal government and rest of the country. The party accused Jefferson and the Republicans of being anti-commerce and anti-New England, positioning

themselves as the true defenders of New England's rights and interests. Federalists did not pull their rhetoric from thin air; the immediacy of their success stemmed from suspicions about the south that many New Englanders had long held. But their success suggested a dangerous trend for the union. By the fall, New England had taken a definite Federalist electoral trend, but the line between New England regionalism and partisan Federalism had become increasingly blurry. By using clear sectionalist language, the New England Federalists suggested how easily irreconcilable northern and southern parties might emerge. This revelation sparked intense fears of national separation and civil war.

Chapter three addresses the northeastern Republican response. New Englanders had largely voted against James Madison in 1808. Now, because of its minority status, onlookers began to fear that even a united New England would be unable to affect the national government. As resistance to the laws took a more violent turn, New England Republicans attempted to prove that New England did have a voice in Washington. They struggled to find a way to reassert northeastern influence in the Republican executive branch, and they were repeatedly rebuffed. Finally they resolved to secure the embargo's repeal, lest Republicanism appear fully dominated by the south and west. Such a political and ideological shift would destroy the Republicans' still-fragile credibility in New England. Against the strenuous efforts of the administration to keep them in line, they succeeded by convincing Congress that if the embargo were not lifted, Federalist-controlled New England would rise up in violent resistance. In doing so, they strained the Republicans' tenuous coalition, but ultimately it held, and Congress repealed the embargo in March 1809. The dissenters had proved, for now, that a minority could still be heard in the

national government. Still, in attaining the embargo's repeal, northeastern Republicans vindicated Federalists and New England sectionalism.

The embargo crisis ended in an awkward compromise, as many later American sectional controversies would, with the 1809 Non-Intercourse Act, but the ordeal was too rapid and chaotic for a real separatist movement to take shape. Ultimately the crisis was resolved within the nascent constitutional system. Nevertheless, over the course of its relatively brief duration, the embargo convinced New Englanders that their commerce, the most basic foundation of their prosperity, was a minority interest within the country. Their fundamental interests, many New Englanders feared, would be abused and ignored by a succession of Virginian presidents and their southern and western Congressional allies. Northeastern citizens overturned the embargo with the constitutional methods available to them, and their Republican representatives proved to their constituents that they were not the attendants of southern overlords. They held their seats, and the Federalist decline resumed. As likely as the formation of a Northern-Federalist Southern-Republican party system seemed at the end of 1808—one that certainly could have led to New England secession—that outcome never materialized.

New Englanders' fears in 1808 were straightforward, even archetypal, although no well-developed vocabulary existed yet with which to express them. A minority section, attempting to protect its prosperity, way of life, and conception of the nation, feared for its ability to influence national policy in the face of the perceived hegemony of another section. Its unhappy citizens found a voice in a particular political party, and that organization served primarily as a mouthpiece for dissent, but also as an instigator. Jefferson's embargo touched a deep nerve in New England regionalism, and sparked intense fear of southern hegemony and tyranny. As

inevitable as the death of the Federalists and eventual northern supremacy seems now, none of that was a surety in 1808. Rather, the converse seemed the most likely outcome. In breaking with Jefferson, northeastern Republicans both reassured New Englanders of their ability to affect national policy and staved off the solidification of a regional divide in party politics. In doing so, they split their own party between north and south, creating lasting resentment between members of each section. The embargo crisis ended, but the sectional divide did not heal.

I. A Barrel of Gunpowder: New England Commerce Embargoed

"You may as well drive hoops of wood or iron on a Barrell of gunpowder,
to prevent its explosion when a red hot heater is in the center of it, as
pretend to enforce an Embargo on this country for six months."
- John Adams to John Quincy Adams, January 8, 1808

On June 22, 1807, the HMS Leopard opened fire on, and subsequently boarded, the USS Chesapeake in neutral American waters off the coast of Virginia. The attack, and the kidnapping of sailors, enraged Americans. "Resolves blazing against Britons from one end of the United States to the other," Nathaniel Ames of Danvers, Massachusetts noted approvingly in his diary.[7] He and other Republicans condemned the British attack in the strongest possible language—an outrage, an unprovoked act of war. Port cities up and down the coast raged in protest. Federalists, who sympathized with Britain's fight against Napoleon, could not contradict the prevailing sentiment; even in Boston they endorsed a popular protest.[8] Timothy Pickering, a Federalist Senator from Massachusetts, lamented to his nephew that many of his colleagues said "peremptorily, that *in no case whatever*, can an attack on a neutral ship be *justified*."[9] A rabid Anglophile, Pickering saw plenty of reason to justify the *Leopard*'s actions, but he belonged to a small minority among the American people. In October, a town meeting in Mobile, Alabama,

7 Charles Warren, *Jacobin and Junto: or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames, 1758-1822* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931), 261.

8 Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 143; Lynn Warren Turner, *The Ninth State: New Hampshire's Formative Years* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 236; Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2010), 112.

9 Timothy Pickering to Samuel Gardner, December 10 1807, in Gardner papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts [MHS].

declared confidently, "England may count upon our divisions. She is mistaken. The violence of her conduct has united all America."[10]

A year later, however, the *Chesapeake* would be patrolling the waters just south of Cape Cod, watching for vessels leaving the United States in violation of the Embargo Act.[11] While Jefferson and his administration had clearly hoped Americans would endure whatever privations the embargo caused, those hopes turned to dust by the summer of 1808. The *Chesapeake* was only one of the ships used to enforce the embargo; a year after the *Leopard* incident, the federal government used both the navy and the army for that purpose.[12] Jefferson, and those around him, had greatly miscalculated the cost of embargo. The administration had overestimated how much Europe needed American produce, and greatly underestimated Americans' dependence on foreign trade. In New England, the embargo brought the economy to its knees, and stirred in its citizens a deep resentment against the federal government.[13] Opposition manifested in petitions, smuggling, and even outright violence. Harsh enforcement in the region only further alienated New Englanders from the national government. Ultimately, in ignoring the embargo laws, they began to question the federal government's legitimacy, enacting a kind of popular nullification and laying the basis for a united northeastern bloc of opposition.

---

10 : U.S. *Senate Journal*, 10th Congress, 1st sess., October 27, 1807.

11 : Albert Gallatin to Thomas Jefferson, August 9, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, ed. Henry Adams, (New York: Antiquarian Press, 1960), 408; *An Address, to the citizens of Rhode-Island, on the choice of electors of president and vice-president of the United States*, [Providence, R.I?], November, 1808, 11-12.

12 : Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties*, 114.

13 : That this chapter focuses on New England does not mean to imply that the embargo did not hit other parts of the country very hard as well. Indeed, cotton prices fell further and faster than any other American export. On the other hand, most cotton was exported from northern, not southern, seaports.

The state of the American economy in the early nineteenth century is the matter of much debate; so too are Americans' attitude toward commerce during the Revolution and the early national period.[14] Certainly, some substantial subset recognized that the ability to trade with Europe and the world was vital to American interests. In *Common Sense*, Paine had written, "Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe." Although most of the new country was engaged in agriculture, many Americans recognized that the ability to trade the fruits of their labor with foreign nations would lift the nation's common prosperity. Commerce would elevate Americans above a life of subsistence, advocates said, and make the young country happy and rich. The northern states in particular relied on their ability to export; they sent away the products of their own farms and fisheries as well as produce from southern plantations.[15] Long distance transport of goods over land was prohibitively expensive, so tobacco and cotton were shipped up the coast. As a result of this eager commercial activity, in the quarter-century after the United States achieved independence, the northern states passed the southern ones in per capita wealth.[16]

However, commerce and trade were not without their doubters in early republican America. While Americans surely had every right to pursue prosperity with diligence and

---

14 The question of "how commercial" the Jeffersonians were is one that historians have explored with great interest and insight, although it is not necessarily central to this particular inquiry. See in particular, Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, and Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), and John R. Nelson, Jr., *Liberty and Property: Political Economy and Policymaking in the New Nation, 1789-1812* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). For a summary of the literature on political economy in the Jefferson period, see John Ashworth, "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?" *Journal of American Studies* (Vol. 18, No. 3: Dec., 1984) pp. 425-435.

15 McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 84; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1979), 161.

16 Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, 41.

industry, many feared that a love of private gain would trump devotion to public good, which would ruin the republic. There was "an honorable spirit of commercial enterprise" and then there was "avaricious speculation" that went beyond industry and diligence and instead rewarded risky, un-republican economic activity. Luxury, selfishness, and elitism threatened the republican experiment, infecting the body politic like a deadly disease. Many commentators focused their fear and indignation on the neglect of agriculture for speculation and commerce, economic activities that elevated men above their peers while circumventing the honest labor that was the hallmark of republicanism. In 1806, John Randolph of Virginia complained, "No, sir, if this great agricultural nation is to be governed by Salem and Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and Baltimore and Norfolk, and Charleston, let gentlemen come out and say something."[17] Even some who perceived the potential benefits of commerce, especially where it concerned exports, wished it to remain a "handmaid" to a predominantly agricultural economy.[18]

In New England, however, commerce was a way of life. Maritime trade from the eastern seaports constituted a fundamental economic fact, as well as a point of important cultural and regional identification. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire were "the eastern states" or often "the commercial states" to contemporaries. Their ancestors had come to the Massachusetts Bay colony from societies where markets of produce and livestock had created communities of buyers and sellers.[19] In the decade before the Revolutionary War,

17 : Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic: 1776-1789* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1969), 413-25; McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 172-73.

18 : Abigail Adams to Louisa Adams, April 4, 1808 in Adams family papers, MHS; *The Hampshire Gazette*, March 13, 1808 (the Federalist paper criticizes this interpretation of commerce).

19 : Winifred B. Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 80.

about three-quarters of New England's shipping tonnage was owned by native colonial inhabitants, rather than British merchants, compared to just over a third in the middle states, and less than 15% in the Carolinas and Georgia.[20] As a result, when the United States became independent, New England held an enormous advantage in the national shipping industry. Ever the conservative, John Adams feared for the corruption of Boston even as the Revolution began; he lamented in 1776 that "even the Farmers and Tradesmen… [are] addicted to commerce."[21] In rocky and severe New England, the ocean proved itself a far better friend than the soil, and all classes of people knew it.

However, commerce had created strife between New England and the rest of the country, especially the south, since the United States had declared its independence. Emancipation from Britain brought to light the stark discrepancy in the sectional balance of power in commercial matters. New Englanders wanted to keep the nation's economic focus on the Atlantic; southerners looked westward in hopes of ensuring their own sectional power. New western states, they believed, would increase the south's economic sectional influence against New England's commercial hegemony. Merchants in the middle states, meanwhile, possessed their own commercial interests, and they wished to see New England's power curbed to promote their own shipping. Hence, the other major regions of the country generally worked against New England's commercial interests, not with them. During and after the Revolutionary War, moreover, attempts in Congress to procure a commercial treaty with Great Britain created

20 Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1835), 345. Some of this advantage is likely related to New England's extensive fisheries.

21 John Adams to Mercy Warren, April 16, 1776, in McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 71.

considerable ire between New England and the South. The debate over commercial reform consumed the 1780s, and never found a satisfactory resolution in Congress.[22]

New England's commercial prosperity expanded dramatically when hostilities broke out between Britain and France at the turn of the century. The Napoleonic Wars made neutral trade fantastically lucrative. During the presidencies of Adams and Jefferson, American merchants acquired tidy fortunes shipping goods from Atlantic colonies back to Europe under the protection of their neutral flag. This carrying trade provided the perfect quick boost to New England's economy, employing men in all sectors of the shipping industry and increasing wealth in the seaports exponentially.[23] During the Napoleonic Wars, the United States made a killing in all exports, especially those of foreign origin. In 1804, the value of domestic exports, was 47 percent higher than exports of foreign origin, but by 1807, domestic exports' value had increased only 43 percent, while that of foreign exports had risen almost 740 percent.[24] The European belligerents took note of the American carrying trade with futile irritation. In Britain, the courts' 1806 decision in the case of the ship *Essex* tried to impede the American carrying trade, but the ruling's bark quickly proved worse than its bite.[25]

As salutary as the carrying trade was for New England's ports, it did not command universal support in the United States. Rather, it multiplied many of the old fears about

---

22 Davis, *Sectionalism in American Politics*, 13-29; 94-108.

23 Benjamin W. Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans: The Merchants of Newburyport, 1764-1815* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 132-33; Morison, *Maritime History of Massachusetts*, 161.

24 Pitkin, *Statistical View*, 370-71.

25 Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 79-82; Anna C. Clauder, *American Commerce As Affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1793-1812* (Augustus M. Kelley: Clifton, 1972), 132; Morison, *Maritime History of Massachusetts*, 184-85.

commerce. In some quarters, the neutral carrying trade provoked suspicion because it did not transport anything grown or manufactured in the United States, and thus excluded cities and states without a substantial shipping industry. Southerners, by and large, disliked commerce that did not export their farming produce. And they worried that northern merchants might demand a bigger navy for protection, something many Jeffersonians opposed. Many Americans denied the need for a response to the *Essex* decision; one opponent from New York said the carrying trade was not a "fair, honest, and useful trade." Others feared that it drew attention away from agriculture for short-term wartime profits that would end when Europe made peace. But to New England Republicans like Jacob Crowninshield, a Salem merchant and Congressman, the carrying trade constituted a necessary part of the American economy. For Crowninshield and his primarily northeastern allies, the United States belonged to a complex Atlantic system, in which New England served as a critical focal point.[26]

Whatever ideological suspicions or prejudices some Americans held against commerce, the Napoleonic Wars undeniably brought enormous prosperity to Americans involved in Atlantic trade, whether they were carrying or not. All onlookers recognized how beneficial war had been to the American shipping industry. Historians debate whether or not the carrying trade affected the economy of the country as a whole, and many doubt its effects on long-term trends in the American economy. Regardless, New Englanders in the early republic clearly perceived its benefits. In coastal Newburyport, Massachusetts, the average adult male's monetary worth tripled between 1793 and 1807. Merchants, blacksmiths, rope makers, and laborers all saw the

26 Clauder, *American Commerce*, 88-89; McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 174; 212-15; Brian Schoen, "Calculating the Price of Union: Republican Economic Nationalism and the Origins of Southern Sectionalism, 1790-1828" in the *Journal of the Early Republic,* Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), 184-85.

benefits of maritime trade. Artisans began dabbling in mercantile ventures. The rising prosperity also increased the franchise; in 1807, over 90 per cent of adult men met the property requirements to vote in that town.[27] American merchants traded with Europe, Africa, and Asia, and whatever limitations the European belligerents placed on their vessels and seamen, their fortunes continued inexorably to rise. In December 1807, New England seemed to be in the midst of a boom that looked likely to keep growing.[28]

When the Embargo Act passed Congress on December 22, 1807, it did so quickly and with little debate, and did not mention what European conditions would be necessary for repeal. Merchants fretted at this omission. International trade was run along very strict rules and disrupting it was dangerous for men who had already signed contracts abroad, or even paid ahead of time.[29] The fact that no one knew how long the embargo would last worried them as well. Merchants feared that their "commerce, if long diverted from, may never return to its accustomed channels."[30] Plymouth merchant Samuel Bromfield wrote to his clients in Amsterdam, "All I can say is, that my intention *today* is to proceed to Holland when ready – what my intentions may be *tomorrow* God only knows." Amid the onslaught of government decrees from both sides of the Atlantic, he could not promise his clients arrangements for insurance.[31] The Embargo Act caused an immediate, frantic flurry of activity, as the last few

27 : Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 132-33.

28 : Pitkin, *Statistical View*; John Lambert, *Travels Through Canada and the United States of North America in 1806, 1807, & 1808* (Cradock and Joy: London, 1814), 74.

29 : Christopher Clarke, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1990), 32.

30 : *To the Inhabitants of Salem* (Salem, Mass.: October 26, 1808), n.p.

31 : Samuel Bromfield to Owners of the Meridian, December 26, 1807, Bromfield and Clarke papers, MHS.

ships embarked. “We can venture to say,” the *Boston Democrat* sneered, “that if the enemy were actually arrived, the Boston Merchants would not work so hard, as they did last Sunday in prospect of the Embargo.”[32] Once the last ships were off and January set in, a month when most ships sat idle anyway, the wait for a response began.

The embargo hit the seaport towns first, and hardest. Sailors were thrown out of work; ships were dragged up into harbors and rivers and lay useless. It was here, where the benefits of neutral trade had been so clear, that the ill effects of the embargo became the most obvious. On January 7, a hundred newly unemployed sailors paraded through the streets of Boston in protest. Carrying an American flag at half-mast and marching to martial music, they made their way to the home of Republican Governor James Sullivan, who addressed them from his balcony. The mob left, but with neither the bread nor the employment they had been demanding.[33] New Englanders on the coasts had become used to seeing ships constantly on the waters, symbolic of their growing prosperity. Now these same ships were pulled up into harbors and small rivers to be kept safe from the weather, decaying while they waited for trade to resume. The burgeoning seaports were abruptly struck down, as the embargo halted every industry that had flourished in the previous ten years. Those observing the situation in January and February believed that the policy could not possibly last for very much longer.[34]

Nevertheless, the embargo dragged on, and conditions worsened. Throughout the summer, and especially as the New England winter approached, the embargo sucked the life out

32 : *The Boston Democrat*, January 2 1808; Clauder, *American* Commerce, 135.

33 : John Adams to John Quincy Adams, January 8, 1808 in Adams papers (microfilm), MHS; Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, 259-60.

34 : John Quincy Adams to John Adams, 27 December 1807; JQA to James Sullivan, 10 January 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

of America's seaports. In Salem, soup kitchens fed over 1,200 people every day by the turn of 1809, reducing a fifth of the town to near-beggary. Newburyport, too, had to establish two soup kitchens of its own—a far cry from the prosperity of just a year before.[35] In Boston, the charity subscription list, in asking for donations, explicitly named "the total suspension of Commerce" as increasing the need for poor relief.[36] An English traveler named John Lambert observed the misery in the northeast. An end to maritime commerce, he observed, "had considerable effect upon the amusements of the people, and rendered [New York] gloomy and melancholy." At first the sailors had "amused themselves with fiddling, dancing, and carousing with their girls," but only "while their money lasted." Lambert could not understand why the people of the commercial towns, especially New York and Boston, had thus far "acquiesced… to the destruction of their own property." He was sure that if the embargo lasted much longer, American commerce would be permanently doomed.[37]

During his travels, Lambert also took note of "the spirit of rivalry, jealousy, and opposition, which *certainly* exists between the southern planters and northern merchants in the United States."[38] While the coastal hubs of New England were in reality intimately connected to the cotton and tobacco planters of Virginia and the Carolinas, inhabitants of those seaport cities viewed the embargo with increasing suspicion. In November, one Massachusetts merchant grumbled, "the Virginians are generally determined to support the present embarrassment, and I

35 Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 171; Labaree, *Partisans and Patriots*, 154.

36 Boston Charity Subscription List, December 15 1808, MHS.

37 Lambert, *Travels Through the United States and Canada*, 103; 294.

38 *Ibid.*, 324.

have my doubts as to the Removal of the Embargo."[39] Even as early as April, Thomas Adams wrote to his brother John Quincy to warn him that the northern suspicion of an ideological hostility to commerce "existing in the dispositions of the South, obtains fresh credit in the North from the first imposition and long duration of the Embargo."[40] By 1807, the divergence that Lambert described had become a part of American regional identity, and New Englanders believed, whether or not their convictions were true, that their suffering far outstripped that of the southern states, whose representatives had imposed their misery. The Virginians, they increasingly believed, were the ones supporting the offensive policy.

Moreover, hardship did not stay in Boston, Salem, and Newburyport. The rocky New England soil in the northern farms of Maine and New Hampshire barely provided subsistence. As a result, many farmers near seaports relied on their ability to participate in the commercial market economy by collecting pelts, shingles, or lumber in the winter, when food was scarce. Lumber, of course, was of particular importance to the shipping industry—another means by which the maritime boom extended inward. In unforgiving inland Maine, the settlers did not specialize in a marketable crop, well aware of how volatile the climate could be. But there especially, subsistence agriculture provided a meager life. The Maine settlers needed imported goods, but they lacked cash. By acquiring and selling commodities like furs and lumber, they were able to accumulate sufficient specie to buy goods and pay their debts to their coastal creditors.[41] The embargo brought the agricultural areas surrounding the seaports to a grinding

39 Bailey Chase to Edmund Kimball, November 7 1808, in Edmund Kimball papers, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass. [PEM].

40 Thomas Adams to JQA, April 10, 1808 in Adams papers, MHS.

41 Alan Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 76-8.

halt. Merchants who had previously paid cash for domestic produce no longer had any need for pelts or lumber. Now, coastal and country creditors called in their loans.[42] Commentators worried the embargo would "fill our jails with prisoners for debt."[43]

The embargo's blow to the eastern economies quickly spread north and westward, into the small farming communities of western Massachusetts and southern Vermont. The Connecticut valley lacked one particular staple export, but its farmers did export their meager surpluses via distant connections. As a result, they were able to pay for imported luxury goods, such as tea, coffee, and sugar.[44] Under the embargo, those long connections dried up. Without maritime trade, and particularly once the government prohibited the overland trade with Canada as well, the whole New England agricultural economy began to suffer. Western farmers failed to move their surpluses, which began rotting in its storehouses, and imported goods became scarce. Western debtors short of specie felt the same sting as their eastern brethren when the time came to pay their creditors. As prices for imported goods rose, moreover, prices for produce dropped rapidly. Butter, mutton, and potatoes lost nearly a quarter of their pre-embargo value; in New Hampshire, the price of lumber fell a precipitous 74 percent. When farmers attempted to bring their goods to market in towns or cities, they either found no buyers at all or were forced to dispose of it at a fraction of the former price.[45]

---

42 Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 153; Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation*, 893-94.

43 A Citizen, *An Address to the Citizens of New Hampshire: Upon a Subject* (New Hampshire, 1808), 3.

44 Clarke, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 28-29.

45 James Frankel, "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain" in *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (Jun., 1982), 306; Lambert, *Travels Through the United States and Canada*, 294; Turner, *The Ninth State*, 238.

Many from inland areas pleaded for relief from their government. A town meeting in Vermont petitioned Congress for help, complaining that their produce, "principally of a perishable nature, is prevented from going to a profitable and ready market" by the embargo.[46] In Amherst, Massachusetts, the sentiment was the same; a group of men there wrote a letter to Jefferson directly, perhaps hoping the plight of farmers would sway him. They assured the President that "the calamity is still spreading further and the interior has already begun to feel severely the affects of the Embargo" as "all our surplus produce is now perishing on our hands."[47] The selectmen of Northampton sent Congress a memorial in March: "bankruptcies are continually occurring in our great towns," they warned, "which spread their effects and produce bankruptcies in the country." This in turn proved disastrous for "almost every citizen." A farmer could not move his surplus, petitioners insisted, nor "realize his dues," and all his hopes for "an honorable and needful reward for the toils of the last season" fell to ruin under the embargo.[48] Rotting produce, unpaid debts, and miserable farmers became the predominant images of inland, agricultural New England as the embargo dragged on through 1808.

Onlookers, especially politicians, took note of how fast and far the embargo's ill effects had spread, and it worried them. Many were particularly perturbed by the harm done to farmers; doctrinaire Republicans may have hoped that agrarians, Jefferson's so-called "chosen people," would not be badly hurt by a stoppage of maritime commerce. Thomas Adams worried that the embargo's effects were so obvious "among the farmers," when he had expected the difficulty to

46 : Citizens of Vermont, *To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States* (Vermont, 1808), 1.

47 : Citizens of Amherst to Thomas Jefferson, August 30, 1808, in Miscellaneous Manuscripts, MHS.

48 : *Boston Gazette*, March 14, 1808, in Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 184.

be confined to the seaports.[49] He also informed his brother than his tenants had asked for lower rates on their rent, "since times and prospects are dull and no market for produce" remained. "I suppose we must cloath ourselves with the mantle of patriotism," he admitted, "and submit with a good face."[50] In Pennsylvania, Benjamin Rush said much the same thing about the western part of the state, observing to John Adams that the embargo was "much less felt by our citizens [in Philadelphia] than by the country part of the state."[51] The attention given to agrarian discontent was likely disproportionate to the actual hardship endured, especially compared to towns like Salem and Newburyport. Nevertheless, the embargo did not only harm the east, and citizens in both coastal and interior towns recognized their common suffering.

Jefferson gave Albert Gallatin, his Secretary of the Treasury, the responsibility of devising an enforcement policy, although Gallatin had been uncomfortable with the idea of an embargo from the beginning. Like Madison, Gallatin was fully convinced of the necessity of commerce to the United States, especially as it concerned the affairs of the public treasury. The Republican commitment to reducing the federal debt relied heavily on customs receipts, rather than hated internal taxes; as a result, the burgeoning foreign trade had become a fundamental part of upholding Republicanism. Between 1805 and 1807, the federal government had collected almost $10.5m from Massachusetts alone in customs duties.[52] Gallatin warned Jefferson that while a short embargo might be salutary, and "less objectionable" to Congress, the government

49 : Thomas Adams to JQA, April 10, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

50 : Thomas Adams to JQA, March 14, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

51 : Benjamin Rush to John Adams, September 22, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

52 : Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 87; Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 50-51; Burt, *United States, Great Britain, and British North America*, 277; Lambert, *Travels Through the United States and Canada*, 365; Pitkin, *Statistical View*, 309.

should leave itself some room to alter its course "without appearing to retract" from the policy. In particular, Gallatin doubted that the embargo would serve any use as a coercive policy on England or benefit the United States at all in negotiations with her ambassador. The hope that the embargo might have this effect Gallatin thought "entirely groundless."[53]

As the year 1808 progressed, the embargo seemed to have no effect whatsoever on either Great Britain or France. This fact became increasingly obvious to all.[54] Lambert observed that even after three months, the "salutary check which Congress imagined [the embargo] would have upon the conduct of the belligerent powers was extremely doubtful."[55] In July Nathaniel Ames tried to be optimistic, noting that English mechanics were protesting in the streets, put out of work by the embargo.[56] But by the end of the year, the evidence was against him. Maine Congressman Orchard Cook wrote to John Quincy Adams that all his information indicated "that the Embargo has not coerced in hardly any degree." Indeed, Cook believed the English ambassador openly ridiculed the measure. As much as he might "wish to God it were otherwise," Cook had to admit the embargo "utterly impotent."[57] The hard truth was that America could not starve Britain. Napoleon allowed huge grain exports from the continent; the United States needed

53 Gallatin to Jefferson, December 18, 1807, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 368.

54 At least one historian has argued that Great Britain did feel the effects, but their less democratic government did not respond to the anger of factory workers now out of work: Frankel, "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain," *The Journal of Economic History*.

55 Lambert, *Travels Through the United States and Canada*, 294.

56 Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 227.

57 Orchard Cook to JQA, December 4, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

to dispose of grain more than Britain needed to import it. And despite the protests of British mechanics, the same was more or less true of cotton.[58]

Some feared that, despite the lack of any discernible effect on the European belligerents, the embargo would never be lifted. Silence from the administration helped fuel this belief. Most had expected it to be short to begin with; a sixty-day embargo, as a measure immediately before a declaration of war, was legitimate. John Quincy Adams claimed he had given his support to this kind of embargo when voting for the policy.[59] He agreed with the president that American ships were in too much danger on the Atlantic, but he felt that arming merchant vessels and "authorizing them to resist the decrees" of Europe would be better than a long embargo.[60] However, after the initial law had passed, the White House remained silent. Massachusetts Governor James Sullivan wrote to John Quincy Adams that the administration faced no danger from its own arguments, but its silence threatened the whole policy. "We are in more danger from our friends than from our enemies," he lamented.[61] In February, Louisa Adams told her husband that Federalist Representative Josiah Quincy had claimed "that the Embargo would not be removed *at all*."[62] International trade relied on constancy, and the longer the president kept American ships at home, the surer a total annihilation of commerce seemed.

Congressmen seem to have been equally ignorant about the precise purpose for laying the embargo, and thus when it might satisfactorily be taken off. Federalists were especially irate.

58 : Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 24-27.

59 : JQA to James Sullivan, January 10, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

60 : JQA to John Adams, December 27, 1807, in Adams papers, MHS.

61 : James Sullivan to JQA, January 25, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

62 : Louisa Adams to JQA, February 26, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

Barent Gardenier of New York raged, "Congress is completely in the dark. We can obtain no information from the cabinet, why or wherefore we act; or for what motive we are about to commit a commercial suicide."[63] But the opposition partisans were not alone. Joseph Story wrote home from Washington in February, "The embargo is more and more a favorite measure here, and its object is *not temporary*; a complete non-intercourse seems to be considered as a permanent measure of retaliation upon the European powers." Story was aghast at the prospect that Congress might find embargoes of a year or two years permissible. "Is this the impression in New England?" he asked a friend rhetorically. "Are our merchants prepared to give up all commerce?" If the commercial cities did not protest, he warned, Congress would end its session without limiting the embargo.[64] And indeed, without instructions from the White House, the tenth Congress did not discuss repeal. By December, some Republicans were convinced the administration wanted permanent embargo.[65]

The Embargo Act also proved a nightmare to enforce. As soon as it passed, the Treasury Secretary had questions for the president about what was to be permitted and what not, and what the punishments for violations would be. Dozens of merchants had already paid or been paid for goods to be transported; hundreds of ships had already left their ports, their return dates uncertain. How much time should be allowed to pass before a real crackdown became necessary? And would trade between the states be legal?[66] The first legislation to even attempt to enforce the embargo was not enacted until March, and opposition to the policy began to spread well before

63 : Lambert, *Travels Through the United States*, 425-26.

64 : Story to William Fettyplace, February 28, 1808, in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 165-66.

65 : Ezekiel Bacon to JQA, January 9, 1809, in Adams papers, MHS.

66 : Albert Gallatin to Thomas Jefferson, March 15, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 377-79.

then. Once the administration had committed itself to stopping all American trade, the project consumed the federal government and its resources. Enforcement involved customs officials, state militia, and even the national army and navy. Historians have noted the irony of Jefferson, who had protested so loudly against Federalists' excessive federal power in the 1790s, now using the federal military to enforce unpopular legislation.[67] Meanwhile, decades after learning to evade Britain's restrictions on their commerce, Americans remained adroit smugglers. The embargo did, ultimately, keep most goods within American borders, but only with an enormous exertion from Jefferson's administration.[68]

The commercial states were trouble from the start. In particular, Massachusetts Governor James Sullivan, despite being a loyal Republican and an adamant supporter of Jefferson and his government, liberally distributed permits for interstate trade in his state. Many New Englanders' daily bread did rely on interstate trade, but many merchants also imported substantial amounts of grain, along with other domestic produce, in order to export it. So while Gallatin had to allow some flour imports into New England so that all its citizens could eat, he feared that Sullivan had allowed too many. Gallatin was sure the imports were intended for illegal exportation. Sullivan stood his ground, claiming that the state's urban residents consumed it all. But Gallatin believed that Sullivan simply "dares not refuse flour certificates" to his constituents, especially merchants in Boston and Salem.[69] In July, Gallatin told Jefferson that Sullivan had requested certificates for

67 Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 1978), 280; Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1969), 177-78;

68 Frankel, "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain," 294-301.

69 Paul Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 194; Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 80-85; Gallatin to Jefferson, May 28, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 393.

nearly 50,000 barrels of flour, 100,000 bushels of corn, and 2000 bushels of rye. New Hampshire's Republican Governor John Langdon had asked for a fraction of that, and no other governors had requested any licenses for grain imports at all.[70]

Enforcement troubles increased over the summer. Violations occurred up and down the east coast, but Gallatin believed that "the danger is much greater from New York northwardly, principally from Massachusetts," than from the middle states or North Carolina.[71] Boston, Portsmouth, New Bedford, Providence, and Cape Cod constantly suffered fines and penalties for attempting to evade the embargo. The Maine district may have been the worst, despite the recent and rapid rise of the Jeffersonians there. Due to Maine's temptingly short distance to the Canadian ports of Halifax and St. John, frequent violations occurred in Portland, Bath, Penobscot, and Saco, while its many tiny rivers allowed for easy transit of produce from the interior to the ports.[72] Another stringent enforcement act passed Congress on April 25, 1808. This supplementary act prohibited all maritime trade, including between states, placed heavy fines on violators, and allowed the government to search any vessel based only on suspicion.[73] While New Englanders likely did evade the laws very frequently, the concentration of penalties in the northeast suggests the federal government was also watching the region more closely than other states that had protested less during the beginning of the year.

---

70 Gallatin to Jefferson, July 15, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 394.

71 Gallatin to Jefferson, July 29, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 396.

72 Gallatin, "Fines, penalties, and forfeitures, for violations of the embargo and non-intercourse laws, and the expenses of prosecutions. Communicated to the House of Representatives, March 2, 1811" (Washington: A. and G. Way Printers, 1811).

73 Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 50-53.

Preventing trade with British Canada and the Maritimes became a particularly troublesome piece of embargo enforcement, especially the overland trade. Congress had passed a supplementary embargo act, commonly known as the "land embargo," in March, though the news of it did not reach New Hampshire and Vermont for another month. The act prohibited the exportation of goods to Canada and Florida. On the northern border, opposition to the maritime embargo had been muted. But the land embargo was different. Within a month, Vermonters were racing officials' ships on Missisquoi Bay and bringing suspiciously enormous loads of luxury goods into border towns. When the winter came, they abandoned ships for sleds; in January 1809, the *Quebec Gazette* estimated some seven hundred sleighs were traversing the road between Middlebury and Montreal. With maritime trade shut off, the necessity of exporting produce overland became all the more important to New England farmers, and the overland trade with Canada assumed a new importance to Americans. Smugglers carried over £93,000 worth of produce out of the Champlain Valley in 1808, a 70 percent increase over 1807.[74]

In July, the difficulties on the northern border came to a head. Violence broke out at Lake Champlain in Vermont; smugglers attempting to take a raft of goods across the border into Canada fired on the militiamen attempting to stop them. At least a dozen men were wounded, possibly even one killed, and the smugglers' Canadian help managed to take control of the raft and escape. The Washington *National Intelligencer* called it a "disgraceful potash and lumber rebellion." It was the first shooting incident that resulted from the embargo, but it would not be the last.[75] To Gallatin, the Champlain incident proved without a doubt that the government had

74 H. N. Muller, "Smuggling into Canada: How the Champlain Valley Defied Jefferson's Embargo" in *Vermont History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter, 1970); A.L. Burt, *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 260-61.

75 Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 115-16.

"not been properly supported by the people." With the waters as low as they were, however, and "considering the temper" on the Canadian border, he felt that the best solution was "a company of regulars and two armed gunboats" to patrol the Missisquoi Bay.[76] The plan was ineffective; rafts and small ships bound for Canada continued to evade capture. Watching and protecting the border became nothing more than a constant source of frustration to the army officials sent there to do so. Nothing seemed effective in enforcing the land embargo once New Englanders had decided to ignore and evade federal laws.

Meanwhile, violence increased in the northeast. The late summer saw constant trouble on Massachusetts' north shore. These tiny and wholly commercial seaports were sinking under the weight of embargo. The collector in Gloucester pleaded for help from the administration, unable to suppress the town's "forcible opposition" to the embargo. Nearby Newburyport caused an even greater uproar. A town mob convened on the wharf and physically prevented the customs officers from stopping a fully loaded vessel about to leave the harbor.[77] In the fall, a crowd of women in Augusta, Maine, marched on the town jail and freed a handful of embargo violators.[78] Another skirmish took place on the northern Vermont border, in which one American soldier was killed, and the citizens of Exeter, New Hampshire, burned the president in effigy.[79] By the winter, some in New England had ceased to try to hide smuggling. One ship left Bath, Maine, in January 1809; when a revenue cutter fired on her, the *Mary Jane* simply fired back at it and continued on

76 Gallatin to Jefferson, May 28 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 393.

77 Gallatin to Jefferson, August 17 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 406.

78 Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 95.

79 Turner, *The Ninth State*, 247.

her way.[80] "What I had foreseen has taken place," Gallatin mourned in December.[81] As he had warned Madison a few months earlier, the American government had, in its efforts to enforce the embargo, only put its own weakness on display.[82] And in doing so, it had undermined its own legitimacy in the New England states.

The cycle of violations and penalties brought embargo enforcement increasingly to bear on New England. Gallatin believed those states were the last quarter of resistance, and directed every patrolling ship to New England waters.[83] "The opposition continues in Massachusetts," he told Jefferson in September. "In every other quarter the law is now carried into effect with as few evasions as could be expected."[84] Two weeks later he told the president apologetically that Sullivan's constant requests for flour certificates were still an issue; the Secretary was sure the flour was intended for export, and formed the basis for that state's violations.[85] The response from Washington began to seem punitive. Jefferson had stated in the spring that the embargo should not deprive any Americans of a meal, but vowed to stop interstate trade if it risked defeating the policy.[86] In November, he wrote irately to Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Levi Lincoln that Nantucket was "so deeply concerned in smuggling, that if it wants [for food], it is

80 The *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), August 17 1808; The *Evening Post* (Baltimore), January 14 1809, both in Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 116.

81 Gallatin to Joseph Nicholas, December 29 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 449.

82 "I had rather encounter war itself than to display our impotence to enforce laws." Albert Gallatin to James Madison, September 9, 1808, in Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 161.

83 Gallatin to Jefferson, August 9, 1808 in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 406.

84 Gallatin to Jefferson, September 2, 1808 in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 414.

85 Gallatin to Jefferson, September 16, 1808 in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 418.

86 Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 79.

because it has illegally sent away what it ought to have retained for its own consumption." Ultimately, however, the federal government did not cut off the island's imports.[87]

The more abusive the administration became toward New England, however, the more violations occurred, and the less its citizens supported either the policies or the representatives of the federal government. Local juries increasingly did not find embargo violators guilty, while federal district court judges often did. Although a federal court had found the embargo constitutional, in a much-publicized case with a Federalist judge, independent juries regularly decided in favor of violators. New England citizens simply refused to acknowledge the embargo laws.[88] "As to judiciary redress," Gallatin admitted to Jefferson in July, "there is very little hope." A few days earlier, he said, "a Republican jury" had declined to convict the Canadians involved in smuggling on Lake Champlain.[89] Customs officials endured harassment for enforcing the law too vigorously, both on the coast and on the Canadian border.[90] Eventually many New Englanders ceased to take the law seriously. In February 1810, one Providence merchant wrote jokingly to a friend that the unprecedented amount of ice in the harbor "has put a stop to Navigation, ten times more effectually than even the 'Embargo' itself."[91]

At every border, New Englanders attempted to get around trade restrictions. The administration's failure to enforce the laws, especially on the Canadian border, convinced New

87 Jefferson to Levi Lincoln, November 13, 1808, in Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties*, 107.

88 Douglas Lamar Jones, "'The Caprice of Juries': The Enforcement of the Jefferson Embargo in Massachusetts," *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Oct., 1980), pp. 307-330.

89 Gallatin to Jefferson, July 29 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 396-97.

90 Jones, "Caprice of Juries," 314; Lambert, *Travels Through the United States and Canada*, 528.

91 Lawton to Northey, February 1810, in Northey family papers, PEM.

Englanders that they had no reason to obey. Furthermore, New Englanders also came to reject the legitimacy of the laws themselves, refusing to submit to the destruction of their economy. As a result, enforcement won the administration no new friends in New England. Rather, Sullivan's warning to the president in the early spring that sustaining a long embargo would severely damage Republicanism and "stimulate new plots of disunion" proved prophetic by the end of the summer of 1808.[92] By shocking the entire northeastern economy and undermining New Englanders' respect for the national government, the embargo galvanized political opposition. In particular, it provided fertile ground for the revitalization of the Federalist party, and in New England Federalists took full advantage of that opportunity. In halting commerce and pitting the full force of the federal government against New Englanders, Jefferson's administration seemed to have attacked the economic and social foundations of the northeast. In response to this assault, the opposition could now rise to the region's defense.

92 Goodman, *Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 194.

II. The Majesty of the People: Federalists Resurgent

"How, then, are we to be saved? The majesty of the people is to be felt by their motions; it is to be heard in their voice; it is to be understood in their elections."
- *Boston Gazette*, August 1, 1808

When Thomas Jefferson won the presidency in 1800, an election he later deemed a "revolution," many believed that he and his Republican party had banished the specter of aristocratic, monarchic Federalism from the United States forever. And although that election was famously close, when Jefferson won reelection in 1804 with a majority that even included Massachusetts, national Federalism appeared defunct.[93] But Republicans' new hold in New England was more tenuous than it seemed, and Federalists, struggling to find their footing, needed only a solid piece of ground to stand on. They found it in 1808, when Jefferson unleashed his embargo on New Englanders and their Republican representatives. In addition to upsetting the New England economy, the embargo disrupted its political trend as well, stoking the fires of partisanship that had begun, albeit slowly, to fade since Jefferson's election. What had initially been a debate over commercial policy quickly became a bruising partisan battle between Republicans and Federalists. The embargo rescued the dying party, giving it an opportunity to halt, and even begin to turn back, the tide of Republicanism sweeping the region.

Because many New Englanders believed themselves to be the particular targets of Jefferson's embargo, a Federalist vote meant both a vote against the "embargo party" and support

93 On post-1800 Federalists: David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965); Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); James M. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970). The groundswell of the Jeffersonians in New England, often in response to Federalist hegemony, has been documented largely on a state-by-state basis: Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*; Turner, *The Ninth State*; and Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors*.

for the protection of New England's commercial interests. After 1804, Federalists had realized that if they did not actively court votes they would continue to lose to the Republicans.[94] So whatever ideologies the party had promoted in the 1790s, in 1808 the embargo was its only issue. Federalist politicians and party newspapers began to insist that Jefferson, as a Virginian, hated commerce and, accordingly, hated New England. Federalists quickly found support in a growing sectionalist defense of commerce, and used that sentiment against Republicans. But instead of adhering to their old shibboleths of centralized government, Federalists now began to turn into something new, and dangerous to the young republic: a sectional party. Their biggest success was at the state level; only a few federal offices changed hands. But the noise they made getting to their success, in their efforts to drive Jefferson's Republicans out of New England, framed the national embargo fight not as one between candidates or parties, but regions. Federalists abetted the northeast's opposition, and quickly began to erect a partisan barrier in between New England and the rest of the United States.

The history of partisan politics in the early republic is well tread: Federalists ruled the 1790s under Washington, Adams, and, especially, Hamilton, until the ascension of the Jeffersonian Republicans in 1800, which precipitated the slow death of Federalism. Yet the Federalist party was not dead in 1800. The New England states had voted definitively for John Adams, their favorite son. The vicious partisanship of the 1790s did abate somewhat, but its heights before 1800 had been great. Partisans in single towns continued to have competing Fourth of July celebrations, symbolically fighting out their competing conceptions of America, and continued to wage vitriolic campaigns against one another in local elections. None of that

94 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention,* 244-46.

had changed by 1808. That year, prominent Federalist Fisher Ames died, and his brother Nathaniel, a staunch Republican, refused to attend his funeral. The Jeffersonian Revolution did not end all lingering affection for the Federalists in their old strongholds, and the Republicans' gains were by no means assured to be permanent. The United States certainly still endured the "unrelenting virulence of Party spirit," especially by the end of 1808.[95]

The national parties were not partisan monoliths. Different personalities, ideas, interests, and people competed within them. Congressman John Randolph consistently opposed his fellow Virginian Republicans Jefferson and Madison, largely out of personal dislike; Josiah Quincy and Timothy Pickering held conflicting views of Federalism, despite both hailing from Massachusetts. Both parties were essentially harmonious; in general, they could find "a concurrence in political action upon general subjects," as Joseph Story, a young but prominent Republican in the Massachusetts General Court, put it.[96] Sometimes partisans fought one another, even to the point of self-defeat. During the Congressional debates in 1806 over a proposed Non-Importation Act, in retaliation against Britain and France, the small Federalist minority in Congress remained silent. A two-month fight among the Republicans produced a toothless piece of legislation that satisfied no one. In that argument, the differing economic interests of the northeastern and southern states manifested themselves as divisions within the Republican party, ultimately defeating the commercial policy.[97] Nonetheless, the early national Republicans usually functioned as a cross-sectional coalition on national issues.

---

95 Ezekiel Bacon to JQA, November 9, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

96 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 128.

97 Schoen, "Calculating the Price of Union," 185-86; Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 109-11.

The parties drew from different sections, and the 1800 electoral map had a stark regional split. Yet the United States did not have sectional parties during Jefferson's first term. In 1804, Republicans made vast inroads in New England, while Federalists continued to hold onto many of their old southern constituencies. In the North, both parties appealed to different types of people. Although Federalism was popular with merchants, and the North Shore of Massachusetts had voted heavily Federalist in 1800, ship captains, seamen, and especially fishing men all tended to be Republican. In New Hampshire and Maine, Republicanism was steadily breaking the Federalist grip, while the farming towns of western Massachusetts remained firmly Federalist. Party affiliation did not correlate strongly to geography, occupation, or income across a broad spectrum. More often than not, especially if no external factor tipped the scales, partisan loyalty had its roots in certain persons or communities.[98] Even when the candidate changed, most towns, especially small ones, continued to vote the same way as they had in the previous election. And in some cases, towns would support a party because it was the opposite of a rival neighbor, even if the two were inherently very similar.[99]

The Federalist party did have a strong foothold in New England; as its influence waned elsewhere, it clung to life there. Affection for John Adams partially explained this, but the presence of Federalists in Congregational churches, a homogenous population, a lingering spirit of deference, and, of course, the merchant interest, all helped keep Federalism alive in New England. Jefferson himself saw "the conversion of New England" as his party's most important

98 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 168-215; Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism*, 201-26; Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 149-70.

99 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 176. This may partially explain the extreme political divergence of Federalist Newburyport and Republican Marblehead.

task; if they failed in this, Jefferson worried the new government would be a very shaky one.[100] Against encroaching Republicanism, seemingly stemming from Virginia, Federalism began to sequester itself in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The party proved a good home for New England sectionalists, even at their most extreme.[101] Moreover, as national Federalism petered out, New England Federalism became correspondingly more important. There, partisans increasingly came to equate New England interests and their own, and saw their enemies both as Virginians and Republicans, and gradually ceased to distinguish between the two.[102] But even in the Northeast, the party's power continued to wane, as the commercial economy boomed and Republicanism developed in a new, northeastern form.

New England Republicans had to combat their opponents' historic hold on the region, so they developed certain characteristics that distinguished them from their southern colleagues. Among the most significant was their view toward commerce. Agrarianism had never been the only reason to oppose the Federalist administrations of the 1790s; indeed, most agrarians in New England remained Federalists longer than others. Small merchants in particular entered the Republican fold with enthusiasm, enticed by Jeffersonian liberalism, and looked on commerce much more favorably than southern members of their party.[103] While the Republicans did achieve a general "concurrence," suspicions remained. In his autobiography, Story wrote of the

---

100 Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 182.

101 In 1803-4, in response to the purchase of Louisiana and the prospect of westward, agrarian, expansion, Pickering led an abortive attempt at New England secession, but won little support. See Kevin M. Gannon, "Escaping 'Mr. Jefferson's Plan of Destruction': New England Federalists and the Idea of a Northern Confederacy, 1803-1804", *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 413-443.

102 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 100; Conforti, *Imagining New England,* 115-22.

103 Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors*, 215; McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 188; Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 46-47.

Jeffersonian period: "Nay, a Virginia republican of that day, was very different from a Massachusetts republican."[104] While many of Story's constituents maintained a lasting suspicion that the Republican party was fundamentally Virginian, many men from the seaports did align themselves and their economic interests with the Republican party, and used the party's rhetoric to sway their state's farmers.[105] In New England, Jeffersonian Republicanism worked best locally, especially in opposition to Federalist social hegemony.

By 1807, the Federalist party had begun to define itself by New England, but New England had not necessarily reciprocated. Parts Massachusetts continued to be Federalist bases, but Jeffersonians had made gains in the seaports and the inland areas in Maine. In 1806, New Hampshire had become a new Republican stronghold, and the Jeffersonians were popular in rural Vermont. As much as New England remained self-consciously distinct, by 1807 it had begun to follow the national trend toward the Jeffersonian Republicans. In the past, its politicians had seen their interests, especially in commerce and economy, opposed to southern ones, and fretted at their inability to win the middle states to their side.[106] But the Jeffersonian offensive had lessened those concerns, tentatively uniting formerly antagonistic sections under the Republican banner. The embargo reversed that trend. It stoked all the old political fears, reopened sectional hostility, and pushed both New England and the Federalist party away from the Jeffersonian Republicans and the American union. As many New Englanders rose to defend themselves from the Virginian embargo, Federalists made themselves their defenders.

---

104 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 128.

105 Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors*, 210-16.

106 Onuf, "Federalism, Republicanism, and the Origins of American Sectionalism," 24-5.

Both northern and southern Federalists realized that the embargo marked the party's best chance since 1800. From Maine to Georgia, they relied on the embargo as the main, if not single, plank of their platform, and tripled their electoral vote of 1804, doubling their numbers in the House of Representatives. The only rallying cry they used in every state campaign was that of protecting freedom of trade. During the summer, the party began to organize nationally again, for the first time since 1800. It began in Philadelphia, but soon found its leader in Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts, who initiated a new Committee of Correspondence.[107] As much as partisans might publicly "whine and rave" about the embargo, John Quincy Adams complained to Massachusetts Republican Ezekiel Bacon, in private they were exulting at its ill effects on the United States, as the country's misery had proved so salutary to their own electoral fortunes.[108] Having positioned their party in opposition to Jefferson and the Republicans, Federalists now found themselves on the potentially popular side of a national issue. Even before Congress had passed legislation to enforce the embargo, Federalists were railing against it in print.

Republicans declared at the outset that the embargo should be given a chance to work. John Quincy Adams chose this moment to switch his affiliation, voting for the embargo and infuriating his former Federalist colleagues. William Gray, an enormously wealthy Salem merchant, also lent his support. Along with state representative Joseph Story, Gray crusaded against resolutions from Salem's Federalists denouncing the policy. Story, for his part, gave a speech in the General Court in defense of the embargo in May. Governor Sullivan also vocalized

107 : Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 158; Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 84-85; 170.

108 : JQA to Ezekiel Bacon, November 18, 1808, in Adams (ed.), *Documents Relating to New England Federalism* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1877), 129-30.

his commitment to the policy, adhering to his party's line.[109] Most believed that without their support, the embargo would never get a chance to work.[110] Still, they and other New England Republicans were wary. None looked forward to supporting the president in his experiment. From the start, they tried to mediate the policy; the entire Massachusetts delegation supported Federalist Josiah Quincy's motion to ensure that nothing in the Act affect the business of fishing vessels. But the small bipartisan effort met defeat when Congressmen from the south and west struck down the measure.[111] For the first time, New England Republicans were now bound to a national policy that was proving deeply unpopular among their constituents.

As the new year dawned, New England Republicans became nervous. Lack of information, or at least reassurance, from Washington made them uneasy; they remained constantly aware that the Federalists were poised to make a comeback. Just a few days into 1808, Sullivan wrote to Adams in Washington, "Why does such a close silence in our members at Washington, in regard to the cause of the Embargo give our enemies such an advantage over us?" Under that silence, he warned, "The British party [Federalists] gain strength every day."[112] Story was in Washington in February, and wrote to a friend at home, "At Salem you are probably asking continually, what news from congress? When will the embargo be raised? What are the appearances as to war or peace?" But Story himself had no answers.[113] The longer the embargo

109 : Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism*, 46; Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 192; Nathaniel Ames, December 27, 1808 in Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 216; Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 154-59; Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story,* 137.

110 : Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 171.

111 : *Columbian Centinel*, January 2, 1808.

112 : James Sullivan to JQA, January 4, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

113 : Joseph Story to Stephen White, February 13, 1808, in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 160.

lasted, the more New England Republicans worried that holding the party line in support of the policy weakened them. As the year progressed, they increasingly feared that continuing support for the president only lent their Federalist opponents credibility.[114] Federalists drew a stark political line, and Republicans found themselves on the wrong side: with embargo, not commerce—and increasingly, with Virginia, not New England.

Nevertheless, Republicans had already overcome electoral odds in New England. Federalists had accused Jefferson of being anti-commerce before, and the years of 1800 to 1807 had definitively proved them wrong, and Republicans had made increasing electoral gains by linking the new prosperity with Republicanism. [115] Those gains were not reversed quite so easily by a few months of embargo. In April, Republicans held firm. "The great body of the people… believe in the necessity and utility of the measure," Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor Levi Lincoln assured Jefferson on April 1, just before the first state elections. "The choice between it and National dishonor is unhesitatingly made by citizens of the State." And indeed, the Republicans prevailed in that minor contest.[116] But the real test still waited. In a presidential election year, with most of New England's Congressmen up for reelection, the danger of a political tidal wave was real. Many Republicans in the region knew how shaky their gains had been in the past eight years, and dreaded the threat of a Federalist comeback. They knew their constituents might not be sufficiently fond of Jefferson to endure an embargo on his recommendation.

---

114 Goodman, *The Democratic Republicans of Massachusetts*, 193.

115 Turner, *The Ninth State*, 227-28.

116 Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 68.

As unhappiness spread, Federalists publicized the hardship to every voter within print range, in a concerted effort to bring together voters from the whole Northeast. Papers were always keen to emphasize that the embargo struck all classes in New England. Timothy Pickering, one of Massachusetts' Senators and among the most extreme of the northern Federalists, wrote a widely republished letter to Sullivan, in which he attacked the governor, the administration, and the embargo. "Are our thousands of ships and vessels to rot in our harbour?" Pickering demanded in newspapers across the region. "Are our fifty thousand seamen and shipmen to be deprived of employment, and with their families reduced to want and beggary? Are our hundreds of thousands of farmers to be compelled to suffer their millions in surplus to perish on their hands?"[117] The embargo's "shock soon extends to every class of society," a "Fellow Sufferer" explained, from the seaports to farmers to mechanics. As a result, "the value of land, of labour, and of every species of industry must sink." Federalists stated that they, not Republicans, understood New England agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce.[118] The misery that Jefferson had handed down, they promised, would soon consume the whole region.

Federalists recognized the source of New Englanders' anger right away, and did not hesitate to exploit it. They repeated over and over that Jefferson, like all southerners, was prejudiced against commerce. Southerners, and the ruling party they controlled, were anti-commerce from principle. They had been for twenty years or more; to compile every instance would take a book, Federalists assured New Englanders. Jefferson and Madison, whatever they had said in the past, had clearly made the annihilation of commerce their aim. Federalists quoted

117 *Greenfield Gazette*, March 21, 1808.

118 John Park ("A Fellow Sufferer"), *An Address to the Citizens of Massachusetts, on the Causes and Remedy of our National Distresses* (Boston: Repertory Office, 1808), 12.

Notes on the State of Virginia liberally; they became especially fond of the passage in which Jefferson had written that he would be happy to "abandon the ocean altogether" in favor of a nation of farmers.[119] In reality, of course, Jefferson and Madison had presided over an enormous boom period for New England shipping, largely by siding with northeastern interests against the southern members of their party and not interfering with the carrying trade. But Federalists were more than happy to credit the good times to the Federalist administrations of Washington and Adams, both of whom still commanded a great deal of respect in New England.

Federalists took issue with the administration's claim that they had acted in the interests of sailors and merchants, because Jefferson fundamentally did not understand such men. "Who will believe that Mr. Jefferson, other southern men, and the members of the interior," Pickering demanded, "some of whom never saw a ship or seaman, are anxiously concerned for [their] protection?" Impressment was far less contrary to their interests, he said, than the total annihilation of commerce.[120] The claim that American sailors found it necessary to expatriate themselves to the Royal Navy to find employment became increasingly popular. Some had hoped at the outset that the embargo, by halting American shipping, would convince British deserters to return to their national ships, thus eliminating one major point of contention between the two nations.[121] But the dissuasion from American ships may have worked too well; Federalist papers abounded with tales of American seamen making for Canada to find work. In a typical story, a sailor banished from the sea tried to make a living farming, but, unsuccessful, "he left his native

119 : *To the Electors of the Essex South District* (Mass.: 1808), 7; *Portland Gazette*, October 24, 1808.

120 : Pickering to Gardner, December 10 1807, in Gardner papers, MHS.

121 : JQA to James Sullivan, January 10 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

country, which has denied him sustenance, and steered for Montreal."[122] Even the normally heavy-handed Federalists did not have to state the irony explicitly.

But in their efforts to convince sailors, mechanics, and farmers to vote Federalist, partisans did make sure to highlight one key point. Jefferson was not against commerce, and by extension New England, by chance. Leisured planters like Jefferson had no use for commerce, certainly not in the way that hardy New Englanders did. "The people of [Virginia] have embarked very little in commerce, and consequently feel but little interest in its prosperity, or disposition to protect it," Senator James Hillhouse declared in a Connecticut newspaper.[123] The problem was not Jefferson's personal prejudices, but his origins. His loyal disciple Madison would be no better. As the presidential election approached, the Secretary of State became to the Federalist papers "the man who has invariably been the enemy of the New England States, and wishes the destruction of our commerce!" That Virginia was an "anti-commercial state" was a truism to Federalists; its politicians could not understand, let alone protect, the interests of New England.[124] All the inhabitants of Virginia, and its Republican party that ruled at Washington, wished for the obliteration of New England's commercial activity. While Federalists had suspected this for years, the embargo finally gave them convincing evidence.

By contrast, of course, Federalists were the "friends of commerce." As such, they were the friends of New England. In Salem, the Federalist paper dubbed the Republicans the "Embargo Ticket" and bestowed the title of "Commercial Ticket" on the Federalist candidates.[125]

122 : *Greenfield Gazette*, August 29, 1808.

123 : Reprinted in the *Repertory* (Boston), April 8, 1808.

124 : *Address to Citizens of New Hampshire*, 4.

125 : *Salem Gazette*, May 17, 1808.

To prove this, they turned to history, albeit somewhat doctored. Under the administrations of Washington and Adams, the party insisted, commerce had flourished and New England had been happy and rich. Even when Washington—never a Virginian to Federalists—had been forced to lay an embargo, it had been forewarned, very brief, and strictly limited.[126] But Jefferson's Republicans wished for them to turn away from the sea permanently and take up the spade instead, and had enacted policies attempting to force New England's sailors and merchants to do so. When Republicans tried to push back against this claim, by pointing out truthfully that it had been under Jefferson as well as Adams that the northern states had experienced such great commercial prosperity, the Federalists attacked them as liars.[127] In their minds, and their papers, the only party that could successfully protect northern commerce was theirs.

While truth was not necessarily on their side, as the year progressed, Federalists uncovered more and more proof that Jefferson and the Republicans intended to destroy commerce. In particular, they found ample evidence that the administration's argument that the embargo was intended to protect sailors and cargo was a lie. The prohibition on the interstate coasting trade was one such fact. "How can a prohibition to trade with our neighbors," Federalists challenged, "save us from war?"[128] Some states in New England did not actually produce enough wheat to eat, and relied on importing it from the middle and southern states.[129] As such, the prohibition appeared malicious. "Can you believe that [the embargo] was really laid

126 A Soldier of '77, *An Address to the Freemen of Vermont* (Vermont: 1808), 18-19. At the time, in 1794, Federalists had warmly supported Washington's embargo as wise and beneficial.

127 *To the electors of Essex South District*, 3.

128 *Address to Freemen of Vermont*, 14-15.

129 In particular, Connecticut and Rhode Island could not feed themselves. Gallatin to Jefferson, May 5 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 384.

to *save our ships and seamen from capture*?" one pamphleteer asked. "If you can you are deceived: the determination is to *destroy trade altogether*. If not, why such restrictions upon our coasting business? Is it not enough for Mr. Jefferson to deprive us of our foreign commerce?"[130] Of course, wheat imported from other states often soon found itself in illegal exports, and ships that supposedly left for a domestic port could easily go anywhere. But nevertheless the stoppage of the coasting trade appeared suspicious to many and further weakened Republicans.

The law against the overland trade with Canada provided Federalists with an even better opportunity to undermine Republicans' arguments for the embargo. A halt to maritime trade was one thing, because all Americans realized that the European powers preyed on American ships and sailors. But no such argument could be made for the land embargo. Thus the protection of sailors could not be the reason for the embargo; those who argued this "seem not to have quite accurate ideas of the amazing difference between a ship and a wagon," as one editorialist sneered.[131] This absurdity became a favorite of Federalist papers. "Are our ships and seamen endangered by a commerce carried on in waggons!" a Salem editorial exclaimed.[132] Incidents on the border provoked even greater outrage: "a most horrid, impolitic and unstatesman-like transaction!" a New Hampshire editorialist cried after the Champlain episode. "Citizen to be put in martial array against citizen—with guns and bayonets pointed at their breasts," only to "prevent a necessary and beneficial trade, which could injure no one." The reason for stopping

130: *To the Electors of Essex South District*, 7.

131: *Address to Citizens of Rhode-Island*, 8-9.

132: *To the Electors of Essex South District*, 7.

the overland trade could only be stupidity or wickedness. Either Jefferson was an imbecile, or he wished to drive New England into poverty.[133]

Federalists harped on a point that found a ready home in New England: that far from being an evil, commerce was a virtue. The embargo was the scourge on virtue, both public and private. Because the law was unjust, it tempted industrious and honorable men toward defiance, "systematical evasions of the law, which tend to corrupt the spirit of honorable commerce, and will materially injure the public morals." New Englanders had always known that commerce formed the very foundation of their industrious virtue, and in attacking it Jefferson and the Republicans had undermined society itself. Federalists stirred up indignation. Massachusetts was the birthplace of the American Revolution; the New England seaports had fed the country for twenty-five years; thanks to its commerce, it was the most industrious and virtuous—the most American—section of the union.[134] "Destroy commerce, and you in great measure destroy the American character," one Federalist preacher insisted. "Destroy commerce, and in a few years, the American name will be forgotten."[135] By designating America a commercial country, Federalists drew a veil over their strident sectionalist rhetoric, but a flimsy one. Almost always they denied the commercial activity of any states outside New England.

While New England relied on commerce, Federalists said, with its junior partners of agriculture and manufacturing, the south rested in the hands of leisured, slaveholding planters.

---

133 *An Address to the Citizens of New Hampshire*, 5.

134 "Instructions of Massachusetts to her delegation in Congress to procure a repeal of the embargo laws. Communicated to the Senate, November 25, 1808," in *American State Papers: Commerce and Navigation, Vol. I* (Washington, DC), 728-729.

135 John Lathrop, *A Discourse Delivered on the Day of Publick Thanksgiving in the State of Massachusetts: December 1, 1808* (Boston: Monroe, Francis, and Parker, 1808), 17.

African slavery did not yet become a main focus of Federalist electioneering in New England in 1808, but the image of Virginian masters and subject New Englanders was sufficiently suggestive. One Federalist pamphlet contemptuously referred Jefferson as a "great Virginia slave holder," an attack that struck at Madison as well.[136] Give this line of argument, the fate of New England became easy to insinuate. A "Soldier of '77" warned the "Freemen of Vermont" of the necessary result of an end to commerce. In addition to forcing northern sailors, farmers, and mechanics out of work and into debtors' prisons and workhouses, the embargo would force the children of those unfortunate freemen into miserable employment in "every menial capacity, under the lash of inhuman masters and overseers, like Virginia slaves."[137] Federalists appealed to latent northeastern sectional pride that their region relied on honest commerce, not chattel slavery, and the embargo proved to New Englanders more than any prior national event what significant danger the south's extra representation posed to their interests.[138]

Against the growing threat of Virginian tyranny, Federalists and their dissident allies even began, in some cases, to use rhetoric from the Revolutionary War. In doing so, they walked a thin line between appealing to national patriotism and threatening revolt. In a speech to the Senate, Timothy Pickering responded to other Congressmen's criticisms toward New England's insurrections against the embargo: "Other rulers pronounced them rebels, more than thirty years ago." He reminded Senators that "*there* the revolution began, of which *Boston* was the cradle." In the very Declaration of Independence, he said, the colonies had stated clearly that among their

136: *Address to the Citizens of New Hampshire*, 5.

137: *An Address to the Freemen of Vermont*, 21-22.

138: Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2006), 27; 43-44.

reasons for separating from Great Britain was the passage of legislation "cutting off our trade with all parts of the world."[139] In the House, Josiah Quincy followed suit. "I beg gentlemen, who are so frequent in their recurrence to that period [the Revolution]," he warned,

> "to remember, that among the causes which led to a separation from G[reat] Britain, the following are enumerated: —Unnecessary restrictions upon trade—cutting off commercial intercourse between the colonies—embarrassing our fisheries—wantonly depriving our citizens of necessaries—invasion of private property by governmental edicts—the authority of the commander in chief… being rendered supreme in civil government."

"Let gentlemen beware how they appeal to the spirit of '76," he concluded, "lest it come with the aspect, not of a friend, but of a tormentor—lest they find a warning, when they look for support; and instead of encouragement, they are presented with an awful lesson."[140] Like Pickering, Quincy walked a fine line between appealing to patriotism and threatening secession. While reminding listeners of New England's commitment to the union, he simultaneously compared Jefferson's regime to that of George III, and hinted that rebellion, or separation, was the most patriotic response. "New England has taken the stand of '76," one Maine newspaper announced just before the November elections, "and she will *now*, and she did *then*, rise victorious from her chains." It quickly went on to say that New Englanders would break those chains by "constitutionally turning [Republicans] out of office" but the militancy remained.[141] Federalist propaganda furthered New Englanders' distrust and hostility toward the federal government by reminding them that revolution was virtuous when the people's voice went unheard.

139: *Columbian Centinel*, December 21, 1808.

140: *Courier* (Norwich, CT), December 28, 1808.

141: *Portland Gazette*, October 31, 1808.

Federalists begged New Englanders to see the "comparative insignificance" of the commercial states.[142] They portrayed the region's commercial interests to be in danger of becoming a permanent minority, especially if they split their votes between two different parties. With only a small fraction of the votes in Congress, the New England states were still forced to bear the brunt of the hardship of embargo.[143] Quincy complained, "Every gentleman who has spoken upon the subject has seemed to take it for granted that this was a burden which pressed equally!" He estimated that since the imposition of the embargo, Massachusetts had lost five times more capital than Virginia.[144] "New England be said to have scarcely any influence in Congress for seven years past," Senator James Hillhouse declared in a Connecticut newspaper, "the party divisions of their Senators and Representatives having *neutralized* their votes." By voting for Republicans, Hillhouse said, New Englanders had curtailed their sectional influence in Washington, and handed their commerce to the anti-commercial south.[145] In February 1809, the Massachusetts legislature called for a constitutional amendment "to give the Commercial States their fair and just consideration in the Government of the Union."[146]

Some Federalists outside of New England attempted to stand by the increasingly extreme stance taken by the northeastern Federalists, but more found the trend dangerous and bordering on treason. A Philadelphia Federalist wrote to Theodore Sedgwick, "It is from your Country we are to look for deliverance. The Middle states are compromised of such an heterogeneous mass,

142: *Newburyport Herald*, March 1808, in Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 155.

143: *Boston Gazette*, January 11, 1808.

144: *Courier* (Norwich), December 28, 1808.

145: *The Repertory* (Boston), April 8 1808.

146: *The Hampshire Gazette*, February 3 1809.

that their efforts are divided."[147] The *Washington Federalist* defended New England's revolt against the embargo, writing, "The northern and eastern states must have the privilege of navigation, or perish." It justified their protests against, and their evasion of, the embargo laws on the grounds that they faced starvation if they could not trade, and warned that if embargo resulted in disunion, New Englanders would not be entirely to blame.[148] But other Federalists, especially in the middle states, pleaded with northeastern leaders to curb the extremism in Massachusetts and her neighbors. In particular, they begged the northeastern Federalists to issue some kind of unequivocal declaration of loyalty to the union.[149] But many partisans and papers, focused exclusively on the prizes of the November elections, continued to make use of the virulent sectional rhetoric that held such appeal in New England.

In the 1790s, political parties had accused one another of being sectionalist while refusing to admit their own tendencies.[150] In 1808, however, many Federalists in New England reversed this paradigm. They recognized that in a crisis, sectionalist rhetoric was an effective electoral strategy, especially because it fit well with their own prejudices that had steadily been developing since 1800, as New England Federalism became the most prominent part of the party. Federalists accused their opponents of being minions to the Virginians who held control over the Republican party. Southerners had always sought to abolish commerce, Federalists claimed, but they would never have "attempted to carry it into effect had they not first succeeded in gaining to their party a majority of the Representatives in Congress from New England." Having duped

147 "A Philadelphia Federalist" to Theodore Sedgwick, July 10, 1808, in Sedgwick papers, MHS.

148 *Washington Federalist*, November 5, 1808.

149 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 298-99.

150 Onuf, "Federalism, Republicanism, and the Origins of American Sectionalism," *All Over the Map*, 31-3.

New Englanders into voting for the "Southern party," the Virginians could now force an embargo upon them, to permanently end their commerce and subject them to perpetual southern hegemony.[151] Federalists appealed to the perennial American paranoia that a great conspiracy existed that threatened Americans' liberties and prosperity.[152]

In 1808, however, this conspiracy threatened New England's rights and interests within the American system, now under Virginian hegemony. Within this frame of mind, Federalists could not admit the legitimacy of the New England Republicans, because they firmly believed that the Republican party was fundamentally southern. Thus, Republicans from Massachusetts or New Hampshire or Rhode Island seemed traitorous to Federalists. The Republican representatives that the northeastern voters had previously elected had betrayed them, Federalists insisted. At the precise moment New Englanders were voting for them, those faithless Republicans were acting "in concert with Virginia politicians" to "rivet the chains of the embargo" upon their constituents—again evoking the chattel slavery motif.[153] By explicitly linking Republicans with Virginia and the South, Federalist partisans completed their sectionalist appeal. Partisans created a contest not only between Federalists and Republicans, or even supporters and opponents of the embargo, but between virtuous, independent northeast patriots and submissive southern lackeys. By the fall of 1808, some New England Federalists seemed to have rejected the idea that New England and Virginia could agree on anything at all.

---

151 : *Portland Gazette*, October 24, 1808.

152 : Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 3-40.

153 : *Address to Citizens of New Hampshire*, 8.

The absence of a particular date for elections meant that early nineteenth century election cycles, especially presidential ones, often resembled a wave of momentum. That momentum could then turn election cycles into referenda on national policy.[154] Federalist success in New England in 1808 was undeniably dramatic, given the party's trajectory since 1800. However, one should not overstate the Federalist revival as a result of the embargo, even in the New England states. Especially on the national level, the gains did not necessarily signify a revolution; only three Massachusetts districts changed hands from Republicans to Federalists. Significant swaths of that state, as well as the whole of Connecticut, had already been Federalist strongholds. Gains were more impressive on the state level. The party recaptured both houses of the Massachusetts General Court in May, only a month after Levi Lincoln had reassured Jefferson the state was safe; they won the New Hampshire legislature in September, and the better part of the Vermont government, including governor, lieutenant governor, and three new congressmen, in November.[155] The most remarkable aspect of the 1808 cycle was the turnout; thousands more people voted across New England than had in the prior few elections.[156]

Part of the reason for the large turnout must have been that both parties used the atmosphere of crisis to rouse their bases. The agrarians of western Massachusetts, and some in Maine, had always preferred the hierarchical stability of Federalism to liberal Republicanism. Federalist shipping towns like Newburyport and New Bedford saw no reason to turn from Federalism now. Other districts stayed Republican, as Jeffersonians matched their opponents'

154 Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, 184-85.

155 Nathaniel Ames, diary entries of May 25-31, 1808 in Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 235; Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties*, 100; *The World* (Bennington, VT), November 7, 1808.

156 "A New Nation Votes," Lampi Collection of American Electoral Returns, 1788-1825, American Antiquarian Society, 2007.

gains. Despite Federalist efforts, opposition to the embargo did not necessarily manifest itself in votes for them. In fact, some towns that had been major embargo violators continued to vote Republican. Barnstable, though lawsuits had forced its customs collector to resign, kept to its former Republican trend. Nantucket, too, which Jefferson had accused of rampant smuggling, voted overwhelmingly Republican in 1808. North shore Marblehead stayed as staunchly Republican as its neighbor Newburyport did Federalist. But its customs collector liberally issued San Domingo bonds, suggesting that he was allowing vessels to sail to the West Indies, and thus continue taking advantage of the carrying trade.[157] Opposition to the embargo, therefore, was apparently more widespread than simple Federalist vote tallies might indicate.[158]

However, the Federalists did win over enough new towns to change some towns' and districts' political stripes, a feat all the more impressive given their recent trajectory. The party's most significant victory on the federal level was probably its conquest of the Massachusetts Essex South Congressional district, which included the major shipping towns of Gloucester, Salem, and Marblehead. All three towns had voted for a Republican Congressman 1804; in 1808, only Marblehead remained loyal. The embargo initiated a political sea change in Gloucester, reversing the majority, and Federalists took Salem by one vote: 901 to 900.[159] Federalists made huge strides at the state level, and reclaimed Massachusetts' second Senate seat when the General Court elected James Lloyd instead of John Quincy Adams.[160] Outside of the Bay State, New

157 Morison, *A Maritime History of Massachusetts*, 190.

158 The converse is also true; the areas of rural New England cut off from outside markets and thus relatively unaffected by the embargo had always been very conservative and staunch Federalist voters.

159 "A New Nation Votes," 2007.

160 Adams had resigned as soon as Federalists had gained control of the General Court, knowing that his vote for the embargo would prevent his reelection by the legislature.

Hampshire Republicans lost the entire Congressional delegation they had recently gained. New Hampshire and Rhode Island voters selected Federalist electors, and Vermont would have given its electoral votes to Pinckney but for corruption in the lame-duck legislature.[161] The 1808 elections were not yet a Federalist revolution, but they seemed the beginnings of one. Republicans' losses in seaports, where they had been gaining, boded ill for their future in the northeast, especially given the impenetrable Federalism of the agrarian west.

The Federalist revival deeply concerned Republicans who believed that their opponents were a corrupt faction bent on destroying the American republic. Jefferson had written to the Republican legislature of New Hampshire in August to express his certainty that the citizens of that state would "meet with cheerfulness the temporary privations" caused by the embargo; a month later Federalists had won the state legislature.[162] Gallatin fretted about almost all the eastern states during the summer, warning Jefferson, "I think that at this moment the Western States, Virginia, South Carolina, and perhaps Georgia, are the only sound States, and that we will have a doubtful contest in every other." If the administration could not lift the embargo by October 1, he was sure, Pinckney would be president come the following March.[163] But soon the Republicans had regained control in Pennsylvania and the other middle states, and the Secretary's fears focused solely on New England.[164] Since Republicans' sweeping victories in the northeast during the 1804 elections, Federalism had appeared moribund. But the embargo had

161 Turner, *The Ninth State*, 242.

162 Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties*, 100.

163 Gallatin to Jefferson, August 6, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin,* 402.

164 Gallatin to Jefferson, September 2, 1808, in *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 414.

created widespread popular anger in New England, and as Federalists fed that defensive rage with fear and indignation, the electoral tide swiftly began to turn.

The emergence of a regional consciousness in New England in 1808, such as it was, cannot be separated from the ideology and corresponding electioneering tactics of the Federalist party. Under the embargo, Federalists no longer denied their regional appeal in New England. Abandoning their stance from the 1790s, they found a new appreciation for state sovereignty over federal law, feeding New England's growing disaffection with a federal government that no longer seemed responsive to its interests. Trade itself meant less than New England's apparent impotence. Under Republicanism, Federalists insisted, the northeast faced poverty, humiliation, and enslavement to corrupt Virginians. To avoid that miserable fate, New England's "hardy sons must now decide whether she shall remain humbled, prostrate, and debased, at the feet of the haughty Mistress of the Union; or whether she shall at length assert her violated rights, and vindicate her insulted honor."[165] Having reclaimed their old majority, Federalists argued vehemently that they continued to support the Constitution and the American republic, but only insofar as they protected the rights of New England commerce.[166] In their public statements, dissolution of the union was "the greatest possible evil" to New Englanders—"short of the absolute destruction of their interest, and the loss of their liberties."[167]

In drawing an explicit distinction between New England and Virginia, Federalists successfully began to force Republicans out of the northeast, but in doing so, the party threatened

165 *Columbian Centinel*, reprinted in the *Hampshire Gazette*, September 21, 1808.

166 *Portland Gazette*, October 31, 1808.

167 "From the *Columbian Centinel*: A Separation of the States; and Its Consequences to New England" in the *Massachusetts Spy/Worcester Gazette*, April 12, 1808.

the union of the country. Their takeover was nowhere near complete, but the embargo had only been on for a year, and New Englanders had already expressed virulent dissatisfaction. No one knew when the trade restrictions would come off; an accord with Britain could be years away. As winter approached, the crisis deepened. New England Republicans faced a choice: to stay loyal to Republicanism and the embargo, and risk being permanently labeled as Virginian minions who had "abused the trust" of their constituents, or to wrest New England back from Federalism by putting sectional loyalty above their commitment to the president and his party.[168] So far, the Republican press in New England had held to the administration line.[169] Partisans lauded the American union, not specific New England interests. But Republican Congressmen from the northeast, witnessing the Federalist electoral wave, had grown extremely concerned. The threat of New England revolution, secession, or civil war, which had occurred to no one a year ago, now seemed a terrible possibility.

168 *Portland Gazette*, October 31, 1808.

169 Thorp L. Wolford, "Democratic-Republican Reaction in Massachusetts to the Embargo of 1807" in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 1942), pp. 35-61.

III. Division, Disunion, Bitterness: The Republican Split

"Disunion division bitterness is our most deadly malady."
Orchard Cook to John Quincy Adams, December 4 1808

"All would be well if our friends remained firm here."
Albert Gallatin to Thomas Jefferson, February 4 1809[170]

In December 1808, Congressman Ezekiel Bacon of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, wrote to John Quincy Adams to say that he believed the "Embargo system cannot much longer be successfully executed without danger of open resistance."[171] With no indication from the Jefferson administration as to when the embargo might end, convinced that the agricultural interests in the south and west had allied against northern commerce, and believing themselves abandoned by their Republican congressmen in favor of an unholy alliance with Virginians, New Englanders were running out of options to free themselves from the embargo. What had begun as essentially foreign policy was threatening, by the end of 1808, to create a full-blown sectional crisis in the United States. During the fall elections, New England had seemingly become "federalized" through opposition to the embargo, but those votes had had no effect; no one was sure what other methods the public might use to resist the embargo laws. But many had begun to genuinely fear violent resistance and civil war if the offending Acts were not repealed. The ability of a minority section within the republican system to express itself through constitutional methods increasingly seemed very much in doubt.

The New England Republican delegation was worried, especially Bacon, Joseph Story of Salem, and Orchard Cooke of Maine. These Congressmen perceived that they could no longer

170 Adams papers, MHS; *Writings of Albert Gallatin*, 451.

171 Bacon to John Quincy Adams, December 11, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

support the Virginian president and his embargo. They feared not only for their seats but for the fate of the republic. If the Republican party were driven out of New England altogether, the region truly would be an isolated, permanent minority, one under the control of strident, uncompromising Federalists. "The present critical state of affairs and the fears of opposition in our state," Cook wrote to Adams in November, "has the effect to make some steps to still the clamour of our state against southern influences necessary."[172] Until now, the Republican sectional coalition had held together in support of the national interest and against the corruptive Federalist influence. But after the elections they became convinced that continuing the embargo led inexorably toward northeastern secession. Loyalty to the Republican cause, as well as heavy pressure from administration whips, kept them quiet as the crisis unfolded. But as winter came, a handful of northern dissenters coalesced. These dissidents managed to use their party to secure a repeal of the embargo, holding together the tenuous sectional alliance by proving to New Englanders that a minority could still make itself heard in Washington.

Fears of civil war had emerged as early as the passage of the Embargo Act, but they gained momentum steadily throughout the year. While these concerns began largely as hyperbole, all onlookers clearly perceived where the line would fall: between the Federalist northeast and the Republican national government. On December 7, 1807, even before the Act had been passed, Sullivan had written to Jefferson to warn that the Federalists in Massachusetts "talk of a division between the southern and northern States as a matter of course."[173] In January, barely a month into the embargo, Nathaniel Ames wrote in his diary, "Civil War seems imminent,

172 Cook to Adams, November 27, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

173 Sears, *Jefferson and the Embargo*, 58.

unavoidable!"[174] He too blamed Federalist agitation for the danger; in all things, he believed the party a constant threat to the United States. Even the more clearheaded feared for the future: John Adams warned his son, "The present humiliation of the northern states cannot long endure, without producing Passions which will be very difficult to restrain."[175] Sectional tensions lurked beneath the surface of American politics, and while it took the better part of the year, eventually the strain became too much. As voting began to break along clear sectional lines, fear of disunion intensified, and party loyalty finally broke down.

Almost all of the New England Republicans had begun the year as loyal partisans and vocally supported the embargo. They believed in the party and its cause, and they trusted Jefferson and Madison. They did not wish to see an American war with Britain or France, and they certainly did not want to cede power to Federalists. Jefferson had so far presided over a period of great commercial prosperity and Republican harmony, and the Federalist party had seemed, before the embargo, to be dwindling down to "a few disciples of Hamilton."[176] At no point in the crisis did New England Republicans consider changing their party affiliation; they wanted to keep the Republican party alive in New England. Even at the end of the year, they still sought to stay loyal to the President. But some, especially from Massachusetts, were chafing under the pressure. Among these were Ezekiel Bacon, of the interior town of Stockbridge; Orchard Cook, representing the sparsely settled Maine district; and, especially, Joseph Story, from Salem. Story won his seat in a special election after the death of the Republican merchant

174 : Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 221.

175 : John Adams to JQA, April 12, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

176 : John Adams to JQA, January 8 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

Jacob Crowninshield, and Bacon hoped the young Congressman would bring with him an honest assessment of the mood of New England to Washington in a time of crisis.[177]

As tension built over the summer, the nomination of James Madison to succeed Jefferson as the Republican candidate for president in 1808 did not go unchallenged. Men on both sides wondered if nominating a northern Republican might unite the country against sectional division. Northern Republicans in particular wished to erase the party's unmistakable Virginian hue. In March, Thomas Adams noted that while Massachusetts Republicans had so far "yielded the precedence to the antient dominion and supported the Administration of Mr. Jefferson, with great zeal," Madison's ascension might not be so well supported. In fact, he believed that George Clinton, the current Vice President and a Republican from New York, "would obtain more votes for President than Mr. Madison" in New England.[178] Sullivan's biographer claimed that he too supported Clinton against perpetual Virginian power in the executive.[179] Up until 1807, a firm belief in Jeffersonian republicanism had held the party together against sectional animosity, but Jefferson's embargo had undermined the popularity of both his party and his successor in New England. Northeastern Republicans hoped that nominating a Republican candidate from New York might reassure New Englanders that the Republican party was not merely a southern and western party under Virginian control, and restore the sectional coalition.

Moreover, Orchard Cook suggested that even Federalists might "push for Clinton & Munroe" over Madison, in order to keep their votes relevant, rather than waste them on a

177 : Bacon to JQA, December 11, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS; Newmyer, *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story*, 55.

178 : Thomas Adams to JQA, March 24, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

179 : Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, 253.

Federalist who would never win the presidency.[180] And indeed, Harrison Gray Otis wondered to fellow Federalist Theodore Sedgwick in June if, to "break down the Virginia system," they would be wiser to support Clinton rather than throw their votes away on a doomed Federalist candidate. "However desirable it is, to preserve the consistency & dignity of our Party," Otis added, "it is of more *consequence to save the Country*."[181] As Federalists saw dramatic electoral success in the fall, however, the party decided to re-nominate Charles C. Pinckney, the Federalist Governor of South Carolina. Its leaders had realized that the harsh sectional rhetoric in New England might preclude any revival of national Federalism if it was allowed to consume the party.[182] However, papers did not advertise Pinckney's nomination, instead stressing the New England credentials of the Federalist electors in Rhode Island and New Hampshire. In January 1809, Joseph Story noted disapprovingly that the South Carolinian had actually approved of the embargo, but his friends were quite careful to keep that fact a secret.[183]

Pinckney did not prevail nationally. Virginian James Madison was elected instead, by the middle, southern, and western states. The resulting electoral map clearly demonstrated New England's protest against the continuation of the Virginian-Republican presidency, expressed through a Federalist vote. Pinckney did not even win his home state of South Carolina, which held loyally to the Jeffersonian party line. With Madison's ascension, New England's choice had

180 Cook to JQA, July 24, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

181 Otis to Sedgwick, June 23, 1808, in Sedgwick papers, MHS.

182 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 299.

183 Joseph Story to William Fettyplace, January 14 1809. Story, *Life and Letters*, 175. The Newburyport Republican paper, *The Statesman*, remarked snidely on November 3, "The New-England Federalists are remarkable for their consistency of character—They are continually *prating* about a Southern influence, yet they select a southern candidate for President." The extreme sectionalism of Newburyport's Federalists seems to have pushed the town's small Republican minority to fight fire with fire.

clearly been repudiated, and the leadership of the Federalist party discredited. As the pressure from ordinary northeastern voters stepped up, Federalists felt it as much as Republicans. Their rhetoric had won them some electoral success, but commerce had not resumed; ships continued to lie idle, and the brutal New England winter had set in. Historian James Banner identifies Madison's election as the point at which the Federalist leadership lost control, and political initiative passed to the party's radical sectionalists. A Newburyport meeting implied a dangerous trend when it declared that the town's citizens had given up on repeal from Congress, and asked the state legislature to take responsibility. If the federal government would not protect New England's interests, the duty would fall to the states.[184]

Some Republicans felt that the northeast could still find a place in the executive if Madison selected a New Englander for his cabinet, something Jefferson had not done. In late November, with Madison's presidency a certainty, Orchard Cook initiated meetings with his fellow Congressmen. He attempted to convince them that choosing a Secretary of State from the Massachusetts delegation would bring together the interests of both the northeastern and southern states, despite their manifest differences over the embargo.[185] For another month, he strove to convince the Senate that if Madison appointed a Virginian Secretary of State, he would irreparably damage sectional relations between the Northeast and the South. Selecting one from Massachusetts, on the other hand, would both appease northern Republicans and quiet Federalists, who had made such striking electoral gains in New England by painting a picture of total Virginian hegemony over the national government, especially the executive branch. Such an

184 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 299-300.

185 Cook to JQA, November 27, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS. Cook suggested that Adams himself would be a good candidate to fill the position.

appointment would be, Cook told John Quincy Adams, "for the best good of the cause."[186] But Madison instead appointed Robert Smith of Maryland for the position in 1809.[187]

Just after the election, on November 27, the Massachusetts legislature, led by Harrison Gray Otis, issued a petition entitled "Instructions of Massachusetts to her delegation in Congress to procure a repeal of the embargo laws" to the U.S. Senate. In it the legislature laid out New England's case against the embargo, and tried to persuade representatives of both parties to put New England's interests first. The embargo, the petition declared, had excluded produce from foreign markets, and deprived its citizens of employment. It had destroyed foreign trade connections, and harmed every industry that relied on those connections. Without customs duties the state had almost no source of revenue. On all counts, the legislature continued, the embargo had failed. As the public servants of that region, the representatives of both parties bore an obligation to seek the immediate removal of the offensive legislation. In all, the petition concluded, "the evils which are menaced by the continuance of [the embargo], are so enormous and deplorable; the suspension of commerce is so contrary to the habits of our people, and so repugnant to their feelings and interests, that they must soon become intolerable, and endanger our domestic peace, and the union of these States."[188]

Northern opponents of the embargo, now the majority in New England, would not have been heartened by the resolution that came from North Carolina a month later, on December 30.

---

186 Cook to JQA, December 17, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

187 Madison had wanted to appoint Gallatin to Secretary of State, but met opposition in the Senate, so left him in the Treasury and brought in Smith. When Smith proved uninspiring, Madison replaced him with fellow Virginian James Monroe. Clinton remained as Vice President until his death in April 1812; Elbridge Gerry, originally from Marblehead, Massachusetts, was Madison's running mate in 1812.

188 "Instructions of Massachusetts to her delegation in Congress to procure a repeal of the embargo laws. Communicated to the Senate, November 25, 1808," 728-29.

North Carolinian legislators, declaring themselves "the real friends of their country" resolved that the embargo had been a just and prudent measure against Great Britain in response to the *Chesapeake* affair. While North Carolinians had borne the full brunt of the embargo's hardship, it went on, they would "cheerfully acquiesce" in its continuance, until the president and his administration saw fit to repeal the law. Without naming any states, they implicitly accused New Englanders of hurting the country by showing off internal divisions to Britain. If those citizens were real patriots, they would support the embargo as a protection of the wealth and dignity of the American nation. In fact, the North Carolinians concluded, "sooner than submit to unjust and vexatious restrictions on our commerce; to the impressment of our seamen; and to the taxation of the cargoes of our vessels" by foreign powers, they would prefer to "live to ourselves, and have no connexion with any of them."[189] With this declaration, the North Carolinians succinctly summarized the Jeffersonian agrarian autarkic ideal.

But this was the last sentiment New Englanders wanted to hear from a southern state. They already worried that southerners were bent on turning the United States into a self-sufficient nation, on the much-maligned "Chinese method" in which they eschewed the seas altogether.[190] The embargo had already made New Englanders realize how much they needed maritime trade, and they were becoming increasingly fearful of losing it for good. With Madison's election, the perpetuation of the Old Dominion appeared fixed. Nor had Madison selected any northerners for his Cabinet. The agricultural alliance between the southern and western states looked set to continue, and southerners previously had proved themselves much

189 "Approval of North Carolina of the measures of the federal government on foreign aggressions. Communicated to the Senate, December 30, 1808" in *American State Papers: Miscellaneous Vol. I* (Washington, DC), 944-945.

190 Lambert, *Travels through the United States and Canada*, 367; McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 219.

more successful at winning the middle states to their side than New Englanders had. Moreover, many New Englanders had long been against western expansion, since before 1787, for fear it would permanently shift the sectional balance to the south.[191] Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana five years earlier had exacerbated that fear, and the embargo made the threat of agricultural hegemony all too close. In 1808, the national government proved, whether it meant to or not, that it had the power to end commerce completely.

Republican Congressmen from New England, despite growing unease about the embargo, feared allying with Federalists, whom they still saw as a corruptive and illegitimate faction in the United States. When James Hillhouse proposed a resolution in the Senate to repeal the embargo, no Republicans joined him. Nahum Parker of New Hampshire had "no doubt" that if Republicans did not vote down Hillhouse's resolution, the result would be "trumpeted through the northern states as conclusive evidence of the intention of the present administration to make the embargo perpetual & distroy commerce altogether." Moreover, to replace the embargo without an alternative would be, in Parker's words, "submission" to the European belligerents—a word that crops up increasingly often in Republicans' letters in late 1808, as they struggled to find a solution to the crisis.[192] To repeal the embargo wholesale would be surrender, both to the European powers bent on destroying America's independence and to the Federalist party that would reverse the Jeffersonian revolution. Allying with the Federalists would, moreover, only vindicate their treasonous tendencies and further endanger the union. So on "mere naked

191 Davis, *Sectionalism in American Politics*, 13-24; 121.

192 Parker to JQA, November 25, 1808; Bacon to JQA, November 9, 1808; Cook to JQA, November 10, 1808, all in Adams papers, MHS.

question" of the embargo's continuance or repeal, New England Republicans did "as they ought," as Orchard Cook put it, and voted for continuance.[193]

But although New England Republicans did not want to stand with Federalists, they remained extremely concerned about the condition of the United States and the hostility of their constituents to the embargo. Town governments made themselves heard to the state legislature, having given up on finding redress from the federal government. Gloucester pledged "what little property we have left" to stop revolt, and Bath pleaded for relief, whether from the state legislature alone "or in concert with other commercial States." Topsfield, meanwhile, endorsed an American alliance with Britain, and the town meeting in Augusta, Maine claimed they would support open resistance to the embargo as "a virtue of the first magnitude."[194] Individuals, too, pressured their Congressmen. Orchard Cook felt particular stress from merchants in his district who wanted desperately to trade with Halifax and other British Canadian ports, and had nothing to fear from British or French attacks on the Atlantic.[195] Men whom Cook had previously "thought firm" in support of Republicanism were, under the pressure of the embargo, now sending him letters asking for its unqualified repeal.[196]

The Republicans had put their faith in the people, and fretted at the sight of revolt under the embargo. "I hear so many stories of rebellion and discontent," Story wrote to a friend in January 1809, "and so many letters reach us of hatred to the embargo, that at times we almost

193 : Cook to JQA, December 4, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

194 : Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 229-230.

195 : Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 194.

196 : Cook to JQA, December 4, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

despond. We fear that there is not virtue enough to save the country, or its rights."[197] New England Republicans, knowing they had voted for a policy that would be difficult for many, had hoped that American virtue could sustain the embargo. They were heavily disappointed that their home had proved so rebellious, whether in violations of the embargo or outright violence in protesting its enforcement, especially as compared to the relative docility of the rest of the nation. They saw their home states slipping out of the influence of both the Republican party and the federal government, aligning themselves in opposition to both. "As to the riotous proceedings in Beverly," Story wrote home at the very end of the year, "they disgrace only the actors, and I trust that old Essex will sustain its general character for good behavior."[198] Salem did avoid the worst of the violence, but clearly New England's virtue had reached its limit.

As New Englanders deserted the federal government, Republican representatives' sectional prejudices revived. They feared that southerners really did ideologically oppose commerce, especially in light of the continuation, seemingly without end, of the embargo. Cook expressed his doubts to Madison in early November about the perceived partiality of the Republican administration to southern agriculture. Finding Madison extremely liberal on the matter, much more than he had anticipated, he came away reassured. But while that interview assuaged Cook's fears about both the old and the new presidents, it did nothing for his prejudices against southerners as a whole. Rather, he believed that the Old Republican faction within the party, led by John Randolph, was prone to denouncing the Jefferson administration largely because the president and his Secretary of State "favoured commerce & its rights so much as

197 : Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 176.

198 : Story to Joseph White, December 31, 1808, in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 172-3.

they did." Madison, Gallatin, and Jefferson may have been liberal on commerce, but to Cook this necessarily put them in a minority of southern Republicans.[199] He believed that the strongly anti-commerce Randolph better represented the southern, and accordingly the prevailing, sentiment of the party on commercial matters.

Even New England Republicans less disposed to distrust southern representatives struggled to fight the prevailing notion that southerners distrusted commerce. Story went to Washington at the beginning of the year, while still a state representative, convinced that the southern delegates cared only for their agricultural interests. Upon arriving and conversing with those Congressmen, he altered his opinion somewhat. On the question of commerce, some southern representatives—though by no means all of them—he found more liberal than "we are taught to believe." Story's letters to friends at home strove to disprove prejudices which had until only very recently been his own.[200] Unsure of what to do in the face of the complexities of the situation, many northeastern Republicans found silence to be the best solution. Of his eastern correspondents, Ezekiel Bacon noted that they had become reticent, by the end of the year, on the subject of the embargo's future. Most likely, he reasoned, onlookers outside of Washington understood the difficulties of the situation with Europe and of domestic discontent, and thought the matter best left to elected representatives. Bacon could not fault them, though he noted wryly that their attitude made his own position much more difficult.[201]

---

199 Cook to JQA, November 10, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

200 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 182.

201 Bacon to JQA, December 11, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

By January 1809, the New England Republicans were convinced that the southern and western members of Congress intended to keep the embargo on indefinitely. They perceived an alliance between the south and the west that was absolutely committed to support of Jefferson's administration, and predicted that the middle states would take the path of least resistance, thus leaving New England an isolated minority. Their attitude was not necessarily just paranoia; William Giles of Virginia also saw unanimous support for the administration and the embargo south and west of the Potomac, and believed that any opposition in the middle states had eased since the November elections. He lamented that the embargo had no "eastern" support.[202] The south was firmly for continuance, Story wrote home in January, and the middle and western states would unite in anything, but "the Republicans from New England receive almost every day letters which urge a repeal." He could not decide, he confessed, what path to pursue. The difficulties with Britain and France persisted, but the discontent in Massachusetts seemed to preclude any continuation of the embargo past the end of Jefferson's presidency.[203]

Story, and New Englanders of both parties, saw the sectional imbalance of power solidifying. Federalist electoral victories across the region had not lifted the embargo; the national government seemed to be past the power of New England voters to affect. The furor suggested a growing belief that New England was becoming a permanent minority in the United States. Though Republicans were much more hesitant than Federalists to speak in openly sectional terms, after a year of embargo they saw no other choice but to advocate for their region at the expense of party loyalty. Every day they felt themselves under increasing pressure from

202 William Giles to JQA, January 5, 1809, in Adams papers, MHS.

203 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 174-75.

their constituents, whether from the seaports or interior, to lift the embargo. "Our northern men… seem to be more and more dissatisfied with a further continuance of the Embargo," Cook wrote to Adams in late December.[204] New England representatives felt increasingly disconnected and out of place in Washington, suspicious of their party colleagues from the south and west, cut off from their friends and family. They continually wrote home for information and advice, and shared the responses with one another in Washington.[205] Within the Republicans, the New England delegation increasingly believed itself an isolated minority.

New Englanders became frustrated with the mood in Congress, which was so far removed from the tumult at home. Josiah Quincy gave voice to representatives of both parties when he complained of the "evils of sitting in this wilderness."[206] They, like their constituents, felt ignored and isolated by the southern and western majority within the Republican party. New England's Republicans did not want to break with the party or the president, whose administration had begun to exert heavy pressure on the northeasterners to keep quiet, and they did not want to submit to the commercial edicts of either Britain or France. But they increasingly came to believe that if the embargo was not raised, the extremists among the Federalist party would finally achieve support for their long-held dream: a separation of New England from the United States. They had only to look at Federalist newspapers for confirmation. Meanwhile, channels of constitutional protest were fading; New Englanders had petitioned, protested, and elected new men. Some Federalists had already given up on solving the problem constitutionally.

---

204 Cook to JQA, December 29, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

205 Cook and Bacon even boarded together in Washington, and shared their letters from John Quincy Adams. See Orchard Cook to JQA, December 4, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

206 Josiah Quincy to JQA, January 17, 1809, in Adams papers, MHS.

New England, to them, was already doomed demographically and electorally.[207] If they could not affect policy through legal methods, what other choice did they have?

By December 1808, an increasing number of observers on both sides believed that if the embargo was not taken off, and soon, there would be a civil war and a separation of the northeastern states. They feared New Englanders would take up arms against the federal government in defense of their rights and prosperity against the anti-commercial southerners. Northeastern Republicans grew even more concerned about the influence of Federalists. They had long believed that extremists within the party were advocating for New England secession, and perhaps an alliance with England, and that if the embargo continued, the people of New England would join them. Story wrote home, "there is great danger of resistance to the laws, and the great probability that the [Federalists] have resolved to attempt a separation of the Eastern States… if the embargo continues, that their plan may receive support from our yeomanry."[208] In staunch Federalist Newburyport, two hundred men exempt from military duty organized themselves into an armed guard. They dubbed themselves "the Silver Greys" and stated that their mission was "to support the Constitution of their country and defend their rights and privileges."[209] In Congress, tales of revolt in New England circulated constantly. Its Republicans were frequently consulted on what to do, but they did not have answers.[210]

---

207 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 51.

208 Story to Stephen White, Jan. 4 1809. Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 174-75.

209 Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 167.

210 Story to Stephen White, December, 1808 in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 191; Orchard Cook to JQA, November 27, in Adams papers, MHS.

The blame for this threat of disunion has often fallen on the Federalist party, both in 1808 and throughout the history. Story blamed "a few ambitious men" whose aim was to "dissolve the union."[211] He and many others referred to the threat of the Essex Junto, a supposed cabal of North Shore Massachusetts Federalists whose ultimate aim was New England secession and alliance with England. Within the historical literature, Federalists did earn a disloyal reputation during the War of 1812, in part due to the "blue lights" who tried to signal to British ships, and especially by holding a New England convention at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1814. The easy picture that emerges is one of radical Federalists looking to remove New England from the American union, and using the embargo to rally support. The prejudices of famous Americans like Jefferson and the Adams family, combined with the genuine secessionist tendencies of some extremist Federalists, and the overall negative view of the Federalist party through the years, have contributed to this straightforward solution: that New England Federalists tried to use the embargo and the War of 1812 to tear their states from the union, but they overestimated their popular support, and as a result fatally discredited their party.

On the other hand, the uproar in New England over the embargo crisis might instead suggest a real fear among both Federalists and ordinary citizens that the united interest of New England, their liberty to trade and to prosper, faced a serious threat from Virginian tyranny. The Essex Junto, for all its popularity as a rhetorical tool, was not a real, well-defined group of politicians; it represented a phantom threat, a fictional scapegoat for Jefferson and his allies to blame for dissent, especially in New England, where wealthy merchants proved a perfect group

211 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 182.

for Jeffersonians to attack.[212] While Republicans' fear of the "federalization" of New England helps explain the push to repeal the embargo, it does not address the root question of how close New England really was to open revolt in 1808. Instead, a better interpretation of unrest in New England at the end of 1808 may instead come from understanding it as a grassroots effort, whether among unemployed militant sailors on the coast or hard-pressed farmers in the interior or along the Canadian border. Federalists seized on an opportunity, but they did not invent a language of New England distinctiveness and suspicion of southerners and Jeffersonian Republicans. And as their nomination of Pinckney in 1808 would suggest, many of the top brass still hoped for a cross-sectional party to rival the Republicans.

Harrison Gray Otis, who would lead the Hartford Convention, noted in 1808 that "the spirit of the yeomanry in [Massachusetts] is raising to a point which will require restraint rather than the excitement of those who are supposed to influence and lead them."[213] Federalist spurred popular anger, but perhaps even they did not recognize how potent their message was to New Englanders laboring under the effects of the embargo. They sought electoral gains, and were happy to use sectionalist rhetoric to achieve them, but very few truly sought secession in 1808.[214] Yet it seems that they did not have control over ordinary people's response to their message, especially as another year of embargo loomed. In December, a Boston preacher's sermon advocated against "open revolt and warfare" and for the continued election of Federalists, who

---

212 David Hackett Fischer, "The Myth of the Essex Junto" in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr., 1964), pp. 191-235.

213 *Ibid.*, 233.

214 The exception was Senator Timothy Pickering, John Adams' belligerent Secretary of State, who had genuinely promoted the idea of New England secession immediately after the purchase of Louisiana. But the excitable Pickering was hardly representative of New England Federalism in 1800-1814.

would protect farmers and merchants, as well as the public virtue.[215] The sermon had a mediating tone, advocating for constitutional recourse over open rebellion—a realization, perhaps, that Federalist propaganda had pushed too hard. The American constitutional system was still in its youth in 1808, and the embargo had dangerously undermined its legitimacy in New England.

Leading Federalists in particular worried that the popular tone in New England had become too extreme, and that partisans' electioneering tactics had in fact pushed the discontent people too hard. George Cabot had written to Pickering in October to implore him to tone down his rhetoric and introduce a motion in the Senate declaring New England's loyalty to the union. Party leaders knew how weak the party was outside of the Northeast, and the increasingly strident protest coming from New England had alienated many moderate Federalists in the middle states. The New England people, some leading Federalists believed, were "much more daring in their means" of opposition than those who were supposed to lead them. Harrison Gray Otis lamented in the winter that the new Massachusetts legislature would "require the bridle more than the spur." The embargo had provided an easy way for Federalists to win votes in opposition to the Republicans, and the concerns that arose from it matched the New England Federalists' own worries about the south and west. But popular sentiment pushed the Federalist party further to its extreme than men like Otis and Cabot would have wished.[216] Unlike the extremes of their party, they had not given up on the American union just yet.

Contemporaries did not only blame Federalist extremists; many genuinely feared a popular secessionist movement in New England. As suspicious as Story was of the Federalists,

215 Lathrop, *A Discourse Delivered on the Day of Publick Thanksgiving*, 15-19.

216 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 298-303.

he too believed that rebellion was stirring from below in New England, and that "the Junto would awaken it" only "if they dared."[217] New Englanders from Maine to Connecticut, coast and interior, were furious about the long duration of the embargo, and men of both parties worried that the northern states were on the brink of rebellion. By the early days of 1809, Federalist papers were fighting in print the accusations that they were the ones causing secessionist rumblings in New England. If only the embargo were removed, they said, the union would survive. They laid any threat of disunion clearly at the feet of the majority. Federalists had tried, in November, for repeal, and had been voted down. The party did not have the power to influence national policies from within Congress. Mary Tarr of Newburyport recorded in her diary in late December that "the Death blow to our Country is kept up by the majority."[218] Because Federalists alone could not repeal the embargo, support for its end would have to come from within the Republican party in the eleventh Congress.

In the end, credit (or blame) for repeal has usually been given to Joseph Story. Certainly he was not the only one; Bacon and Cook were instrumental in his efforts, and it soon became clear that Republicans from all states jumped to repeal the embargo and ease the suffering of their constituents. But Story seems to have been at the center. He had been in and out of Washington for the better part of the year, but he did not join the Congress until December, in the midst of the furor over the embargo and the heightened fears of civil war. Far from a staunch partisan, and "little infected with Virginia notions," he held a firm loyalty to his native Massachusetts.[219] That being said, he was appointed to fill a Crowninshield seat, indicating his

217 : Story to Stephen White, December 1808, in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 191.

218 : Mary Tarr Diaries, Philips Library, PEM.

219 : Letter to William Everett, n.d., in Story, *Life and Letters*, 129.

popularity among Salem Republicans. Story had never been convinced of the merits of Jefferson's embargo, but he had supported giving it a chance. As the administration remained silent as to when, if ever, commerce would resume, he came to believe that Jefferson aimed to harm the commercial interests of the north in favor of southern agriculture, and render New England politically impotent in the process. Sure that the embargo would never coerce Britain or France, and would instead destroy the United States, he resolved to secure its repeal.[220]

In January 1809, even as Congress debated the merits of repealing the embargo, they passed a final enforcement act that proved too much for New England. Violators suffered huge fines, up to six times the value of the offending vessel and its cargo. The law further empowered collectors, and severely curtailed owners' legal rights.[221] The outcry in New England was ferocious. Federalists reacted with a "mock-Funeral" procession in Boston, and the town meeting there refused to "voluntarily aid or assist in [its] execution."[222] Newspapers jumped back into action. **"**Where is the Yankee," howled the *Newburyport Herald*, "who could bear to be abused and ridiculed by Virginian boys? Being suckled by slaves, pampered in indolence, and effeminate by indulgence! Can New England, rich in intellect, and knowledge, and wealth… support this forever?"[223] The January Enforcement Act terrified New Englanders who already feared what a permanent southern-western hegemony might do to them, and resistance to federal authority spread. Customs collectors in Boston, Newburyport, and Providence resigned their

---

220 : Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 171-2; Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 180; Newmyer, *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story*, 55-56.

221 : Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 59.

222 : Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 105; Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 230.

223 : Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 166.

offices rather than attempt to uphold the new federal law in the face of popular rage.[224] The American system seemed simply unable to protect New England's commerce.

Whatever backroom machinations the New England Republicans were attempting in Congress—and they seem to have believed by January that the embargo would be limited within a few months—their constituents remained unaware. They saw only a permanent Virginian embargo, coupled now with stringent enforcement to punish them for defending their lives and property. Even a meeting in devotedly Republican Marblehead asked for repeal after the last enforcement act, as did all of its neighbors.[225] New Englanders' constitutional methods of protest appeared to have finally dried up, and the total annihilation of northern commerce seemed to have arrived, just as Federalists had predicted. John Quincy Adams, though no longer a Senator, set out for Washington at the end of January. Through Massachusetts and Connecticut, he was constantly asked, "Had the General Court [of Massachusetts] declared the division of the States? Had they recalled all their members from Congress? Were there forty sail of ships in Boston Harbour, loaded, and waiting only the permission of the Legislature to sail?" Adams did not have an answer, and he arrived in Baltimore with relief.[226]

The Massachusetts legislature delivered a stern remonstrance to the Senate in February, a final assault on the embargo and the administration, couched in a strident defense of New England's patriotism. The General Court accused Congress and the president of ignoring the New England states and their interests, and dismissing the "peaceable and respectful efforts" of

224 : Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 117.

225 : *Ibid*., 139.

226 : JQA to Louisa Adams, February 1 1809, in Adams papers, MHS.

their representatives. Commerce, it said, had been an essential part of life in New England for merchants and farmers since the colonial days. A single act of government could not change this fundamental fact; commerce was part of the northeastern people's very character. The idea that either belligerent power of Europe might be influencing their sentiments the legislature dismissed as "slanderous aspersion, which cannot be believed even by those who propagate it." Any American who questioned the patriotism of the people of Massachusetts needed only to look at the annals of the Revolutionary War to find definitive proof to the contrary. And once more the General Court reminded Congress that Great Britain's interference with commercial activity had driven the Massachusetts to rebellion in the 1770s.[227]

The last enforcement act did not last long; if anything, it seems to have hastened the embargo's already imminent death. The full pressure of administration bore down on Story and his allies to keep quiet, but to no avail; the New England Republicans continued to press their fellow representatives about when and how the embargo would be repealed.[228] In late December, Cook met with Albert Gallatin, who by now wanted to see the embargo repealed as soon as possible. The Treasury Secretary suggested it be replaced with non-intercourse with Britain and France, still punishing the European belligerents without causing such domestic discontent. Cook predicted the date of actual repeal would be June 1, 1809.[229] The President too thought Congress would agree on June rather than March.[230] But Story had written home a few days prior to the

227 "Remonstrance of Massachusetts against the embargo laws. Communicated to the Senate, February 27, 1809," *American State Papers: Commerce and Navigation, Vol. I* (Washington, DC), 776-778.

228 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 187.

229 Cook to JQA, December 29, 1808, in Adams papers, MHS.

230 Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Mann Randolph, January 31, 1809, in Thomas Jefferson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC].

January Enforcement Act that if the tumult in Massachusetts kept up, he would feel obligated to press for a March date of repeal.[231] In early February, a month into the last attempt at enforcement and with violent opposition spreading, Adams wrote home that Congress had decided on March third as the date of the new non-intercourse act and the repeal of the embargo.[232]

So, on the last day of Thomas Jefferson's presidency, Congress voted to enact a Non-Intercourse Act with Britain and France and a repeal of the Embargo Act of 1807, which would take effect on March 15. While still restricting commerce somewhat, the Non-Intercourse Act re-opened maritime trade, most critically with Holland and newly freed Spain, as well as the inter-state coasting trade. As usual, the Federalists persisted in their strategy of opposing all legislation initiated by Republicans, and voted against the non-intercourse act in symbolic support of total free trade. Orchard Cook did the same, so strong was the pressure of the merchants in his district. So did Nahum Parker and two of his fellow New Hampshire Republicans, Representative Francis Gardner and Senator Nicholas Gilman.[233] But most of the New England Republican delegation voted for non-importation and repeal, preferring to support a compromise rather than continue to fight the White House. Some Congressmen who had been among the staunchest supporters of the embargo simply did not attend the floor vote, knowing the opposition had the votes it needed.[234] Some southerners, meanwhile, who believed they had suffered just as much under the embargo

231 : Story to Stephen White, January 4 1809, in Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 174.

232 : JQA to Louisa, February 13, 1809, in Adams papers, MHS.

233 : Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 196; Turner, *The Ninth State*, 248-49.

234 : Jennings, *The American Embargo*, 160.

as New England had, resented Story and his northern allies, believing they had selfishly betrayed both party and nation just to make their citizens richer.[235]

Because Story had returned home to Salem, Bacon led the Republican dissidents, mainly northerners but supported by a sizeable faction of Pennsylvanians who jumped at the chance to see Philadelphia's commerce restored. However, for the sake of showing national unity, Bacon co-sponsored the Non-Intercourse Act with Wilson Cary Nicholas of Virginia, another former embargo supporter. Although non-importation was the result, one Republican declared that both he and his constituents "were so heartily tired of the embargo that they would be glad to get anything else in place of it."[236] Indeed, as Story pointed out later in his autobiography, the truth was that many Republicans had reached a silent consensus that the embargo had been a "miserable failure" and many were more than happy to see its end.[237] The noise and drama had centered on New England, but the pain was not confined there. Some supporters, even from the west, claimed later that they had never thought the measure a wise or proper one, but had not wanted to abandon their party and their president.[238] James Madison assumed the presidency, Jefferson fled home to Monticello, and when March 15 arrived and repeal became official, Mary Tarr wrote with relief in her diary, simply, "Embargo taken off."[239]

---

235 Schoen, "Calculating the Price of Union," 195-96.

236 Perkins, *Prologue to War*, 182.

237 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 185.

238 Nicholas Gilman to John Goddard, May 1, 1812, in Dawes papers, MHS.

239 Mary Tarr Diaries, Philips Library, PEM.

Federalists railed against this newest Republican assault on trade, and credited themselves with the embargo's repeal. But they had to acknowledge the relief felt by all New Englanders. "The miserable Embargo system is to be partially repealed," announced the *Hampshire Gazette* on March 15, "although it is to be accompanied and coupled with a measure equally as unjust, equally as foolish, stupid and unavailing." The author predicted that the "insane authors" of the new bill would have to kill it as well, after suffering the same "disgrace & derision." But, he concluded, "we thank Heaven for even this scanty boon."[240] By placing such heavy emphasis on the embargo, Federalists had only earned themselves temporary support. In returning maritime commerce, northeastern Republicans clipped the opposition's influence and dampened popular anger. New England politics slowly began to settle down, especially as the weaknesses of the new restrictions on trade quickly became apparent.[241] Still, Republicans had abetted Federalist goals. While they managed to end the embargo and restore some faith in the federal government, Bacon, Cook, and Story prioritized a sectional bloc above their party. Rather than dampen sectional hostility, they had vindicated both Federalists and northeastern suspicion of Virginians and the Republican party.

240 *Hampshire Gazette*, March 15 1809.

241 Clauder, *American Commerce*, 149; Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans*, 174.

Aftermath

> "If we schismatize on either men or measures, if we do not act in phalanx… I will not say our *party* (the term is false and degrading), but our *nation* will be undone. For the republicans are the *nation*."
> - Thomas Jefferson to William Duane, March 1811

The embargo's repeal, through a single act of Congress, proved that the minority section still did have the power to affect national policy with constitutional methods, and after the Non-Intercourse compromise American politics settled back into an uneasy peace. The young American republic had faced and survived its first real sectional crisis since the ratification of the Constitution. Through the state and national elections, local petitions, and largely peaceful protest, the embargo was overturned, and the dust settled. New England Republicans had been warned of aligning too closely with the southern wing of their party, and the Federalist leadership had been checked, at least for the moment, of its most extremist tendencies. What matters, in the end, is not how close the United States really was to civil war but how close onlookers believed it was. They clearly perceived the danger of a permanent partisan-sectional division between Federalist New England and the Republican South and West, and took note of how rapidly the crisis worsened after New Englanders' November votes failed to enact any change. The ability of a minority to assert its interests had been put to the test, and apparently the minority had won, without having to resort to extra-constitutional measures.

Still, the United States' virulent sectionalism continued to threaten to split politics along the same lines. While both Republicans and Federalists tried to ease their parties' regional affiliations, the embargo uncovered sectional bitterness and mistrust that would never entirely fade for some. Those northeasterners and southerners who had been involved, especially in

Congress, resented one another in the denouement of the crisis. Many blamed each other for the fiasco, convinced that the other had trampled on their rights and interests, as well as those of their constituents.[242] Some never forgot. The fissure in the Republican party over the embargo divided it into two defined camps, neither of which was regionally homogenous. For Joseph Story and Thomas Jefferson in particular, the fight over the embargo became a lasting point of animosity. Their enduring dislike for one another demonstrates a symbolically significant fight: a young Congressman from a Massachusetts seaport, against the great Virginian president, embittered by the failure of his diplomatic experiment. While certainly not the only participants who remembered the embargo with anger and resentment, they encapsulate quite well the staying power of the divisions the embargo had caused.

The symbolism of the date of repeal was not lost on Jefferson, and the former president never gave up on the embargo.[243] He especially begrudged that the policy had been repealed without a declaration of war in its place. As his presidency drew to a close, he increasingly looked forward to its end; a few weeks before leaving for Monticello, he told John Quincy Adams over his morning newspapers that he looked forward to the day he no longer had to pay attention to them.[244] But in hindsight he still refused to give up on the embargo, believing that it would have worked had Congress only been less weak-willed and given it time, instead of panicking. In 1810, writing to General Henry Dearborn, he blamed America's current troubles with Britain on the "fatal measure of repeal" and complained that "the wealth which the embargo

242 Schoen, "Calculating the Price of Union," 195-96.

243 Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation,* 916-18.

244 JQA to Louisa Adams, February 21, 1809, in Adams papers, MHS

brought home safely has now been thrown back into the laps of our enemies." Even Federalists ought to have seen the error of their opposition to the policy by now, he said. To Jefferson, Great Britain clearly still maintained control over the seas, and the United States' best course of action was still to keep its ships and sailors off the Atlantic.

In particular, the former president singled out Story for blame. Jefferson ascribed the repeal of the embargo "to one pseudo-Republican, Story." Story had only been in Washington for a short time, Jefferson maintained, but in that time he had convinced Bacon that a civil war was imminent. Bacon then panicked and convinced the "sound members" of Congress to take off the embargo, thus aiding England and the Federalists.[245] Jefferson himself seems to have turned away from New England after he left Washington in 1809. He had mistrusted northerners somewhat before his presidency, but afterward, in his retirement, he came to believe that the South and West were the true guarantors of American republican virtue, and saw the Northeast as a source of corruption. For all of the Massachusetts Republicans' efforts to assure New Englanders that the Republicans were not a southern and western party, Jefferson himself appears to have come to believe it.[246] He disliked moderate Republicans like Story who abandoned party to protect sectional, rather than national, interests. To Jefferson, only loyal Republicans could be entrusted with the great American experiment, the "last hope of human liberty in this world."[247] To Jefferson, a pseudo-Republican was, in effect, a pseudo-American.

---

245 Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, July 16, 1810, LC.

246 Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought" in *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Nov., 1976), pp. 529-556.

247 Thomas Jefferson to William Duane, in Hofstadter, *Idea of a Party System*, 181.

Story, too, remembered the embargo crisis well, and he defended himself and his allies from Jefferson's accusations. "Pseudo-republican of course, I must be," he wrote bitterly, "as every one was in Mr. Jefferson's opinion, who dared to venture upon a doubt of his infallibility." Jefferson had continued to believe in the embargo long past the objective evidence of its failure, Story insisted. His role in the embargo's repeal had been for the good of Republicanism and the union. Had the embargo lasted another year or more, as the president wished, Story was sure the Republicans would have been permanently driven out of power in New England.[248] Story's increasingly nationalistic outlook vindicated his professed dedication to the American union. When the War of 1812 reanimated violent dissent in New England, Story was appalled. As before, he saw Federalists' opposition to the Republican government as a tactic designed to "inflame the animosities between the Northern and Southern people" and achieve "a severance of the Union." During the war, he continued to support Madison even as other northern Republicans defected at the behest of their constituents. Now a Supreme Court Justice, he even tried embargo cases on behalf of the federal government.[249]

In looking back on his first tenure in Washington, however, Story saw a clear sectional division within the Republicans. He wrote to a friend that if he had learned only one thing in Congress, it was "that New England was expected, so far as the Republicans were concerned, to do every thing, and to have nothing. They were to obey, but not to be trusted." Story, after seeing the President and his southern allies cling so tenaciously to a failed policy, believed Jefferson had aimed to keep New England divided and silent while pursuing a southern and agricultural

248 : Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 184-85.

249 : Newmyer, *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story*, 84-92.

agenda.[250] Although he lost his appetite for national politics, Story served again in the Massachusetts legislature, until Madison appointed him to the Supreme Court in 1811, ignoring Jefferson's objections that Story was both too young and a dubious Republican.[251] Story remained a Republican, though on the Court he largely came in line with arch-Federalist John Marshall. Nevertheless, his condemnation suggests that in the aftermath of the embargo crisis, many New England Republicans still worried about the Virginian hold on the leadership and their apparent disregard for their northeastern constituents. This fear became especially pronounced as the War of 1812 revived sectional tensions very similar to 1807-9.

When Madison declared war on Britain in 1812, these fears seemed vindicated, and more Republicans, under fire from Federalists and furious constituents, abandoned the president. In May, just before the United States declared war on Britain, Republican Senator Nicholas Gilman of New Hampshire, who had opposed the 1809 Non-Intercourse Act as too restrictive, complained that he doubted "whether commerce shall even receive a fair and reasonable protection from the federal government." No longer, he went on, could New Hampshire's senators tolerate trade restrictions. "Commerce can never have a fair and reasonable support," Gilman insisted, "untill we have a President from north of the Potomac." He suggested that New England Federalists might, to that end, throw their support to Dewitt Clinton of New York. In language reminiscent of 1808, Gilman stated that the "Southern and Western people combine, and we are divided, and by that means play into their hands." New Englanders, regardless of party, had to stand together in defense of their interest. Nor was Gilman alone. Having barely

250 Story, letter to William Everett, n.d., in Story, *Life and Letters*, 187.

251 Story, *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*, 194-95; Newmyer, *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story*, 70.

survived the embargo, more frustrated New England Republicans abandoned the Republican coalition during the war in acquiescence to their constituents' loud protests.[252]

The last stand for a united New England interest in the crisis years of embargo and war occurred at Hartford, Connecticut, in 1814. Having fed New England separatism for years, top Federalists convened in Hartford and made a list of demands to protect New England's commerce and defense. But in unwittingly bringing their demands to Washington just as the United States seemingly prevailed against England, they dealt a blow to national Federalism from which the party would never recover. Meanwhile, in New England, the war's end—like the embargo's—proved enough to dampen sectional anger. The Hartford Convention discredited national Federalism, though many in Massachusetts viewed its aims with sympathy. Electorally the Convention actually seems to have helped the party in Massachusetts; the state government remained in Federalist hands until the 1820s.[253] But Federalists never commanded national influence again. They nominated ex-New Englander Rufus King (then of New York) for president in 1816, and no one at all in 1820. The first party system ended with the ascension of James Monroe in 1816, whose two terms concluded a quarter century of Virginian rule. The Republican party became a mess of hostile interests, but a firmly cross-sectional one.

Nevertheless, the demands of the Hartford Convention did not die. In 1816, just before the election of Monroe and the beginning of the "Era of Good Feelings" that was supposedly without partisan warfare, the Massachusetts and Connecticut legislatures proposed a constitutional amendment designed to protect New England interests, essentially reviving the

252 Nicholas Gilman to John Goddard, May 1, 1812; Gilman to Goddard, May 23, 1812, both in William Dawes Papers, MHS; Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic*, 7.

253 Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 348-50.

demands of the Hartford Convention at a more opportune time. Chief among these was the protection of commerce. Embargoes on American ships, the legislatures proposed, would not be laid for more than sixty days, no matter what the circumstances. Moreover, Congress would not be able to prohibit commercial intercourse between the United States and foreign nations, including colonies and dependencies, without the consent of two-thirds of both the House and Senate. And, after the harmful commercial disruptions of the War of 1812, the legislatures also asked that Congress be prohibited from declaring war without a two-thirds majority. Clearly, some members of the New England minority still wished to assure a northeastern voice in questions of commerce, a voice that had so clearly been ignored in 1807 and in 1812, and sought an alteration to the Constitution to protect that minority.

The proposed amendment also attacked certain southern privileges. The first resolution in the amendment demanded that representatives and taxes be apportioned among the states according to their number of *free persons*, excluding western Indians and "all other persons"—a clear reference to slaves, whose representation, New Englanders felt, falsely augmented southern influence. Westward expansion appeared to the northeast as southern expansion, so the legislatures also proposed that no new states be admitted into the United States without a two-thirds majority in both Houses of Congress. And, finally, the two legislatures asked that the same person not be elected President a second time, nor the President "be elected from the same State two terms in succession." The Virginian grip on the executive still worried New Englanders. Even at the outset of a supposedly non-partisan era, the remaining northeastern Federalists and their many sympathizers still strove to protect northeastern minority interests, and to keep that minority from becoming any smaller or more isolated. As a result, New England's defensive

loyalty to Federalism did not fully disappear until 1824, when a New Englander once again inhabited the White House.[254]

Fittingly, the amendment met its defeat in the West; the Ohio State Assembly declared it "inconsistent with good policy." American commerce on the eastern coast gradually declined in importance, even for New Englanders, as the wars in Europe ended and the American economy moved westward on canals and railroads. New Englanders had moved to adapt even before the embargo ended. Ebenezer Dickinson incorporated the Amherst Cotton Factory in 1809; if southern cotton could not be exported across the ocean, then it could provide material for northeastern spinning machines. Nearby, in the same year, merchant Levi Shepard's three sons and nephew set up the Northampton Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company, similarly attempting to find a new mode of economy under the constraints of embargo.[255] The War of 1812 provided further stimulus for industrialization, and in 1814 the United States' first mill was famously built and put into operation in Waltham, Massachusetts. Gradually New England began to move toward a combination of agriculture and industrial manufacturing, largely replacing commerce, and thousands of its citizens emigrated west. Ultimately, and not as a result of force, New Englanders did finally turn their backs on the sea.

New Englanders never forgot the embargo, nor did they lose their fears of a southern conspiracy to annihilate their interest. The fight over the embargo had never just been about commerce. Certainly, it was the issue that galvanized the widest swath of the population. But

---

254 "Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed by Massachusetts and Connecticut, and rejected by Ohio. Communicated to the Senate, January 30, 1816," *American State Papers: Miscellaneous, Vol. II* (Washington, DC), 282-83; Matthew Mason, "'Nothing Is Better Calculated to Excite Divisions': Federalist Agitation against Slave Representation during the War of 1812" in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Dec., 2002); Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 81-82.

255 Clarke, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 111-12.

Jefferson's embargo had deeply offended New England regional identity, and unearthed a sectional strain that, in less than a year, threatened the unity of the country. Even as the commercial interest declined, northeasterners' distrust of the South persisted, especially as the slave question, which Federalists had presciently provoked, loomed larger. Ultimately, the bitterness the embargo created lasted much longer than the policy itself. In 1840, abolitionist D. L. Child spoke at a Whig meeting in Northampton, Massachusetts. In his talk he attacked the southern slaveholding "cabal" for its chokehold on the national government. In front of the ex-Federalist farming town, Child argued that the "same fatal hand" that protected southern slavery had, in 1807, "inflicted an unlimited embargo against the votes of all the commercial, and two-thirds of the free States, under the pretense of protecting commerce, but in reality to destroy it."[256] Such an accusation could evidently still command a response, thirty years later.

256: *The Liberator*, March 27, 1840.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Material:

Anonymous. *To the Electors of the Essex South District.* Massachusetts: 1808

———. *An Address, to the Citizens of Rhode-Island, on the choice of electors of president and vice-president of the United States*. Providence: 1808.

——— . *To the Inhabitants of Salem*. Salem: 1808.

Adams, Henry (ed.). *Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815.* Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1877.

———. *Writings of Albert Gallatin.* New York: Antiquarian Press, 1960.

Amory, Thomas C. *Life of James Sullivan with Selections from his Writings*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1859.

Appleby, Joyce. *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s.* New York: New York University Press, 1984.

Ashworth, John. "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?" *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Dec., 1984), pp. 425-435.

Ayers, Edward L., et al. *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.

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

Banning, Lance. *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Buel, Richard. *America on the Brink: How the Political Struggle Over the War of 1812 Almost Destroyed the Young Republic*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Burt, A.L. *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

Clarke, Christopher. *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.

"A Citizen." *An Address to the Citizens of New Hampshire: Upon a Subject.* New Hampshire: 1808.

"Citizens of Vermont." *To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.* Vermont: 1808.

Clauder, Anna C. *American Commerce As Affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1793-1812*. Clifton: Augustus M. Kelley, 1972.

Conforti, Joseph A. *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Davis, Joseph L. *Sectionalism in American Politics, 1774-1787*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977.

"A Fellow Sufferer" [John Park]. *An Address to the Citizens of Massachusetts, on the Causes and Remedy of our National Distresses*. Boston: Repertory Office, 1808.

Fischer, David Hackett. "The Myth of the Essex Junto". *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Apr., 1964), pp. 191-235.

———. *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Age of Jeffersonian Democracy.* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1965.
Frankel, James A. "The 1807-1809 Embargo Against Great Britain." *The Journal of Economic History*. Vol. 42, No. 2 (Jun., 1982), pp. 291-308.
Formisano, Ronald P. *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
Gallatin, Albert. "Fines, penalties, and forfeitures, for violations of the embargo and non-intercourse laws, and the expenses of prosecutions. Communicated to the House of Representatives, March 2, 1811." *American State Papers: Finance, Vol. 2*. Washington, DC.
Gannon, Kevin M. "Escaping 'Mr. Jefferson's Plan of Destruction': New England Federalists and the Idea of a Northern Confederacy, 1803-1804." *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 2001), pp. 413-443.
Gilje, Paul A. (ed.). *Wages of Independence: Capitalism in the Early American Republic.* Madison: Madison House, 1997.
Goodman, Paul. *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.
Hendrickson, David C. *Peace Pact: The Lost World of the American Founding*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003.
Hofstadter, Richard. *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
——— . *The Paranoid Style in American Politics, and Other Essays.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964.
Jennings, Walter Wilson. *The American Embargo, 1807-1809.* Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1921.
Jones, Douglas Lamar. "'The Caprice of Juries': The Enforcement of the Jeffersonian Embargo in Massachusetts." *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Oct., 1980), pp. 307-330.
Knupfer, Peter B. *The Union as It Is: Constitutional Unionism and Sectional Compromise, 1787-1861.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
Labaree, Benjamin W. *Patriots and Partisans: The Merchants of Newburyport 1764-1815.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
Lambert, John. *Travels through Canada and the United States of North America in 1806, 1807, & 1808.* London: Cradock and Joy, 1814.
Lathrop, John. *A Discourse Delivered on the Day of Publick Thanksgiving in the State of Massachusetts: December 1, 1808* (Boston: Monroe, Francis, and Parker, 1808).
Levy, Leonard W. *Jefferson and Civil Liberties: The Darker Side.* New York: Quadrangle/New York Times Press, 1963.
Mason, Matthew. "'Nothing Is Better Calculated to Excite Divisions': Federalist Agitation against Slave Representation during the War of 1812." *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 75, No. 4 (Dec., 2002), pp. 531-561.
———. *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
McCoy, Drew. *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980.

Morison, Samuel Eliot. *The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1979.
Muller, H.N. "Smuggling into Canada: How the Champlain Valley Defied Jefferson's Embargo". *Vermont History*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Winter 1970), pp. 5-21.
Newmyer, R. Kent. *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story: Statesman of the Old Republic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
Peterson, Merrill D. *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
Perkins, Bradford. *Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961.
Phillips, James Duncan. "Jefferson's 'Wicked Tyrannical Embargo.'" *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Dec., 1945), pp. 466-478.
Pitkin, Timothy. *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America.* New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 1835.
Rothenberg, Winifred B. *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
Schoen, Brian. "Calculating the Price of Union: Republican Economic Nationalism and the Origins of Southern Sectionalism, 1790-1828." *Journal of the Early Republic,* Vol. 23, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), pp. 173-206.
Sears, Louis Martin. *Jefferson and the Embargo*. Durham: Duke University, 1927.
Shalhope, Robert E. "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought." *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Nov., 1976), pp. 529-556.
"A Soldier of '77." *An Address to the Freemen of Vermont.* Vermont: 1808.
Story, William W. (ed.). *Life and Letters of Joseph Story*. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1851.
Taylor, Alan. *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
———. *The Civil War of 1812*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.
Tucker, Robert W. and David C. Hendrickson. *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
Turner, Lynn Warren. *The Ninth State: New Hampshire's Formative Years.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983.
U.S. Congress. "Amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed by Massachusetts and Connecticut, and rejected by Ohio. Communicated to the Senate, January 30, 1816," *American State Papers: Miscellaneous, Vol. II*. Washington, DC.
———. "Approval of North Carolina of the measures of the federal government on foreign aggressions. Communicated to the Senate, December 30, 1808" in *American State Papers: Miscellaneous Vol. I.* Washington, DC.
———. "Instructions of Massachusetts to her delegation in Congress to procure a repeal of the embargo laws. Communicated to the Senate, November 25, 1808." *American State Papers: Commerce and Navigation, Vol. I*. Washington, DC.
———. "Remonstrance of Massachusetts against the embargo laws. Communicated to the Senate, February 27, 1809." *American State Papers: Commerce and Navigation, Vol. I*. Washington, DC.

Waldstreicher, David. *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
Warren, Charles (ed.). *Jacobin and Junto: or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames, 1758-1822*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931.
Wewers, David. "The Specter of Disunion in the Early American Republic, 1783-1815." Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2008.
Wolford, Thorp L. "Democratic-Republican Reaction in Massachusetts to the Embargo of 1808." *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Mar., 1942), pp. 35-61.
Wood, Gordon. *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969.
Zagarri Rosemarie. *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.

Selected Manuscript Collections:

Massachusetts Historical Society
Adams family papers (microfilm), 1639-1899
Boston Charity Subscription List, 1808-1810
Bromfield and Clarke family papers, 1672-1861
William Dawes papers, 1727-1814
Gardner family papers, 1772-1915
Timothy Pickering papers (microfilm), 1731-1927
Sedgwick family papers, 1717-1946

Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum
William Gray papers
Edmund Kimball papers
Mary Tarr diaries

Selected Newspapers, 1807-1809

Boston Democrat: Boston, MA
Columbian Centinel: Boston, MA
Courier: Norwich, CT
Greenfield Gazette: Greenfield, VT
Hampshire Gazette: Northampton, MA
Newburyport Herald: Newburyport, MA
Portland Gazette: Portland, ME
The Repertory: Boston, MA
Salem Gazette: Salem, MA