JAMES FAIRMAN FIELDER (February 26, 1867–December 2, 1954), governor, jurist, was born in Jersey City, the son of George Bragg and Eleanor A. (Brinkerhoff) Fielder. On his father's side his ancestors were English. On his mother's they were Dutch; among them were some of the earliest settlers of the old Bergen section of Jersey City and some of the founders of the Dutch Reformed Church in the state. His father was a member of the Fifty-third Congress. Fielder received his early education in the Jersey City public schools and at Selleck's School in Norwalk, Connecticut. In 1887, a year after being awarded his LL.B. from Columbia Law School, he was admitted to the Hudson County bar. He began to practice law in the office of his uncle, former state Senator William Brinkerhoff, and eventually became his partner. Fielder married Mabel Cholwell Miller of Norwalk, Connecticut, on June 4, 1895.

Large, powerfully built and active, Fielder was fond of fishing, hiking and golf. His associates admired him for his mild and pleasant temperament and also for his firm resolve and unshakable integrity once he had set a course.

Developing an early interest in politics, Fielder served on the Hudson County Democratic Committee. In 1903 and 1904, he was elected to the state assembly; three years later he was elected to the New Jersey senate, and he was reelected in 1910 by the largest plurality ever given a senator from Hudson County to that date. In the senate he served on a number of important committees that included Banks and Insurance, Judiciary, Riparian Rights, Passed Bills, the School for the Deaf Mutes and the Soldiers' Home. As a measure of his competence and his popularity, in January 1913 his fellow lawmakers chose him president of the senate, knowing that he would become acting governor when Governor Woodrow Wilson resigned to go to Washington. In his last message to the legislature, Wilson praised Fielder as "a man of proved character, capacity, fidelity and devotion to the public service, a man of the type to which the people of this State desire their public men to conform."

Fielder had been a loyal supporter of the Wilson administration, and as acting governor he turned immediately to the task of completing the Wilson program. Though not a dynamic executive in the Wilson mold, Fielder gained friends through his willingness to combat representatives of the Smith-Nugent machine in the legislature, as well as the state's powerful corporate interests. He vetoed a special Atlantic City bill that would have opened the way to weakening commission government in other cities; he signed the full crew bill that the railroads had resisted, which afforded maximum safety for passengers. His approval of a bill providing for widows' pensions led the state into a field previously neglected. In the fight for constitutional reform, however, Fielder's personal leadership proved insufficient to bring about the passage of a bill providing for the election of delegates to a convention scheduled to meet in the fall. The bill passed the assembly with bipartisan support but went down to defeat in the senate at the hands of senators from rural counties who feared the reduction of their power in the legislature.

The struggle for reform of the jury system was more complicated. The drawing of juries, particularly grand juries, was "notoriously subject to political influence and control," as Wilson had charged. Sheriffs, unsupervised by the judiciary or any other agency or official, drew the juries for the county courts. Frequently controlled by local machines, sheriffs could easily fix the personnel of the juries to prevent the indictment of any interest protected by the machine. The reformers intended to prevent such corruption by turning the whole process over to the judiciary. Both parties recognized the need for reform, but the Smith-

Nugent machine, the liquor interests, and the sheriffs themselves mounted powerful opposition. Despite Wilson's initial leadership and Fielder's vigorous follow-up, this coalition managed through various tactics to prevent the passage of an effective bill before the end of the session on April 4, 1913. In agreement with Wilson and other party leaders, Fielder issued a call for a special session. Before it convened on May 6, President Wilson returned to the state to help with the struggle, but his ambiguous statements and failure to back a specific plan served only to distress and confuse the reformers. Finally, on the eve of the special session, Fielder and other state leaders in conference with the president worked out a compromise bill that provided for jurors to be selected by county jury commissions composed of the sheriff and one other member appointed by the chancellor or head of the court of chancery. An amendment added in the special session required that the bill be submitted to a public referendum. In the election on November 4, 1913, the people approved the new system.

Fielder's intention to seek the Democratic nomination for governor in the fall primary was evident from the beginning. Within a week of becoming acting governor, he announced his candidacy for a full term and began to organize his campaign. For the first time, the gubernatorial candidate would be selected according to the newly reconstructed primary laws. As incumbent, Fielder enjoyed some advantage, but this edge largely depended on Wilson's publicly blessing his candidacy. Fielder's major rival was H. Otto Wittpenn, longtime progressive Democrat, mayor of Jersey City, temporary head of the party in Hudson County and strong supporter of Wilson's programs in the state and presidential campaign. Frank S. Katzenbach, former mayor of Trenton and perennial candidate for governor, was also in the race, but his support dwindled as the campaign ran on. Wittpenn was just as eager as Fielder to win Wilson's backing, but the president, reluctant to choose between two loyal friends and backers, delayed his decision until late summer. Finally, on July 23, 1913, he wrote to Wittpenn that he thought a three-cornered fight would be "most unwise." He felt the party should unite behind Fielder, who, Wilson wrote, "backed me so consistently, so intelligently, so frankly and honestly throughout my administration and has followed, on the whole, so consistent a course that I feel I would have no ground whatever upon which to oppose his candidacy." Clearly Wilson also believed, in view of the Essex organization's antagonism to Wittpenn's candidacy, that Fielder had the better chance for victory. Wittpenn's graceful withdrawal resulted in a handy victory for Fielder over Katzenbach in the primary on September 23, 1913, by 45,229 votes. The size of the victory had been due largely to support from the Smith-Nugent machine. Even so, Fielder, emulating his predecessor, felt it necessary to declare his independence, and a week after the primary he attacked the organization, seeking to read James R. Nugent and his associates out of the party. Wilson immediately expressed admiration for Fielder's stand, but other advisors thought he had seriously weakened his chances of winning over his formidable Republican opponent, Edward C. Stokes.

Fielder campaigned vigorously, speaking throughout the state. He resigned from the senate on October 28, 1913, creating a vacancy in the governorship and evading the constitutional provision against succeeding himself. Despite some pessimism, he defeated Stokes by a solid plurality of 32,850 votes although he received only a minority of the 354,578 total cast. The Democrats retained a slim majority of three in the senate and fourteen in the assembly.

But his victory, Fielder knew only too well, was less than it appeared. Shifting loyalties within the Democratic party had already destroyed any chance of mustering the solid majorities needed to continue progressive legislation. The Smith-

Nugent machine had now recovered fully from the Wilson onslaught. It was forming a new alliance with Frank Hague, a rising young Hudson County political leader gradually emerging as boss of the old Davis organization. Together they formed a major legislative force generally obstructive or openly hostile to Fielder's progressive initiative. Meanwhile, the old-line progressives, the bulk of them originally from the Republican party, once more separately grouped behind Colby, who had taken more than 41,000 votes from Fielder in the gubernatorial contest. And before the end of Fielder's first year, the White House made it clear that it had lost interest in further promotion of the progressive campaign in New Jersey. Wilson, in fact, soon found it politically expedient to put aside old animosities and cooperate with the state organizations that had earlier drawn so much of his wrath.

In the face of these obstacles Fielder's successes were moderate. He secured repeal of the Hillery Maximum Tax law, one of the few distinctly progressive measures he had called for in his inaugural. The law had been passed to protect the railroads after equal taxation laws had brought these corporations on a par with other state taxpayers. Other legislation achieved was hardly controversial. It included the imposition of an inheritance tax, improvement in the conduct of preferential primaries in counties and municipalities, strengthening of the pure food laws, reforms in the penal system, an increase in funds allotted to agricultural research, a bank stock tax law, and a major improvement in the drafting of legislative bills by establishing a Legislative Reference Bureau in the State Library and appointing an expert bill-drafting adviser in the office of the attorney general. Three constitutional amendments were also submitted to the people. The first, which Fielder opposed, granted woman suffrage; the second simplified the amendment process; and the third expanded the power of municipalities to condemn land for public improvement. All three were voted down in a referendum in October 1915.

At the end of the first legislative session of his administration, Fielder summed up his despair in a letter to Joseph P. Tumulty. "I have been up against some difficult legislative situations during my experience at Trenton," he wrote, "but this is the worst that I ever encountered. There are several factions of Democrats and at least two of the Republicans with outside influences constantly at work on each and . . . the Democratic Assemblymen, for the most part, are the most unreliable lot of men we ever had to deal with. One never knows upon whom he can count to assist in legislation."

The situation did not improve, for the Democrats lost control of both houses of the legislature in the 1914 elections. The following year the Republicans increased their lead to continue a domination that endured for more than a decade. The remainder of Fielder's term was frustrating and relatively unproductive, although the legislature enacted some laws he supported. It passed some recommendations of the Economy and Efficiency Commission to reduce the number of boards, departments and political commissions. It created a central purchasing bureau for the state and its institutions. It required advance announcement of proposed expenditures to enable the public to review them and react. It limited a woman's work day to ten hours and safeguarded factory workers from some industrial hazards and occupational diseases. But the governor had little power beyond the ability to threaten with the veto or to use it. A coalition of Democrats and Republicans had already begun to dismantle the Wilson reforms, particularly those referring to New Jersey's corporation laws.

By the end of his term, Fielder, thoroughly at odds with both parties in the legislature, charged them with failure to meet the needs of the state and vowed to have done with politics for life. In 1917, he became State Food Administrator to help the war effort. Two years later he was named vice-chancellor of the court of

chancery, a post he retained for twenty-nine years. He died in Montclair at the age of eighty-seven.

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David W. Hirst

WALTER EVANS EDGE (November 20, 1873–October 29, 1956) enjoyed the unique distinction of serving as governor during both World War I and World II. Born in Philadelphia to William and Mary (Evans) Edge, Walter descended from a family resident in the Chester Valley since the eighteenth century. After his widowed father remarried in 1877, the boy moved with his family to Pleasantville, New Jersey, where his father worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad. Edge spent his boyhood in the occupations of late nineteenth-century rural youth—fishing, hunting, limited schooling, and work. His autobiography, *A Jerseyman's Journal* (1948), recalls these years with the urban American's nostalgia for the Arcadian myth. Edge's formal education ended at the age of fourteen, when he completed the equivalent of eighth grade. He began his business career in Atlantic City, as "printer's devil" on the *Atlantic Review,* and when he was sixteen he found part-time employment with the Dorland Advertising Agency. Within two years he bought the agency and began a rapid approach to his goal of being independently wealthy.

In the best Horatio Alger tradition, Edge worked hard, and circumstances came to his aid. Most significant among them was Atlantic City's boomtown growth as a resort. He had grasped the potentialities of the development early and made himself and his business a part of the movement. In 1893 he established a social-notes paper, the *Atlantic City Daily Guest;* this proved so profitable that in 1895 it became a full-fledged newspaper, the *Atlantic City Daily Press.* His advertising agency, meanwhile, expanded to include general commercial advertising. By 1910 the Dorland agency, with offices in New York City, London, Berlin, Paris and other European cities, was grossing some $10 million annually. By the early years of the twentieth century Edge had established a financial independence in business enterprises that continued to support him comfortably over the next fifty years, while he engaged in public affairs.

Walter Edge married twice. By his first wife, Lady Lee Phillips, whom he wed on June 10, 1907, he had one son, Walter E. Jr. The first Mrs. Edge died in July, 1915. On December 9, 1922, he married Camilla Loyall Ashe Sewell of Bath, Maine. One son, Loyall, and two daughters, Camilla and Mary Esther, were born to this union. His second wife and his four children survived him.

Even while concentrating on his goal of early financial independence, Edge had always envisioned a career in politics and public service. In the early 1890s he had become active in the Atlantic City Republican party, and in January 1897 he had been appointed journal clerk of the senate as a reward for his newspaper's endorsement of the GOP candidates. From this undemanding position he observed the tactics of state politics and met its chief figures. With time out for service in the Spanish-American War, Edge