to a vacancy on the State Board of Education.

Although Moore continued to maintain a residence in the Lafayette section of Jersey City, during his late years he spent much time at a summer home in Mount Airy, Hunterdon County. Horseback riding was his favorite avocation. His legal practice, corporate directorships, and a multitude of speaking engagements meant that his schedule remained a busy one. Moore's last major political involvement was as campaign manager for Elmer H. Wene, unsuccessful Democratic gubernatorial candidate in 1949. That year also marked the overthrow of the Hague machine in Jersey City. On November 18, 1952, Moore suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and died while at the wheel of his automobile near his Hunterdon retreat. He was 73.

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Richard J. Connors

MORGAN FOSTER LARSON (June 15, 1882–March 21, 1961), New Jersey's fortieth governor, was born in Perth Amboy. He was the son of Peter and Regina (Knudson) Larson. His father was a Danish blacksmith who immigrated to the United States at the age of twenty-two.

Larson's rise from obscurity to the state's highest elective office in 1929 is a Horatio Alger story in local politics. Educated in the Perth Amboy public schools, Larson later studied engineering at Cooper Union Institute in New York City. In his determination to succeed, he applied the Protestant virtues of hard work and personal sacrifice as a student. He worked in Perth Amboy during the day and commuted to New York for night classes; by 1907, when he was graduated, he had logged a total of sixty thousand miles. Larson served as Middlesex County engineer in 1907–1910 and 1923–1924. He also served as city engineer for Perth Amboy and township engineer for Woodbridge. In 1914 he married Jennie Brogger, and that union lasted until her death in 1927.

Perhaps the most revealing incident in Larson's private life took place in 1921, when his brothers Lawrence and George Larson were killed in a grade-crossing accident. Larson softened the impact of that tragedy on his brothers' seven children by taking them into his home and giving each a college education.

In 1921, at thirty-nine, Larson ventured into electoral politics and was elected state senator as a Republican from Democratic Middlesex County. He was reelected in 1924 and 1927. In 1925 he became the senate's majority leader and a year later its president.

More than any other public concern, transportation interested Larson while he served in the senate, and it provided an issue of sufficient public appeal to bolster his prospects for statewide office. The rising popularity of the automobile during the 1920s and the resultant shift of thousands of city residents to suburban communities dramatized the obsolescence of New Jersey's road system. In 1925 the engineer-turned-political-leader joined Senators William B. McKay and Arthur N. Pierson, of Bergen and Union counties, to win legislative backing for three ambitious transportation projects: the George Washington Bridge, between Fort Lee, New Jersey, and 178th Street in Manhattan; the Outerbridge Crossing,

from Perth Amboy to Tottenville; and the Goethals Bridge, from Elizabethport to Holland Hook. Larson achieved his most notable success in the senate in 1927, when he sponsored legislation for a state highway system. It provided for 1,700 miles of improved roads, costing an estimated $162 million, and called for a comprehensive plan for the future construction of highways. Moreover, the highway act helped put an end to the acrimonious debates and pork-barrel highway bills that had traditionally subverted efforts to modernize the state's transportation network.

Larson's advocacy of heavy transportation expenditures and his ability to placate his fellow senators gained him increasing support in the Republican hierarchy. As senate majority leader, he reportedly "went along with the majority of the members in anything they proposed," in effect associating himself with the stronger, more broadly based Republican leaders. During the 1920s he carefully built an allegiant constituency in Middlesex County, where, one observer noted in 1928, "everybody likes him." A *Newark Evening News* reporter recalled him as "under middle height, compactly built with thick brown-gray hair and complexion tanned by much outdoor life. He is of nervous, vital temperament, full of pep, youthful in outlook, smiles often and alluringly, popular, a 'regular guy' to use the vernacular." This "regular guy" image ultimately made Larson one of Middlesex County's most successful Republican spokesmen, and his adeptness in remaining essentially unscathed by Republican factionalism set the stage for a gubernatorial bid as the 1920s drew to a close.

Larson's final test as a prospective Republican standard-bearer came in 1927, when he faced what appeared to be a stiff challenge for his senate seat from Democrat Frederic M. P. Pearse. After an unusually vigorous campaign, Larson handily beat Pearse with the largest plurality any candidate for office had gained in the history of Middlesex County.

As the gubernatorial election of 1929 approached, Republican leaders viewed Larson's candidacy as a remedy to a potentially serious breach caused by the rivalry between two Essex County stalwarts, J. Henry Harrison and Fred G. Stickley, Jr. Furthermore, Mayor Frank Hague, the Hudson County Democratic boss, eyed the senate president with curious favor. Hague had successfully elected three Democratic governors in a row; in the upcoming election, however, his machine faced outspoken opposition from one gubernatorial candidate, reform Republican Robert Carey of Jersey City. A Carey victory in the general election would undoubtedly weaken Hague in Hudson County and perhaps spell disaster for him in other parts of the state. Hague sought to spoil Carey's bid by assuring a Larson victory in the upcoming Republican primary. With the help of twenty thousand votes cast for Larson by Hudson County Democrats—an unethical though not illegal practice at the time—the senate president beat Carey and two other Republican candidates. Hague's short-term strategy had worked, for Larson appeared to be a weaker opponent than Carey. After the primary, however, the scheme backfired. Larson became a formidable adversary to Hague and to Democratic control of the governorship.

Larson's gubernatorial campaign revealed some of the problems that would trouble him after winning office. His amiable, indulgent political style preserved a fragile alliance with Republican senators and with the powerful party chairman and United States senator, David Baird, Jr., of Camden County, yet it worked against him as the party's standard-bearer. Early in his candidacy Larson made his major issues the conservation of potable water, the development of transportation, and the control of water pollution. These laudable concerns stimulated little interest in the electorate, however. Predictably, confidence in Larson's political astuteness waned through the summer and fall of 1929.

Most Republican leaders wisely thought Frank Hague the most provocative issue and urged Larson to strike out against him.

In late September, after weeks of spiritless campaigning, candidate Larson finally took the offensive. He began to lash out at Hague's bold domination of state politics, claiming that the supporters of the Democratic candidate, Judge William L. Dill of Paterson, were voting to continue Hagueism. By late October graft and corruption had become the targets of Larson's speeches. "If I am elected Governor," he told audiences, "I will enter the Capitol at Trenton through the front door and the Hague machine will go out the back door." This shift in campaign rhetoric, although it came after three months of lackluster public appearances, worked remarkably well. Although Dill was unquestionably honest and appeared to be independent of Hague, he could never completely shake the implication that he was in some way indebted to the Hudson County machine. Dill received 671,728 votes to Larson's 824,005.

From the beginning of his administration, Governor Morgan Larson encountered serious division in his party and challenge to his authority. The most evident reason for these difficulties was his inept handling of local patronage during his first year in office, but he faced a more fundamental dilemma. During the 1920s and 1930s the state legislature rarely cooperated with the long-range objectives of the governors. Larson's difficulties with the lawmakers exceeded those of his predecessors, in part because after taking office he became somewhat of a political maverick. He sought, perhaps prematurely, independence from the Republican party chieftains whose support he had cultivated as president of the senate. In the first confrontation, Larson insisted that the attorney generalship be given to Senator William A. Stevens of Monmouth County, though traditionally that office had been filled after consultation with county politicos. Later the governor angered Camden Republican boss Baird by selecting John Drewen for Hudson County prosecutor; Baird, ever the archenemy of Hagueism, wanted Larson to appoint the avowed antimachine Republican, Robert Carey, to the position.

Following the storm of controversy over the Drewen appointment, Larson made another serious tactical blunder by nominating Mayor Clyde Potts of Morristown to another term on the state board of health. The Potts nomination dismayed many Republican senators. A senate investigating committee had implicated Potts in a scheme to suppress competition in constructing the Dover-Boonton trunk sewer. The committee alleged that Potts, in violation of state law, had permitted the use of expensive patented materials and had destroyed important records bearing on the project. The evidence against Potts was considerably stronger than the governor's rationale for nominating him: Larson called Potts a close friend and political ally, and, after examining the testimony, said that "there didn't seem to be anything that involves his work as a member of the State Board of Health." Not surprisingly, the governor's justification only intensified the opposition. Larson's critics argued that he had created an embarrassing dilemma for the senate and called on him to rescind the nomination. Finally, after receiving considerable pressure, Larson followed the advice of leading Republicans and withdrew the mayor's name.

In another episode that alienated legislators, he named Senator Clarence E. Case of Somerset County to the state supreme court. This act throttled Case's senate committee, which was investigating improprieties in state government.

Larson's first year as governor ended unsuccessfully. Although his party held majorities in both legislative houses, he never received support for his policies. He faced a defiant legislature that passed "ripper" bills, which deprived him of the power to appoint officials for state agencies and made efficient administration of the government virtually impossible by

causing considerable duplication of effort and waste of public funds.

During his second year in office Larson turned his attention toward improving the state economy, which had begun to slump as a result of the Great Depression. In September 1930 he directed Attorney General Stevens to initiate an action before the Interstate Commerce Commission to end alleged discriminatory freight costs in New York harbor. The complaint, which the governor outlined in his first and second annual legislative messages, claimed the lighterage rates to be in violation of the Act to Regulate Commerce. The Commission disagreed and turned the case down.

In spite of this setback, however, the major achievements of Larson's second year as governor were in interstate affairs. Drawing on his engineering background and his experience in having drafted the first comprehensive highway act in 1927, Larson reached agreement with Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York in 1930 to construct the Lincoln Tunnel under the Hudson River. Although Larson was viewed as a political liability within his own state, he was a knowledgeable spokesman for New Jersey during the talks with New York officials.

During his second year in office Larson, now forty-nine years old, married Adda Schmidt. A native of Denmark, she had been the secretary and companion of his mother.

Widespread unemployment loomed as the major crisis in the state as the Larson administration drew to a close in 1931. In his third and final annual message to the legislature, the governor gave top priority to joblessness and called on the lawmakers to devise ways "to meet the state's responsibility in the crisis." He supported the creation of the state Emergency Relief Administration, a temporary agency that dispensed $8 million in aid to county and municipal programs, but he soon discovered the need for considerably more help from the national government to alleviate the economic and social misery wrought by the collapse of capitalist markets throughout the world. The Great Depression made Larson's last year in office his most frustrating. Like many Americans he believed that the Protestant work ethic and the free-enterprise system were indisputable pillars of strength in a democratic community; the depression, however, brought these traditional beliefs into serious question.

During his candidacy for governor political pundits often compared Larson to Herbert Hoover. Both men, after all, were engineers of humble origin who had achieved success through a rugged application of the work ethic. In retrospect, another analogy seems appropriate, for the Hoover and Larson administrations both began with unbridled confidence but ended during the early depression in failure and frustration.

After leaving the governorship Larson had a mixed career. He had a modicum of success in engineering with the Port of New York Authority, but his many financial holdings in banking institutions, gas and petroleum, and real estate collapsed. In 1945 Governor Walter E. Edge appointed him commissioner of the recently created Department of Conservation, a position he held until March 1949. He remained on the state payroll as a consulting engineer with the Water Policy and Supply Council, yet never again did he enjoy notoriety and influence in public affairs. At the age of seventy-eight, Morgan Larson died in Perth Amboy.

Records of Governor Morgan F. Larson, New Jersey State Library, Bureau of Archives and History, Trenton, N.J.

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