

as governor in midterm to accept President Madison's nomination as brigadier general in the rapidly expanding United States Army.

Evidence of Bloomfield's personal popularity and of the unifying strength of his party leadership became all too clear in the succeeding legislative election for governor in October 1812; for the first time in more than a decade a Federalist was named to fill the chair vacated by "the General." Although his military service was much more prosaic than colorful slogans would suggest (he spent his three years in the military organizing and supervising training and defense establishments in New York and Pennsylvania), he must have been touched by the thoughts of those Republican celebrants who toasted him at a party gathering on the Fourth of July, 1812: "When in the camp, on the march, or under the walls of Quebec, may he never want the genuine character of a Jersey Blue."

When the war ended in 1815, General Bloomfield retired to his mansion in Burlington. His ease was short-lived; his personal popularity and ability to unite warring factions of the party resulted in his election to two terms in the House of Representatives, in 1816 and 1818. Only in 1820, in his sixty-seventh year, was he allowed to decline renomination and retire again to his estate in South Jersey. There he died in 1823, overshadowed in history by the founding fathers, to whom he was contemporary, but bound to them by his able service to the causes that had rendered them immortal.

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Emmet Collection, New York Public Library, New York, N.Y.

Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C.

New Jersey Broadside Collection, The New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, N.J.

Samuel L. Southard Papers, Princeton University Special Collections, Princeton, N.J.

John W. Taylor Papers, The New-York Historical Society, New York, N.Y.

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Carl E. Prince



AARON OGDEN (December 3, 1756-April 19, 1839), a man of impressive physique and a craggy and truculent countenance, had a character to match. To a distinguished family name he added a lustrous military service during the Revolution and a solid reputation among New Jersey lawyers.

The family had deep roots in New Jersey. John Ogden, who built a house in Elizabethtown in 1664, was one of the original settlers of that community. He moved there from Long Island, to which he had emigrated in 1640 from Hampshire, England. Aaron's father, Robert Ogden, had been speaker of the New Jersey lower house on the eve of the American Revolution. Aaron graduated from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1773. There he met many of the state's future leaders, with whom he worked and fought in the Revolution and later in the state's courts and in the political arena. In 1787 he married Elizabeth Chitwood, daughter of another prominent family, who bore him two daughters and five sons.

He capitalized on his assets to become one of New Jersey's leading Federalists

and to build a long and impressive political career. During the early national period, however, political success in New Jersey depended on party victory, not individual ability. Federalist Aaron Ogden could never overcome the Jeffersonian-Republican party's control of state politics to achieve sustained political success. He served two years (1801-1803) in the United States Senate, completing the term of James Schureman, who had resigned. From 1803 to 1812 he was elected annually to the state's general assembly, where he was the leader and the workhorse of the ineffectual Federalist minority. During these years Ogden's Federalist colleagues nominated him for the governorship whenever they wanted to challenge the Republican majority, but this was only a token action. The governor was elected by the legislature, and the Republican majority elected Joseph Bloomfield every year from 1803 to 1812.

In 1812 New Jersey Federalists shared in the nationwide Federalist revival brought about by the opposition to the national administration's maritime policy and the declaration of war against England. They won a majority in the legislature and elected Ogden governor. In 1813 the Federalists lost their majority and with it the governorship, beginning their slow decline to dissolution. Ogden dropped out of active politics to pursue a career in banking and steamboating. His permanent claim to fame, in fact, rests on his efforts to promote steam navigation, not on his political career. He is the Ogden in the landmark Supreme Court decision *Gibbons v. Ogden*, which ended private monopolies in interstate commerce.

In his year as governor, Ogden led the Federalist majority without being its captive. He showed an ability, integrity and independence which the state could have put to good use had partisanship not so dominated its elections. The most immediate issues Ogden faced during his term involved defense against possible British attack, coastal defense in cooperation with the governors of nearby states,

and relations with the national government.

On January 21, 1813, Ogden informed the legislature that though the state militia was willing and anxious to take the field in defense of the state, its arms and munitions were deficient for active service. The legislature appropriated a sizable but insufficient sum to remedy this defect. The national government also provided inadequate and deficient arms, having more immediate use for the little equipment it had. Ogden devoted enormous energy to solving this problem, to no avail. The Federalist legislature, which had passed some vitriolic resolutions condemning the war and its "wasteful and disastrous" conduct, refused Ogden's request for adequate appropriations. Diehard Federalists, hoping to drive Ogden to a position totally against the war, condemned the national government for not supplying the New Jersey militia or adequately providing for the state's defense, but he refused to be driven.

Ogden's general orders of November 16 and December 1, 1812, placed portions of the state militia in federal service under federal officers. In a speech at Newark he pledged the state's cooperation with the government's war efforts. He worked out a plan with Governor Daniel D. Tompkins of New York for the joint defense of New York harbor, and with the governors of nearby states on plans for coastal defense. Even though Federalists complained that his exertions were contrary to the party policy of opposing the war effort, Ogden won high praise from moderate Federalists and from his Republican opponents. Under the headline "Honor Where Honor is Due," the *Trenton True American*, the state's leading Republican newspaper, complimented Ogden on the "patriotic stand he has taken in defense of his country." His conduct, the paper said, was distinctly different from "the anti-American conduct of the friends of peace." The article concluded that Ogden "knows the value of liberty too well to sacrifice it on the

altar of faction." The Madison administration appreciated his cooperation so much that Secretary of War John Armstrong offered him command of the New York-New Jersey military district. Ogden refused because Armstrong insisted that to accept the post he would have to resign as governor. When Republican Governor Tompkins of New York took that command without relinquishing the governorship, New Jersey Federalists concluded that the original offer had been a Republican stratagem to remove a Federalist governor. Ogden refused to accept this conclusion and rejected all suggestions that he adopt a more intransigent attitude. Throughout his term he consistently supported the war effort and the national government's conduct of the war.

Other than controversies concerning the war, two issues dominated New Jersey politics during Ogden's term. The Federalists recognized that their victory in 1812 was the result of a peculiar set of circumstances and passed two bills through which they hoped to retain power. They changed the method of choosing presidential electors from popular to legislative election, and they passed a complicated redistricting law, hoping to gerrymander the state in their favor. The governor supported both measures and lost much of the reputation for non-partisanship won by his attitude toward the war.

Equally partisan, but less divisive, was the issue of state banking. Federalists, with Ogden in the lead, had long advocated the expansion of the state banking system but before 1812 had made no headway against the Republican majorities. Once they had won control of the legislature, they chartered six new banks capitalized at over \$2 million. Each bank was to raise its own capital by selling shares par-valued at \$50 each. Half of the stock of each bank was reserved for the state, and so was the power to make some appointments to the board of directors. Ogden worked hard behind the scenes to assure the passage of this bill and even

harder to assure that the banks created by the law actually came into being. But he refused to cooperate with the Federalist majority when it tried to politicize the banking system.

The Republican legislature of 1811 had passed an act authorizing the governor to sell state-owned shares in the bank of New Jersey to the highest bidder so long as the bid was not below the state's original purchase price. A resolution by the Federalist legislature of 1812 authorized the sale of state-owned bank stock at the best price it would bring on the market. Ogden informed the legislature that the law and the resolution were in conflict. In a rare display of executive independence, he refused "to execute the commission assigned to me" until the conflict was resolved. For this action he once more won high praise in the Republican press. However, his personal popularity could not be converted into another Federalist victory.

In the elections of 1813, the Republicans argued that opposition to the war would encourage the enemy and prolong the conflict. They blamed the Federalists for the defenseless condition of the state and condemned them for the change in the election law, some polemicists arguing that the Federalists were more concerned with their own reelection than with the country's defense against attack. The Republican press did not vilify Governor Ogden. If mentioned at all, he was compared favorably to the unpatriotic New England governors and the less-than-patriotic Federalist majority in the state legislature. On this platform the Republicans gained a ten-vote majority in the legislature and by that margin elected William S. Pennington over Ogden to the governorship.

After the war's end in 1815, Ogden shifted his energies from law and politics to steamboating. His ships, the *Sea Horse* and the *Atlanta*, carried freight and passengers from Elizabethtown Point to New York City, earning substantial profits for Ogden and his partner, Thomas Gibbons. A series of personal and commercial dif-

ferences forced the dissolution of the partnership and began the long and complex litigation which culminated in the landmark Supreme Court decision of *Gibbons v. Ogden* in 1824. The expense of the litigation and the loss of the steamboat franchise depleted the fortune Ogden had accumulated. In 1829 Congress created the post of collector of customs for Jersey City especially for Ogden. Though lucrative, the position did not pay enough to enable him to liquidate his obligations, and he was imprisoned for debt in New York. Fortunately, his boyhood friend and Princeton classmate, Aaron Burr, pushed a bill through the New York legislature prohibiting imprisonment of revolutionary war veterans for debt. Thus reprieved, Ogden comfortably lived out his life with his sinecure in Jersey City. He died there on April 19, 1839.

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WILLIAM SANDFORD PENNINGTON (1757-September 17, 1826), the state's sixth governor, was one of those who benefited

most dramatically from the social mobility stimulated by the revolutionary war. He was perhaps the first governor of either the colony or the state who did not derive from hereditary, propertied gentry; in large measure this fact affected his outlook and his place in history.

Pennington was born into a Newark family of limited means. He was orphaned at an early age, and his formal education ended with apprenticeship to a local hatmaker. He joined the Continental army as an enlisted man when the Revolution began. Though his service record is confused by unsubstantiated claims to heroism, it at least partly shows his value to the American cause: he was made sergeant in an artillery unit in 1777, commissioned second lieutenant in the field in 1780, and, having served through the entire war, mustered out as a brevet captain. He returned to Newark to work as a hatter. By the early 1790s he was in business for himself as a retail merchant in his native town.

He typified the new, self-made elitist attracted to the Jeffersonian-Republican cause in the 1790s. Following a pattern of political involvement not uncommon in other states in the formative years of America's first party system, Pennington and his brother Aaron helped found the Essex County Democratic Society; this was part of a Jeffersonian-Republican movement emerging from popular American support for the French Revolution and encouraged particularly by the organizational efforts of Edmond Genet, French minister to the United States in 1792 and 1793. The Pennington brothers rose to leadership of the society and in 1796 used the organization as a springboard to found the first Jeffersonian newspaper in the state, the *Newark Centinel of Freedom*. This political commitment left the now successful and outspoken Anti-Federalist revolutionary veteran only a short leap from entry into active politics.

Newark provided fertile ground for men and women with Jeffersonian leanings: it was the home of several families like the