
During the past quarter century America’s first party system has been the focus of a substantial amount of scholarly research. The Southern Federalists, 1800-1816 is the first attempt to chart the history of the Federalist party in the South following the election of 1800. For reasons that remain unclear Maryland has been excluded. This is particularly unfortunate since Jacob Wagner’s Baltimore Federal Republican was the most virulent Federalist newspaper of the age. Too, Robert Goodloe Harper, Alexander Conte Hanson, and other leading southern Federalists came from that state. Nevertheless, this look at Federalism in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia remains a useful undertaking.

For the first half of his book James H. Broussard tells a familiar tale. Unable to respond appropriately to the rapid political and social change that characterized Jeffersonian America, southern Federalists clung to an outmoded elitism, railed against Republican hypocrisy, showed no appreciation for the role of the minority in a two-party system, and, even when faced with extinction, refused to organize politically. To be sure, during the embargo crisis and the War of 1812 Federalism enjoyed limited revivals in the South. These rallies were short lived, however, for those who turned in anger to the Federalists found nothing in common with them. Although it is never stated categorically, the evidence presented suggests that little difference existed between southern Federalists and their northern counterparts save that in the South apathy was so overwhelming that it proved impossible to organize statewide Federalist political machines similar to those that existed in a number of northern states.

Broussard is at his best when narrating the history of southern Federalism at the national and state levels and when recounting election statistics. His handling of significant interpretive issues is disappointing however. For example, after a brief survey of the economic, demographic, and religious possibilities in an attempt to uncover the common denominator that explains the existence of the Federalist party in the South, he grasps at an ideological explanation that will satisfy few. Only one issue united southern Federalists, he argues, fear of France and her revolution. This view is complemented by a second highly debatable judgment: Federalism in the South had no local roots but focused solely upon national and interna-
tional questions. When these issues ceased to pertain after 1815 "there was no longer any need for a Federal Party" (p. 179). Individuals then drifted away and the party went into permanent decline. The application of modern social science techniques to these important interpretive questions might perhaps have produced more sound and defensible explanations for the existence of a southern wing of the Federalist party and its final disappearance. But Broussard's traditional methodology has not yielded convincing results.

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This title is somewhat misleading. Instead of an avant-garde psychobiography of Abraham Lincoln, George B. Forgie has written an old-fashioned study of themes and materials which were the staples of the discipline of American Studies some ten to fifteen years ago. Lincoln does not figure prominently in the work. To say this is not to condemn the book but to inform the potential reader of its true nature.

What is meant by the themes and materials of American Studies is the attempt to capture the national "mentality" or "style" of a "generation" (which Forgie calls the "post-heroic generation") and the search for the key to this in "rhetoric," utilizing such materials as obscure baccalaureate addresses, little-used middle-brow periodicals, the stories and novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne and James Fenimore Cooper, and the forgotten oratory of Edward Everett. Forgie attempts to unify his somewhat discursive book by a vaguely psychological theme: the problem of the leaders of the generation which followed that of Washington and Jefferson was to imitate their virtues without destroying the truly heroic work of America's revolutionary fathers.

Many of Forgie's particular insights are valuable, and some are downright brilliant. Saving Mount Vernon from destruction was a symbolic attempt at saving the Union itself. That Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" described a healthy ritualistic patricidal act belongs in the brilliant category. So does the view that Hawthorne shows Holgrave in *The House of the Seven Gables* not to be radical at all, for domesticity completely tames him and makes him the inheritor rather