

**THE DISSOLUTION OF A REPUBLICAN:
DANIEL WALDO LINCOLN, 1784-1815**

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2010

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the
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Abstract

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Recent scholarship on the first generation of Americans born after the Revolution has focused on the entrepreneurial spirit and individualism of young people eager to create a nation of equal opportunity. The rise and spread of a democratic polity couched within an expanding liberal economy shaped new definitions of self and position. For Daniel W. Lincoln the second son of Levi Lincoln, the prominent Democratic-Republican of Massachusetts, the new cultural and political landscape brought contradictory and unsettling consequences. As an inheritor of the Revolution and a Republican, he outwardly espoused his father's principles and championed a country of equal laws, equal rights, and equal opportunity for every man. Socially, however, he was conservative, a closet cultural Federalist, who preferred deference, philosophy and poetry to politics and partisanship. For an elite Republican in Massachusetts such as Daniel Lincoln, there were few likeminded souls who shared his sensibilities.

The tension between the equality intrinsic to Jeffersonian ideology and the elitism Daniel naturally gravitated toward left him a lonely melancholic and progressively more out of synch with his peers. He increasingly turned to alcohol for relief with disastrous

consequences. Throughout his life Daniel tried his best to exemplify those values which he claimed to revere, but his inability to control his drinking abrogated these standards, embarrassed and disappointed his father, and alienated him from the respect and affection of his peers. He died of alcohol-related illness when he was only thirty-one.

Daniel Lincoln's story is more than a case study of nineteenth century failure. He succeeded professionally as a lawyer and Republican orator. He had a thriving law practice in Boston as well as in Portland, Maine. Based on over 250 letters Daniel wrote to his family and friends, this dissertation provides an unusually intimate look at the effect of changing nineteenth century definitions of deference, class, gender and politics. Daniel Lincoln's letters chronicle a new perspective of a nation in transition and add to the richness and complexity of the historical synthesis of the early American republic.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible had I not married very well. Not only did my husband, Richard Dresser, provide me with the subject of this dissertation but he lovingly sustained me and championed me throughout this long process. His cousin and my good friend, John Herron, Jr., introduced me to Daniel W. Lincoln and was the first to make the suggestion that Daniel would make an interesting research topic. (“And by the way, here is a collection of over 200 letters from the early nineteenth century you might want to look at.”) Jock’s encouragement and faith that I could do well by Daniel helped keep my head down and my pen to paper. The blossoming scholar, Samuel Dresser, gave his mother a reason to push on and make her worthy of his good regard. My sisters, Anne Marble Caramanico and Peggy Marble, gave me gentle and not-so-gentle nudges along the way for which I am grateful. Tom Caramanico gave up his desk several summers in a row so I could write and read and complain in the safe company of family. Earl Dresser made sure I got out and about on a daily basis no matter what.

Professors Andrew Robertson, Jonathan Sassi, and Carol Berkin provided me the scholarly direction I needed to bring Daniel to life and give his nineteenth century struggles twenty-first century relevance. I am also grateful to Professors Angelo Angelis and Thomas Kessner for their time and thoughtfulness in reading this work. Ron Davis, professor of history at California State University Northridge, was my first great history teacher who showed me how history was not only fascinating but odd, mysterious, heart-breaking, hilarious and always human.

I am also grateful to the Colonial Dames and the Charles Tanenbaum Eighteenth Century Reading Room at the CUNY Graduate Center for fellowships that provided me with financial support during my studies. Caroline Fuchs, Kathy Quinn, Binny Terecek, Susan Falck, Lynne Reitman, Ilsa Halpern, Rachel Tarses, Jeanne Blake, Edith Thurber, Judy Stoeven Davies, Janet Zarish, and most especially Lynn Schlesinger, have been steadfast and wonderful friends for many years and provided distraction and pleasure far beyond the stacks and archives.

Lastly, my mother, Rebecca Bonnell, to whom I dedicate this work and with whom I debated whether or not to attend graduate school, told me the best thing to do in life is to follow your heart's desire. I have.

For my mother

Rebecca Sturtevant Bonnell

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INTRODUCTION

Daniel Waldo Lincoln died in Worcester, Massachusetts on April 17, 1815 at the age of thirty-one, a “victim of intemperance.” He left behind a modest estate that included a four-year-old horse, a trunk that contained his clothing (pantaloon, military boots, stockings, vest, and a great coat), a silver watch, and a steel-hilted sword. There were also four books: William Hazlitt’s *The Eloquence of the British Senate, Bonaparte and the French People* by Gustav Schlabrendorf, *An Essay on the Natural Equality of Men* by William Lawrence Brown, and *The Works of Thomas Chatterton* in three volumes. The entire estate was valued at \$210.50¹

The official record of Daniel’s life as it appears in the family genealogy is equally unassuming. In an inferior font reserved for women and children who died too soon, it consists of a simple listing of his accomplishments: college graduation, professional appointments, and public orations followed by an excerpt from his 1815 *Worcester Aegis* obituary that eulogized him as a scholar, patriot, and gentleman. At the very end of the paragraph, almost as an afterthought, a sentence appears that is more intriguing and revealing than any of the fulsome accolades preceding it: “Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inebriare longam,” or “In the brief sum of life drunkenness forbids us enduring long.” Daniel Lincoln’s

¹ Inventory of the Estate of Daniel W. Lincoln, Esq. *Worcester County Probate Record Books*, Volume 45, Massachusetts State Archives, 670-71. The estate was valued at about \$3,000 in 2009 terms.

brief entry may have been a genealogist's attempt to shuffle him onto the margins of the family history where he would quietly fade into the past and be forgotten.

But Daniel Lincoln left more than his horse, his clothing, and a few books, that were lost and scattered years ago. Not listed on the official inventory was the collection of over two hundred and fifty letters Daniel wrote to his friends and family. He wrote the first in 1801, on the day the Harvard College overseers admitted him to the class of 1803. He wrote the last letter fourteen years later in March 1815, a month before he died of an alcohol-related illness. Someone, likely a family member, carefully gathered and organized the letters chronologically, binding them into a single volume with a marbled cover perhaps as a sentimental keepsake. Collectively the letters tender a unique record of a young man struggling to find himself during the turbulent years of early nineteenth century America.



Fig. 1. Bound volume of Daniel Waldo Lincoln Letters and Papers. Photograph by author.

As the second son of Levi Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson's first attorney general and a prominent Jeffersonian Republican, Daniel adopted his father's political principles and publicly championed a country of laws, a state separate from the church, a nation free of the corrupting influences of British luxury and hierarchy and sustained by a society of

independent producers. He believed it was his inherited mandate to protect the nation from enemies of liberty, those conservative politicians with an affinity for British monarchism: Federalists. His public loyalty to his father and the Jeffersonian principles he inherited directed his life and determined his friendships. But Daniel was also a member of the elite, grandson of one of Worcester's wealthiest merchants, Daniel Waldo, a Federalist rumored to have been a Loyalist during the Revolutionary War.² As an elite Jeffersonian, Daniel's political and cultural sensibilities frequently clashed.

In many ways Daniel's class, gender, and race created the cultural determinates that limned his sensibilities more in tune with the values and ideals of the educated elite of his father's generation than the rising democratic polity of his own. Consequently, he found himself out of touch with his own Republican cohort. Although he certainly had more in common culturally with his Federalist counterparts, his politics ensured he would find no friends there. For a privileged Republican who cherished traditional values, the clamorous world of ambitious self-made men unleashed by Jeffersonian Republican created a discordant reality.

It was difficult enough to be caught in the vortex of competing currents of an America in transition but another affliction hobbled Daniel even more as he grappled with the task of defining himself in the world. He drank a great deal and was probably an alcoholic. Throughout his life he tried his best to exemplify virtue and honor, but his inability to control his drinking impoverished these standards, embarrassed and angered his family, and alienated

² Daniel Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family: A Record of the Descendants of Cornelius Waldo of Ipswich, Massachusetts from 1647 to 1900* (Worcester: Press of Charles Hamilton, 1901), 162.

the respect and affection of his peers. The rivers of alcohol he imbibed inhibited his psychological development and impaired his ability to come to terms with the many contradictions life handed him. At the end of his life he was a lonely, disgruntled, and melancholy man, too ill to work and dependent on his father's largess for his upkeep, a humiliating end to a once promising life.

Recent scholarship on the "inheriting generation" has focused on the innovation, entrepreneurial spirit, and individualism of men and women who forged a new, dynamic nation of unlimited potential.³ Daniel Lincoln's story, however, reads differently. As a privileged Republican who valued tradition as much as he did the Jeffersonian ideal, Daniel chronicled in his letters a unique perspective of the advancing liberalization and democratization of his time which for Daniel was not the shining beacon of opportunity it was for others. And although alcohol cut his life short, such an early ending was not preordained. For long periods, presumably when he was abstemious, he lived a productive professional and scholarly life. He studied law and devoted himself in his leisure time to belle-lettres and writing.

As individual performance pieces, Daniel showcased his best self in the letters. With his quill pen and a nib so tiny the script often disappeared into the indecipherable, his

³ See Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2000), Joyce Oldham Appleby, *Recollections of the Early Republic: Selected Autobiographies* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997); Joseph J. Ellis, *After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979); J.M. Opal, *Beyond the Farm: National Ambitions in Rural New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Random House, 1995).

practiced, elegant handwriting vouched for his training, self-mastery, and personal aesthetic.⁴ “Whoever can make a straight mark with little pains may learn to write handsomely,” Daniel advised his younger brother. “Let me recommend to you to trace the lines in copperplates with a dry pan until you can imitate them. This practice is useful to learners. A good hand is easily attained. The purchase is trifling, & the acquisition valuable.”⁵ A well written letter could induce the admiration of his readers and they in turn they could mirror back to Daniel the competent, learned, scholar he felt himself to be. If he could convince his readers of his talents, he was on his way to repairing the damage his drinking had done to his reputation and, more importantly, becoming a man they could admire.⁶

Politically an Anglophobe, a contradiction can be seen in Daniel’s enthusiasm for the British Romantics.⁷ The Romantic ideal of the man of sensibility who valued imagination over reason, emotions over intellect, and celebrated the conflicting duality of nature’s sublimity and horror, resonated with Daniel.⁸ Similarly, Daniel saw himself as the tortured Byronic hero, a dark and brooding introspective man, with an aversion to society, unlucky in love, and vulnerable to his own self-destructive tendencies.⁹ His romantic prose and poetry allowed him to safely unleash his passionate side within a scholarly context. As much as his

⁴ Richard Bushman, *Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992), 90.

⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 12, 1806, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers (DWL Papers.)

⁶ See William Merrill Decker, *Epistolary Practices Letter Writing in America before Telecommunications* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁷ At the start of the nineteenth century, there was not yet an American Romantic movement.

⁸ Marilyn Butler, “Romanticism in England,” in *Recent Revisionary Criticism*, ed. Karl Kroeber and Gene W. Ruoff (Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 8-9. Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company A Reading of English Romantic Poetry* (Cornell University Press, 1971), vii-xvv.

⁹ Peter Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962), 187.

father embraced the rational qualities of the Enlightenment, especially as it informed his republican vision, Daniel responded to the dark emotional aesthetic of Wordsworth, Byron, and Blake. Rambling, florid descriptions of man and nature clustered with the arcane, classical references of his traditional education. “Winter stretches his fleecy mantle over the ruins of Nature, over the horrors of desolation,” he wrote of a snowstorm in 1811. “Where now is the rose bud of spring?”¹⁰

Probably as a demonstration to his father of his Republican loyalty and his usefulness as a wordsmith to promote the Jeffersonian agenda, political invective frequently filled his letters but his ire was carefully honed and gracefully wielded. The Republican warrior role suited Daniel and complimented his romantic sensibility as a tireless champion for the public good. He performed it well, but at a high personal price. By taking on his father’s political battle to win his love and approval, Daniel submerged his own ambitions. This undermined his ability to create a separate identity of his own. His real self remained fragile and undeveloped, concealed by the blistering rhetoric of the Republican soldier out to save the world from Federalism. Once he picked up the rhetorical sword to defend Republicanism, he became the pugnacious partisan in a heated political battle that he was not emotionally mature enough to fight especially when he became the target of the opposing side. Consequently, his politics were more about the fight than promoting principles because the principles were more his father’s than his own.

The obedient son did not resist his father’s ambitions for him, at least not outwardly. There are scattered hints of discarded plans of moving to frontier Ohio or New Orleans, and several disdainful remarks about the law and Harvard, but Daniel never seriously considered

¹⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, December 23, 1811, DWL Papers.

going his own way. He did move from Portland to Boston and back again under his own volition, but these were safely circumscribed moves well within the social and political parameters that his father set for him. Throughout his life he stayed the course and tried to become the Republican his father meant him to be. For awhile being the Republican warrior was a workable compromise. He could vent his hostility toward Federalism, rally the loyal, and be a good son. Psychologically, he could displace his hostility toward his father onto the father Federalists and their British counterparts. But whatever vilification or admiration he received from his efforts felt hollow to him. He could not sustain the charade of the Republican heir apparent forever.

Isolated socially, demoralized, disturbed by his fragile relationship with his father, and living in a period when excessive drinking was commonplace, Daniel was particularly susceptible to becoming alcohol dependent. Alcohol numbed his anger and depression. And by publicly dishonoring his father with his drunkenness it was also a means to separate himself from his family as well. But the chief victim was always himself. Once he was sober again, the contrite Daniel regretted his behavior, feared the loss of familial love, chastised himself, made many promises to reform, and tried to subordinate the rebellious inclinations that caused so much pain. Depressed and angry, the cycle began again, each time with more deleterious consequences. Eventually it cost him his life.¹¹

¹¹ As the progeny of a man in the public eye, Daniel's story is not unlike that of other failed sons of famous men who could not find themselves in the confluence of conflicting cultural and psychological pressures that came with the family name. John Adams's sons Thomas Boylston and Charles Adams both struggled with alcoholism. John Quincy Adams's son, John Adams, died of alcohol poisoning. Another son, George Washington Adams, committed suicide. There were some, of course, who exercised what agency was available to them and defined themselves in opposition to their fathers. (James Sullivan, the Republican governor of Massachusetts, had a son William who was an uncompromising Federalist.) See Paul C.

The dissertation that follows examines and illuminates Daniel Lincoln's troubled journey as he framed it in his letters. He was both a player and an observer, reacting to events great and small that swept through his life. Placed in context, the letters are eye-witness accounts to historical events interwoven with his personal agonies. Chapter One is devoted to the father Levi Lincoln's rise as a political figure in Massachusetts between 1775 and his appointment as United States Attorney General in 1800, setting the stage for the world which Daniel, as the good Republican son, would inherit. Chapter Two begins with Daniel's 1801 letters from college and continues through the beginnings of his professional life in Worcester in 1806. His personal demons first appear here and soon gain the upper hand, especially after a sudden and devastating personal loss. Chapter Three charts Daniel's rise and fall in the rambunctious political world of Portland, Maine between 1806 and 1810 when his father was Lieutenant Governor and later Acting Governor of the state. The stakes attached to Daniel's public reputation were never higher. For a while he enjoyed the benefits of patronage and position until another loss triggered a new cycle of self-destruction and withdrawal. In Chapter Four Daniel moves to Boston in 1810 to fight the good fight in a land of Federalists. He sets out determined to build a new life and prove himself to his friends. Once again his achievements, and there are several noteworthy ones, are dimmed by his failure to control his drinking. In the final chapter, Daniel returns to Portland in 1813, fails in love for a third time, falls critically ill, and returns to Worcester in 1814, coming full circle back to his childhood home.

Traces of the public Daniel Lincoln scattered here and there in court records and newspaper accounts, cast only the vaguest silhouette of a man overshadowed by his greater,

Nagel, *Descent from Glory: Four Generations of the John Adams Family* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1983).

louder, and bolder compatriots who shaped the nation bequeathed to them by their forbearers.¹² Without the letters that is all there would ever be of Daniel Lincoln with the exception of the terse second-class notice in the family genealogy. Through good luck and the foresight of later generations who gathered and preserved the collection, Daniel's letters bring to life the man left by the thin public record. From a distance of two hundred years and placed within a contextual historical narrative, Daniel Lincoln's letters create a full and complex portrait of one man's experience in a tumultuous and transformative period. Daniel's letters chronicle a different perspective of a nation in transition and add a singular voice to the cultural and historical synthesis of the early American republic.

¹² Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution*, 1-9.

CHAPTER ONE

“Honored Sir,” The Father -- Levi Lincoln



Fig. 2. Levi Lincoln Portrait by James Sullivan Lincoln. Reprinted from Solomon Lincoln, *History of the Town of Hingham, Plymouth County Massachusetts* (Hingham, Mass: Caleb Gill, Jr. and Farmer Brown, 1827), 334.

Daniel Lincoln's story began when his father, Levi Lincoln, set out from his family estate in colonial Hingham, Massachusetts to make his way in a world unlike any other. Coming of age in the exciting and contentious political aftermath of the Seven Years War that would soon develop into the American Revolution, Levi Lincoln rose to occupy national and state office at the highest levels. He also became one of Worcester, Massachusetts's wealthiest landowners. His official portrait depicts him in his later years -- a white-cravatted, portly man; dignified, staid, and serious. His right hand rests languidly on a book, as if preparing to swear by it. His gaze is distant and inscrutable. As a younger man on the rise at a time fortuitous for the ambitious, Lincoln had been blessed with keen political intuition, driving moral purpose, and unusually opportune advantages that years later produced the

austere and dignified figure in the portrait. His success became the defining template for the generations of Lincolns that followed him.

Lincoln's 1749 birth in Hingham, Massachusetts heralded the fifth generation of Lincolns in Massachusetts. The first was Samuel Lincoln, a weaver's apprentice who arrived from England in 1637 at age eighteen.¹ Levi's father, Enoch Lincoln, lived on the estate left to him by his forefathers and made his living during the colonial period as a mariner in the coasting trade and later as a glazier and farmer. He impressed people as "strong-minded" and "a decided and ardent whig and one of the most influential men of his party...his conversation always turned upon grave and important subjects. He was uncommonly prudent and circumspect in conduct, scrupulously avoiding error. In manner he was reserved."² A life-long American patriot, during the Revolutionary War Enoch Lincoln represented Hingham in the Massachusetts General Court. He also served as a selectman and later on the town's Committee of Correspondence. He represented his district in the state's 1777 constitutional convention. When he died in 1802, Enoch Lincoln left a large estate to his wife the former Rachel Fearing and their ten surviving children many of whom had absorbed his example of activist politics. Levi was the couple's third child and second son.³

¹ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family An Account of the Descendants of Samuel Lincoln of Hingham Massachusetts 1637-1920* (Boston: Goodspeed Bookshop, 1920), 6. Samuel Lincoln arrived in Hingham to join his brother Thomas, who was one of the original founders of the town having arrived in 1633. The original Lincoln, Samuel, was also the progenitor of a more famous cousin, the nation's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln met his cousin Levi Lincoln, Jr. in 1848 when campaigning for Zachary Taylor in Massachusetts. Levi invited Abraham to dine at his home with a number of other distinguished gentlemen from the area, an event his cousin remembered with great affection some thirteen years later. William Herndon and Jesse Weik, *Abraham Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1900), 289-90.

² Solomon Lincoln, *History of the Town of Hingham, Plymouth County Massachusetts* (Hingham, Mass: Caleb Gill, Jr. and Farmer and Brown, 1827), 148-9.

³ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 74.

Enoch was also the father of Amos Lincoln, who served in the Revolutionary War under Colonel Paul Revere. Amos married two of Revere's daughters Deborah and Elizabeth (serially, not simultaneously).⁴ Another son, Abraham Lincoln, followed his older brother Levi to Worcester where for many years Abraham also served as a selectman and state representative. He married Nancy Bigelow, the daughter of Worcester's most renowned Revolutionary War hero, Timothy Bigelow. Abraham was best known as Worcester's favorite apothecary, partial to good food and fine cigars.⁵

To ensure his son's future security, Enoch apprenticed the young Levi to his cousin, Jeremiah Lincoln, a blacksmith. It quickly became evident that a life spent pounding hot iron on an anvil had little appeal for the young Levi. Fortunately, Ebenezer Gay, a prominent liberal Congregationalist, brilliant theologian, and the pastor of Hingham's First Parish Church for fifty years, took notice of Levi's scholarly interests and encouraged him to pursue higher education.⁶ Allegedly Enoch hesitated because he could not afford to provide his other four sons with the same advantage. Gay, however, wielded his considerable influence to

⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁵ Such indulgences eventually proved fatal to Abraham when in 1824 he suddenly tipped over "and in less than an hour was a corpse." William Lincoln and Charles Hersey, *A History of Worcester Massachusetts From Its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836* (Worcester, Mass: Charles Hersey, 1862), 235.

⁶ Gay was one of the founders of what became the Unitarian movement on Boston's South Shore. A believer in rational thought and an opponent of the excesses of the First Great Awakening, Gay considered himself a moderate Calvinist and propagated the role of reason and free will over covenant Puritanism and predestination. In spite of his liberal approach to religion, Gay remained a strict authoritarian in his nearly seventy years at the church which may partially explain his abiding loyalty to the Crown during the Revolution and his persuasiveness with Enoch Lincoln. See Robert J. Wilson, III, *The Benevolent Deity: Ebenezer Gay and the Rise of Rational Religion in New England, 1696-1787* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

Levi's advantage. Enoch proved to be no match for the august Gay. In 1768, when he was nineteen years old, Levi entered Harvard College.⁷

One hundred years after its founding, the young men of Massachusetts's most prominent and influential families were educated at Harvard. Most entered with an eye on the ministry, the typical course of study for the intellectual elite. Mirroring New England's hierarchical society, a student's rank was determined not by his academic accomplishments, but by his family's status. Shows of deference such as doffing caps to higher-ups was required, especially by the freshman who were forced to do the bidding of anyone ranked above them, which meant everyone but the cooks, cleaning ladies, and other on-campus laborers.⁸ In addition to a traditional classical education (Greek, Latin, logic, natural philosophy, theology, geography, oratory, English composition, and belles-lettres), a young man acquired the gentlemanly manners and fashion of the genteel (French, etiquette and ball room dancing) providing him with the social skills necessary for a life among the New England elite.⁹

As Levi pored over the classics, conjugated his Latin verbs, and polished his oratorical skills for future sermons, political turbulence rattled Boston. The irate populace had been fending off a number of highly unpopular British directives since 1765 when the crown issued the ill-fated Stamp Act (the crown's effort to collect their just due in order to pay off debts incurred during the French and Indian War.) Highly unpopular with the colonists, the Act was repealed in 1766 only to be replaced by an even more hated tax in 1767. The Townshend Acts imposed additional taxes on items such as glass, paper, and tea. Increasingly the

⁷ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 170.

⁸ Conrad Edick Wright, *Revolutionary Generation: Harvard Men and the Consequences of Independence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-4.

colonists viewed the British presence as unwarranted and an unconstitutional interference in their affairs. Anti-British public sentiment mounted and culminated in March 1770 when some provoked British soldiers fired into a crowd. Five people died. On one day happenstance brought Levi into a Boston courtroom where John Adams was arguing a case. The combination of the heady political climate and Adams's legal brilliance convinced Levi that in spite of its dubious reputation, a better future lay for him in the law rather than the pulpit.¹⁰

Levi graduated in 1772 and immediately commenced his legal studies with Daniel Farnham, an affluent lawyer in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Perhaps the student and his mentor clashed because Farnham was a proud and vociferous Loyalist who publicly derided those who resisted British authorities as "law breakers and rebels."¹¹ One such law breaker would have been Levi's brother, Amos, who in 1773 dressed as an Indian and threw barrels of tea into Boston Harbor. Levi remained with Farnham for a year and then elected to study instead with exactly the kind of rebel Farnham detested: Joseph Hawley, of Northampton, some 150 miles to the west.

The Hawleys were "River Gods," a moniker bestowed on wealthy families who exercised considerable financial and political influence along the Connecticut River Valley. Respected not only for his rectitude and honesty and a highly regarded as a member of the

¹⁰ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 157. Although their reputation and status had begun to change, lawyers still struggled with a poor public image that originated with the Puritans who viewed lawyers as shysters and opportunists, antithetical to the workings of a Godly community. The nation's first law school at Litchfield, Connecticut would not be established until 1773. Harvard Law School was not founded until 1815. See Gerard W. Gawalt, *The Promise of Power: The Emergence of the Legal Profession in Massachusetts 1760-1840* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979).

¹¹ John James Currier, "Ould Newbury," *Historical and Biographical Sketches*, (Boston: Danmrell and Upham, 1896), 130-1.

state legislature, Hawley also had an impressive pedigree as grandson of the Calvinist divine Solomon Stoddard and a cousin of Jonathan Edwards. Hawley's law practice consisted mostly of debt cases and land claims but contrary to expectations of one of his class, he frequently represented the small farmer defendant against the landowner plaintiff. In 1765 when several local farmers resisted additional taxes imposed by the Stamp Act and refused to pay their debts, Hawley represented them. His defense failed, the farmers were fined, and Hawley was temporarily suspended from the bar. The experience did not deter him, however. It galvanized him. Thereafter, he continued to defy social convention and became an active, if not rabid, Whig and Patriot. In 1774 when Levi arrived in Northampton to study with him, Hawley had become a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress that organized Committees of Correspondence and Safety and military resistance to the Crown.¹²

Levi chose an exciting time to relocate to western Massachusetts and to study with a controversial lawyer often in the midst of the region's political thicket. Shortly after his arrival in Northampton in September 1774, over 4,000 local militia (nearly the entire voting population of the surrounding region) assembled in nearby Worcester. As a protest against the Massachusetts Governing Act, which rescinded many of the self-governing privileges the colonists had enjoyed since 1691, the locals believed that the best way to overturn British

¹² Ray Raphael, *The First American Revolution: Before Lexington and Concord* (New York: New Press, 2002), 25. Hawley, whose father who committed suicide in 1735 following a particularly enthusiastic sermon by Jonathan Edwards, suffered from periods of depression that forced him to periodically withdraw from his law practice. (Allegedly Hawley never forgave Edwards for over stimulating his father and believed Edwards responsible for his father's death.) Hawley's depression had a manic side as well. He became renowned for his patriotic ardor, marching through small rural towns waving a flag in an appeal to young men to fall in behind him and become soldiers. His enthusiasm, or mania, hugely benefited the patriot cause. Hawley succeeded in raising five companies of about 700 men. See E. Francis Brown, *Joseph Hawley, Colonial Radical* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931).

authority was to stop British officials from convening the Court of Common Pleas. When the twenty-five officials arrived to summon the court, the crowd met them and demanded they recant their appointments. The harassed officials quickly did so in writing but the crowd wanted more. In a dramatic showdown, the court officers were made to walk slowly down Worcester's Main Street, reading aloud their recantations thirty or more times so that all those who lined the street could hear it for themselves. The incident effectively ended British authority in Worcester, some seven months before the events at Lexington and Concord.¹³

When news of the British march on Lexington arrived in Northampton, Levi immediately departed for eastern Massachusetts with a number of other militiamen from the area. He arrived too late to get in on the action and ended up staying in Boston only nine days, the totality of his military service.¹⁴ Instead of joining the army or marching with Benedict Arnold to assault the British in Quebec as was the wish of Hawley, Lincoln defied his mentor and took a different course. He returned to Northampton to resume his career.¹⁵ With the country moving toward war and with the colonial political and social structure teetering toward permanent upheaval, the twenty-six year old Levi saw an unusual opportunity to fulfill his political and personal ambitions as well as his patriotic ones.¹⁶

Almost immediately after he was admitted to the bar in Hampshire County in 1775, Levi moved to Worcester, a town some sixty miles to the east. For a young, lawyer on the

¹³ Raphael, *The First American Revolution*, 133-5.

¹⁴ Lincoln's brief service constituted a veritable military Land of Lincoln. Levi Lincoln served under a cousin, James Lincoln, who served under another cousin, Benjamin Lincoln, who would earn his reputation as a great Patriot general during the Revolutionary War. Benjamin Lincoln would later embrace politics antithetical to his cousin's. The brevity of Levi Lincoln's career would cause him some political embarrassment later in his life but even nine short days was enough to earn him political credibility as a Revolutionary War soldier. Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 194.

¹⁵ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 157.

¹⁶ Brown, *Joseph Hawley*, 154.

rise the timing was uniquely fortuitous. Since the 1774 revolution in western Massachusetts and the commencement of hostilities in Lexington, local Loyalists had lost confidence in the ability of the royal governor to protect them from the threatening rabble emanating from the countryside. The most distinguished Worcester families such as the Chandlers and the Paines who had controlled the town for generations, moved to Boston and beyond for protection. (William Chandler, scion of Worcester's most distinguished family had been one of Levi's classmates at Harvard.) Their estates were confiscated and sold. Their positions of authority left vacant. Only two lawyers remained in town after the Loyalist exodus.¹⁷ Two weeks after landing in Worcester, his bags barely unpacked, Levi Lincoln was appointed Clerk of the Common Court, by the General Court of Massachusetts, a post that had long been occupied by the town's leading Loyalist, Timothy Paine.¹⁸

Other appointments quickly followed. In 1776 the town appointed Lincoln to a seat on the Committee of Correspondence and Inspection.¹⁹ The following year the state commissioned him Judge of Probate and in 1779 he was elected a delegate to the Massachusetts constitutional convention. The legislature wanted him as their representative to the Continental Congress in 1781, but he declined the offer. In 1783 the Massachusetts Supreme Court appointed Levi Lincoln Barrister at Law for Worcester County, an honor given to only one other.²⁰ Even more fortuitously for a young man with personal and political

¹⁷ Kenneth J. Moynihan, *A History Of Worcester 1674-1848* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2007), 83.

¹⁸ John L. Brooke, *The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1713-1861* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 155.

¹⁹ Worcester Town Records of 1777 reprinted in *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity*, 4 (1882), 272.

²⁰ The legal system in Massachusetts had been modeled after the British system which included different ranks of lawyers. The barrister ranked at the top. Only he could argue law

ambition, in 1779 the General Court appointed him special prosecutor in the confiscation proceedings of the estates of absent Loyalists. In a move that may have raised eyebrows even then, Lincoln purchased a large portion of the confiscated Chandler estate at cut rate prices for himself.²¹

During this period two high profile court cases widened Levi's reputation as a jurist. The first occurred in 1778 when the court assigned him to defend Bathsheba Spooner, a local woman who was the daughter of the locally reviled Loyalist, Timothy Ruggles. Pregnant by a man not her husband and desperate, Spooner enlisted her seventeen-year old lover and two British deserters to kill her husband and throw his body down a well. Levi's insanity defense of Spooner failed partly because of the overwhelming resentment the patriot jury felt for the daughter of a local Loyalist. The judge sentenced her to be hanged. Spooner repeatedly appealed to the court for a stay of execution until her baby was born but the court refused to believe she was pregnant. All four perpetrators were hanged in front a frenzied crowd of 5,000 people. An autopsy revealed that Spooner had indeed been expecting, making it five, not four, who died that day.²²

A second notorious case placed Levi at the center of the controversy over slavery in Massachusetts. Although the institution had faded by 1781, the Quock Walker case hurried its demise. Levi represented John and Seth Caldwell who were being sued by Nathaniel Jennison for enticing Jennison's slave, Quock Walker, to leave him. Walker had been

in the high courts of Massachusetts. The rank of barrister had been introduced in Massachusetts by the colonial governor Thomas Hutchinson in 1762. Although never as strict as its British predecessor, the title of barrister began to disappear after 1806 when the profession imposed greater regulations upon itself. Gawalt, *The Promise of Power*, 117.

²¹ Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 94.

²² For a full account of the murder and the trial see Deborah Navas, *Murdered by His Wife: An Absorbing Tale of Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth Century Massachusetts* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

promised his freedom when he turned twenty-five by his first owner who had died before Walker reached the age of emancipation whereupon Walker became the property of Jennison. When Jennison refused to manumit Walker as promised, Walker ran away to the Caldwell brothers. Jennison recovered Walker and refused to free him. Lincoln argued that Walker's rights were protected under the 1781 Massachusetts constitution that declared "all men are created free and equal." In his argument Levi wrote, "Is not the law of nature the law of God - Is not the law of God then against slavery?" In the case's final disposition in 1783 which virtually ended slavery in Massachusetts, Supreme Judicial Court Justice William Cushing cited Lincoln's argument.²³

Lincoln's involvement in two other significant postwar events positioned him to assume political leadership in Worcester. The first occurred in 1784 and centered on a church controversy between Arminians and Calvinists. The second incident involved disgruntled indebted farmers who attempted to rebel against the court system. The animosity between the two groups on both occasions divided educated, large land-holding professional men (many of them, like Lincoln, recently arrived in Worcester) from the merchants and farmers long residing in the outlying areas.

The church controversy surfaced over who would be the successor of Thaddeus Maccarty, the terminally ill pastor of the First Church of Worcester. Maccarty had been preaching traditional Calvinist theology of sin and damnation since 1747 but was allegedly open minded enough not to condemn the growing number of more liberal Unitarians thereby managing to maintain a fragile cohesion in his parish.²⁴ The more liberal group favored Aaron

²³ Robert Spector, "The Quock Walker Cases (1781-83) – Slavery, Its Abolition, and Negro Citizenship in Early Massachusetts," *The Journal of Negro History* 53 (1968): 431-42

²⁴ Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 95-7.

Bancroft to be Maccarty's successor. Bancroft was a Unitarian, a man whose views reflected their own rational and enlightened thinking. He extolled free agency, the perfectibility of man, and a benevolent and forgiving God. The majority of parishioners, however, vigorously opposed Bancroft, believing him a heretic. After Bancroft had preached three times and the orthodox parishioners remained undeterred in their opposition to appointing him, sixty-seven of the others left to form the new Second Congregational Church (which later became the First Unitarian Church) with Bancroft as pastor. Those who supported Bancroft, while in the minority, were also among the most powerful of the post-war elite and most were lawyers, judges or clerks of court, some of whom had been Loyalists during the war.²⁵ Lincoln had chaired the parish committee that recruited Bancroft.²⁶

Feelings were still raw over the Bancroft episode when a group of credit-crunched farmers led by Daniel Shays gathered to assault the court house in Worcester and other towns as they had done so successfully in 1774. Demanding relief from their crushing debts, this time the farmer's rebellion fell on less sympathetic ears. This time the creditors were not British Loyalists, but American bankers and merchants. Indebted farmers viewed the lawyers who represented the bankers with disdain, and called them "banditti, blood suckers, pickpockets, windbags..."²⁷ Levi Lincoln who represented numerous creditors pressing for debt repayment, countered the insurgents and appealed to the government to suppress the rebellion. His opposition to Shays made him a target for the rebels who surrounded his home with the intention of "seizing his person." Someone warned Lincoln of their intentions and he

²⁵ Ibid., 97.

²⁶ Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 155.

²⁷ Charles Warren, *The History of Harvard Law School and of Early Legal Conditions in America* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1908), 189.

and his family slipped out the back before they arrived.²⁸ His cousin of Revolutionary War fame, General Benjamin Lincoln, rode out from Boston and squelched the disturbance.

Although Daniel Shays fled to Vermont and escaped trial, others involved in the insurgency faced charges of sedition.²⁹ The court appointed Lincoln to defend Henry Gale, one of Shays's lieutenants. As a farmer himself, Levi may have sympathized with Gale; as an officer of the court and a creditor, his sympathies were limited. His defense may have been tepid or perhaps the outcome was predetermined because the court quickly convicted Gale of high treason and sentenced him to be hanged. Not until Gale was actually standing on the gallows, noose around his neck, prayers delivered, sins confessed, did the sheriff pull from his pocket a temporary reprieve signed by Governor John Hancock. A few weeks later, Hancock fully pardoned Gale who immediately tried to shake off the memory of what happened in Worcester by moving to Vermont.³⁰

While Levi steadily built his professional and public reputation, he also found time to court and win Martha Waldo of Lancaster, a niece of Stephen Salisbury, one of Worcester's most prosperous merchants.³¹ They were married in 1781. Now a respected married man, the model of republican citizenry and responsibility, Levi put his energies into expanding his holdings. In 1782 he bought 150 acres of prime farmland from John Hancock. The property included a mansion built in 1741 that had briefly been used as a hotel for circuit riding lawyers and judges. The two-story Georgian house, uncommonly large for late eighteenth century Worcester County, was conveniently located on the county's busiest thoroughfare: the

²⁸ Ibid., 131; Raphael, *The First American Revolution*, 215-6.

²⁹ Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 129.

³⁰ Lisa Saunders, "The Hanging of Henry Gale," *American Spirit* (2008): 28-9.

³¹ Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family: A Record of the Descendants of Cornelius Waldo of Ipswich, Massachusetts from 1647 to 1900* (Worcester: Press of C. Hamilton, 1902), 158-9.

Boston Post Road.³² The road connected Worcester to Boston forty-seven miles to the east and Springfield fifty miles to the west. Levi and Martha Lincoln lived in the house for the rest of their lives.³³



Fig. 3. Levi Lincoln Mansion formerly the Hancock-Henchman Mansion, Worcester, Massachusetts. Reprinted from Worcester Bank and Trust Company, *Some Historic Houses of Worcester* (Worcester: Worcester Bank and Trust Company, 1919), 8.

Lincoln also acquired property through foreclosure. His gain came from another man's tragic loss. Timothy Bigelow was Worcester's most celebrated Revolutionary War hero. He had led 110 Worcester Minutemen to Concord in 1775, accompanied Benedict Arnold in his ill-fated assault on Québec City, served with General Horatio Gates and witnessed the surrender of General John Burgoyne. He had spent the winter of 1778 with George Washington at Valley Forge and fought bravely at the Battles of Monmouth and Yorktown. But he returned home from the war in 1784, destitute and despairing. It was Bigelow who mortgaged a farm to Lincoln in order to restart his blacksmithing business. When he could not repay his debt, he landed in debtor's prison on Lincoln's claim. In 1790,

³² Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 112.

³³ Charles A Chase, "The Daniel Henchman Farm," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity*, 18 (1902): 261.

alone and friendless, Bigelow died in the desolate jail, reputed to be a putrid place that “disgraced humanity.”³⁴

By 1783, the same year Lincoln became a barrister, the list of taxable wealth in Worcester County cited Lincoln second, just behind his wife’s uncle, Stephen Salisbury.³⁵ By 1800 he possessed over 3,000 acres through connections or confiscation, making him one of the largest land owners in the county’s western district. By 1815 he owned five farms, land in Worcester, and a sawmill; acreage valued at over \$18,000, the highest of any land owner in Worcester.³⁶ He kept detailed books of his farms; tracking every penny spent, and was reputed to be a demanding taskmaster. He was particularly sensitive to any hint of unfaithfulness or fecklessness from his 109 laborers and dealt with them harshly for the smallest infraction.³⁷

While Lincoln was accumulating real estate, his family was expanding. Martha Waldo Lincoln gave birth to the couple’s first son, Levi Junior, in 1782. His birth came just as her husband was earning his reputation as the region’s preeminent landholder. Nine more children arrived over the next nineteen years, seven surviving to adulthood. Daniel Waldo was born in 1784 and his sister Martha the following year. John arrived in 1787, Enoch in 1788, and Rebecca in 1792. Martha gave birth to her last child, William, in 1801 when she was forty. Three other sons ironically all sharing the name Waldo did not survive past childhood. The

³⁴ Ellery B. Crane, “History of the Jo Bill Road,” *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity*, 18 (1902): 207.

³⁵ Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 94.

³⁶ Richard B. Lyman, Jr. “What Is Done in My Absence?” Levi Lincoln’s Oakham, Massachusetts, Farm Workers, 1807-20,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 99 (1989): 159; Gawalt, *The Promise of Power*, 112-3.

³⁷ Lyman, “What is Done in My Absence?” 160-3.

first Waldo died at age five in 1795, the second died the day he was born in 1799, and the third of dysentery at age three in 1803.³⁸

Little else is known about Martha Waldo except that later in life she assisted her son John in his Worcester store and produced enough cheese and butter on the farm to trade with her neighbors significantly enhancing the family coffers. Locals also admired her lush gardens.³⁹ Martha's father, the first Daniel Waldo, was a successful hardware merchant and Loyalist from Boston. He moved his family to Lancaster in 1777 and lived there until 1782, when he moved to Worcester. There he opened a hardware and dry goods store with his son, also named Daniel Waldo.⁴⁰ Post-war Worcester's demand for dry goods soared making Daniel Waldo prosperous enough to indulge his aristocratic tastes and being the first to own a one-horse chaise.⁴¹ He later became the first president of the Worcester Bank. Martha's brother, Daniel Waldo, succeeded his father in that position and steadfastly stood by his conservative principles all the way up to the Hartford Convention of 1814 at which he was an attendee.⁴² He never married and lived with his two maiden sisters, Rebecca and Sarah, both highly religious women whose "piety was the ornament of their character."⁴³

³⁸ Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family*, 162-4.

³⁹ Mary Beth Sievens, "Female Consumerism and Household Authority in Early National New England," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 4 (2006): 360-1.

⁴⁰ Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family*, 158-62.

⁴¹ John S.C. Knowlton and Clarendon Wheelock, *Carl's Tour in Main Street* (Worcester, Mass: Sanford and Davis, 1889), 160.

⁴² Knowlton and Wheelock, *Carl's Tour*, 156.

⁴³ Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family*, 163. The Waldos held fast to the First Congregational Church, at least for awhile. In 1814, however, they left the church because it too had become too progressive. Under the advisement of Boston's Jedidiah Morse, they founded the ultra orthodox Calvinist Church of Worcester. Carolyn J. Lawes, "Trifling with Holy Time: Women and the Formation of the Calvinist Church of Worcester, Massachusetts, 1815-1820," *Religion and American Culture* 8 (1998): 177-84.



Fig. 4. *Left to Right: Daniel Waldo and Rebecca Salisbury Waldo* Reprinted, by permission, from the Worcester Art Museum , “Early American Paintings at the Worcester Art Museum.” http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/

During the 1780s, Worcester’s population began to slowly rise from 1,900 people in 1775 to 2,095 in 1790.⁴⁴ Still chiefly a farming community, a paper mill, blacksmith, painter, carpenter, tailor and shoemaker took care of the needs of its 1,500 residents.⁴⁵ Holding a virtual monopoly on the law there, Levi law practice grew exponentially during the late 1780s and 1790s.⁴⁶ As the power shifted from the pre-Revolutionary gentry to the post-Revolutionary elite, Levi Lincoln found himself nicely positioned to be a leader of a new order. He had been a seminal figure in the Arminian separation from the Calvinist church, he had held the line against the Shaysites, he was a respected jurist and showcased his talents in high profile trials, was a Barrister and Judge of probate, and was rapidly becoming one of the area’s largest land owners. But reaching prominence as a judge and amassing the largest number of acres in Worcester County did not satisfy Levi Lincoln’s ambitions. Aiming for bigger things, he decided to make his mark in politics.

⁴⁴ Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 93.

⁴⁵ Charles Tappan, “Worcester in 1799,” in *Reminiscences of Worcester From the Earliest Period*, ed. Caleb Arnold Wall (Worcester, Mass: Tyler & Seagrave, 1877), 304-5.

⁴⁶ Gawalt, *The Promise of Power*, 45.

In 1790 when Lincoln made his first foray into electoral politics vying for a seat as a state representative, the Federalists, victors of the ratification debate, occupied high office at all levels nationally and throughout Massachusetts.⁴⁷ During the ratification debates over the United States Constitution, Lincoln had been concerned about the power of the federal courts over the state courts as well as the absence of a Bill of Rights but had ultimately supported the Federalist position and endorsed the document. He had also been a Hamiltonian, and in 1791 credited the government with the return to productivity in the agricultural markets.⁴⁸ So when Lincoln ran for public office for the first time he did so as a clear supporter of Washington's government. As one of a pack of fourteen other candidates, however, he failed to distinguish himself and was not elected.⁴⁹

Between 1790 and 1794, Lincoln retreated from politics and limited his civic involvement to school committees and redistricting plans. But he had hardly given up on a political life. Keeping an eye on the federal level, Lincoln watched the growing contention over the guiding principles of government. The republican ideology that had bound the colonies together to fight England had been elastic and ambiguous enough to suit the ambitions of a range of disparate people in vastly different circumstances all seeking to overthrow British rule. When the war ended, and the common enemy was no longer, republicanism as a political principle opened to competing interpretations.

⁴⁷ Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 105-6. Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005), 120.

⁴⁸ Marvin Junior Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln, Sr.: Jeffersonian Republican of Massachusetts" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1969), 49-51.

⁴⁹ "Massachusetts State Senator Election for Worcester County, 1790," *A New Nation Votes American Election Returns 1727-1825* http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1790.00003

On one side, the Federalists supported a conservative agenda that promoted a tempered and balanced government of shared powers. In order to sustain itself, they believed the republic required a strong, consolidated federal government secured by a genteel leadership, a natural aristocracy. They maintained that by keeping the decision-making power in the hands of those who best understood how to wield it, the country would stay the republican course. Commerce would continue to grow with the help of a national bank, Christianity would be the guiding influence of its leaders, and relationships with old friends across the Atlantic would be repaired and flourish to mutual advantage. Federalists feared rapid expansion because a scattered, disparate population could threaten the young nation's stability. Instead they supported a regulated market economy that would make Americans prosperous while at the same time, preserving traditional hierarchy. In short, Federalists looked to an authoritative central government with a strong military establishment buttressed by a tradition of deference as the best protector of liberty.⁵⁰

But to those still squeamish over the possibility of a central government with too much power (and even limited power was too much for many) the possibility of a recandescence of an aristocratic or even monarchical society seemed a very real threat. Keenly sensitive to any hint of aristocratic intrusion, suspicious that a consolidated federal government would transmogrify into a closed, hierarchical society, Republicans led by Thomas Jefferson smelled tyranny in the Federalist agenda and believed it to be anti-republican. To them, the survival

⁵⁰ The literature on the Federalist side of the republican debate is considerable and still growing. See especially James M. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts 1789-1815* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969); Doron Ben-Atar and Barbara B. Oberg, eds., *Federalists Reconsidered* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Linda K. Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980); David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

of the republic depended upon a confederation of sovereign states. A Congress would not only govern more effectively than an overly powerful government, but would also be a better bastion against assaults on personal liberties by a government with an overabundance of power.⁵¹ They opposed national banks, established churches, and federal taxation.⁵² In addition, Republicans were committed to a limited federal government that would foster open and competitive commerce. It should promote frugality and it should encourage agriculture, with commerce “as its handmaiden.” The Union should expand its borders so to broaden opportunity for farmers. Many Republicans kept a vigilant watch for any hint of a monarchical conspiracy clad in American republican rhetoric that might be waiting for the right moment to seize control as Caesar did in ancient Rome.⁵³ Broadly speaking, their message appealed especially to those outside the South who had historically been excluded from the ruling class but were ambitious; rising “new men” whose aspiration was respectability, such as Levi Lincoln.⁵⁴

The French Revolution in 1789 deepened the divide. At first both Federalists and Republicans viewed the events there with equal enthusiasm. Jefferson, long a Francophile, believed France to be “a counterpart to the American experiment in liberty.”⁵⁵ But as the ideals of the revolution deteriorated into the Reign of Terror, the execution of Louis XVI, and

⁵¹ Saul Cornell, *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism & the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 221-30.

⁵² Andrew Robertson, “‘Look at this Picture...And On This!’ Nationalism, Localism, and Partisan Images of Otherness in the United States,” *The American Historical Review* 106 (2001): 1273.

⁵³ Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 5.

⁵⁴ Fischer, *Revolution*, 203. John Adams called this a “passion for distinction” or esteem that directed human action in myriad ways. See Steven Watts, “The Culture of Capitalism,” in *Federalists Reconsidered*, 168.

⁵⁵ Stephen Howard Browne, *Jefferson’s Call for Nationhood: The First Inaugural Address* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 79.

the Napoleonic Wars, alarm and repugnance replaced the initial enthusiasm. Federalists gazed into the future and saw the bloody events in France repeating themselves in America. If democracy was not contained and the cautionary tale of France left unheeded, the United States faced a dark future of a radical democracy gone mad with delusions of power wreaking havoc on the ruling classes.

Jeffersonians looked across the ocean too but cast their wary gaze on Britain. There they saw a far greater threat to their independence and happiness. They saw the British lying in wait, licking their chops at the possibility of reimposing control over their former colonies through domination of its maritime commerce. Britain, they believed, was just waiting for Americans to falter and fall through division and crises. Feelings concerning the wars in Europe, whether they were Anglophile or Francophile, fell cleanly into either the Federalist or Republican camps.⁵⁶

Although both sides agreed that union was crucial to the republican ideal, the 1790s were nothing if not brutally antagonistic and divisive as the argument grew louder. Both sides, however, held that political parties were synonymous with factions, fatal fissures in the nation's unity. Therefore, as Republicans and Federalists sharpened their differences and party principles took shape, the cry for unity could be realized only by rejection, if not annihilation, of the other side. Paradoxically, the call for unity furthered personal, political,

⁵⁶ Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 17-21. Henry Adams described the Federalist's notion of a Jacobin. "Every dissolute intriguer, loose-liver, forger, false-coiner, and prison bird; every hare-brained, loud-talking demagogue; every speculator, scoffer, and atheist – was a follower of Jefferson; and Jefferson was himself the incarnation of their theories." Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson*. (New York, Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), 57.

and cultural discord. By accusing the other of partisanship Federalists and Republicans alike claimed the more virtuous position as reluctant combatant.⁵⁷

During the 1790s as his political sensibilities developed, Levi Lincoln kept a close eye on the escalating arguments between Jefferson and Hamilton. Drawing on what he had absorbed of his father's sense of responsibility and civic-mindedness, his old champion Ebenezer Gay's liberal theology and opposition to traditional Calvinism, his experience as a lower ranked student at Harvard, and his mentor Joseph Hawley's social activism, Lincoln began to form his own political credo. He had been uneasy about federal power since the ratification debate and felt that Federalists played too fast and loose easy with the Constitution at the expense of state power. He had feared America's capitulation to English shipping interests. He also was becoming increasingly intolerant of Calvinist clergy who aligned themselves with Federalists and used their pulpits to preach politics instead of gospel. And as a relatively young man and a farmer, he sympathized with those who advocated for "the newcomer, the ambitious man, the outsider."⁵⁸ But Lincoln's Republicanism had its roots in the traditional as well. As a civic minded new member of the local elite, he was a fervent believer in furthering honor and virtue in the American people as necessary ingredients for the future success of the great republican experiment.⁵⁹ He believed not in the power of a landed aristocracy, but the civic obligations of a natural aristocracy, one in which he counted himself as a member. Once Lincoln adopted Republicanism as his personal ideology he never looked back. It turned out to be a most opportune and personally advantageous decision.

⁵⁷ See Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

⁵⁸ Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln Sr.," 58.

⁵⁹ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 76-9.

There was a pragmatic side to Lincoln's political choice as well. While reshuffling the political deck as a lawyer and Arminian during the church controversy, Levi Lincoln built a political base that appealed to likeminded men who had begun arriving in Worcester in greater numbers since the end of the Revolutionary War. As early as 1794, he began organizing a county committee that endorsed Jeffersonian candidates through the local press, still staying clear of partisan affiliation.⁶⁰ As a Republican, he occupied a unique niche among the local politicians. There were few Massachusetts Jeffersonians who were also Harvard educated lawyers with extensive experience in the court system with connections to several high profile cases. Add to that pedigree his Revolutionary War experience as a Minuteman (however brief it was), his investment in farming, and the force of his reputation as a civic activist, and Levi Lincoln had carved out a unique place in the world of Worcester politics.

In 1795 Lincoln ran again for state senator and lost again. The second loss, however, seemed to galvanize him. The next year, when John Adams ran for the presidency and took all the electors in Massachusetts, Lincoln ran for the United States House of Representatives but Federalist Dwight Foster rode Adams's coattails to Congress. Lincoln did, however, win a seat as state representative in 1796; his first electoral victory. He was re-elected the following year and served simultaneously as state senator.⁶¹ In 1798 he once more ran against Foster. This time Lincoln did better, but not well enough. Significantly, he carried

⁶⁰ Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln Sr.," 56-7.

⁶¹ Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 159. "Massachusetts State Representative May 15, 1797," *A New Nation Votes American Election Returns 1787-1825*, http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1797.00016 and "Massachusetts State Senator Election for Worcester County 1797," *A New Nation Votes* http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1797.00003

Worcester but the county went for Foster.⁶² In 1800 an unusual domino effect of vacancies opened the door once again to a congressional seat. Foster resigned his position in order to assume the vacated senate seat of Samuel Dexter who had been appointed John Adams's Secretary of War. It took three special elections for Lincoln to receive the necessary majority (he had received a plurality each time) and win Foster's seat. Finally elected to national office, Lincoln took his place in the Sixth Congress, in February 1801.⁶³

Lincoln's service as a representative was brief. The new president, Thomas Jefferson, saw in Lincoln an ambitious, articulate, and successful jurist whose organizational skills and perseverance had won him several state elections as a Republican in Federalist Worcester County. Politically, Jefferson needed a toehold in Massachusetts and Lincoln was the man to provide it. Lincoln, Jefferson said, was "the ablest and most respectable man of the Eastern states."⁶⁴ Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin viewed Levi's appointment enthusiastically and wrote Jefferson that "Mr. Lincoln is a good lawyer, a fine scholar, a man of great discretion and sound judgment, and of the mildest and most amiable manners. He has never, I should think from his manners, been out of his own State or mixed much with the world except on business. Both [Lincoln and Henry Dearborn, Jefferson's Secretary of War also from Massachusetts] are men of 1776, sound and decided Republicans; both are men of the strictest

⁶² Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln Sr.," 63; Moynihan, *A History of Worcester*, 113.

⁶³ Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 159.

⁶⁴ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, September 17, 1800. Letter. The Library of Congress. *The Thomas Jefferson Papers*. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:14:/temp/~ammem_ZhaU::

integrity; and both, but Mr. L. principally, have a great weight of character of the Eastward with both parties." ⁶⁵

The 1800 election had been a contentious one and the opposition to Jefferson from the old Federalist guard had been ferocious. Massachusetts gave their electoral votes to favorite son John Adams, but Worcester County with the help of Levi Lincoln went for the Republican Elbridge Gerry for Governor over the Federalist Caleb Strong, who won the election anyway. The breach in the Federalist line was significant but did not signal the end of Federalist influence there. Rather after 1800 a new surge of political energy spread through Worcester County vitalizing voluntary societies and politicizing newspapers to either the Federalist or Republican side. ⁶⁶

As Jefferson's attorney general, Lincoln found himself center stage in the partisan argument that was particularly rancorous in his own Massachusetts. ⁶⁷ After Jefferson's election the acrimony worsened. Many Bostonian Federalists, the most elite and powerful of whom originally hailed from Essex County (and were later dubbed the "Essex Junto") felt their interests, especially concerning maritime trade with Britain, were safely represented as long as Federalists Washington and Adams were in office. ⁶⁸ Jefferson's election in 1800

⁶⁵ Albert Gallatin letter to Maria Nicolson, March 12, 1801 quoted in Dumas Malone, *The Sage of Monticello Jefferson the President: First Term, 1801-1805* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1981), 58.

⁶⁶ Noble Cunningham, *In Pursuit of Reason: The Life of Thomas Jefferson* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 250

⁶⁷ Ronald P. Formisano, "Boston, 1800-1840 From Deferential-Participant to Party Politics," in *Boston, 1700-1980: The Evolution of Urban Politics*, ed. Ronald Formisano, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 31.

⁶⁸ At least one historian, David Hackett Fischer, believes that there was no such thing as an Essex Junto. According to Fischer, the junto was the product of John Adams's fevered imagination. Adams blamed the Essexmen for his narrow 1796 victory and the group also publicly disagreed with Adams over other policies. The term became ammunition for his Jeffersonian opposition who used it as freely as the Federalists did "Jacobin" to slander each

created disturbing rumblings of cultural and political upheaval that threatened these conservative men of property.⁶⁹ In a powerful combination of political and social hegemony they threw their considerable political weight behind legislation protective of their shipping interests especially Hamilton's financial program that ensured merchant-held public securities increased in value and that credit was available when needed. As soon as the Revolution had ended, they renewed their ties to English banks whose extension of credit widened commerce and fattened their wallets. They contributed funds to suppress Shays's rebellion (which were later repaid by the legislature), supported the United States Constitution during the ratification debate (partly because they feared another agrarian insurgency), and chartered banks to each other to keep their maritime businesses running.⁷⁰

Boston's Calvinist Standing Order also embraced Federalist politics. During the golden days of the Washington and Adams administrations, Calvinist clergy felt optimistic about the nation's future. They saw in Federalism a righteous combination of church and state, each supporting the other in building a godly and Christian community by balancing and policing intemperate inclinations of the people that may lead the nation astray. With the deist Jefferson in office, seamless cooperation of magistrate and clergy was disrupted much to the detriment, they believed, of the public's virtue.⁷¹ The matter was made even worse by a post-

other. David Hackett Fisher, "The Myth of the Essex Junto," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 21 (1964): 222-4.

⁶⁹ Paul Goodman, *The Democratic Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), x.

⁷⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 169.

⁷¹ Jonathan Sassi, "The First Party Competition and Southern New England's Public Christianity," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 21 (2001): 264-99.

war influx of self-interested commercial men who brought with them “skepticism and uncertainty” to say nothing of drunkenness and vice.⁷²

Jedidiah Morse, a respected Calvinist and author of *The American Universal Geography*, preached that a secret French society known as the Bavarian Illuminati were responsible not only for the French Revolution but the rise of Jeffersonian democratic societies in America. It was the Illuminati’s mission, cautioned Morse, to replace all things virtuous and valuable with “fraud, violence, cruelty, debauchery, and the uncontrolled gratification of every corrupt and debasing lust and inclination of the human heart.”⁷³ It became Morse's mandate to eliminate this corrupting element through public disclosure of their names and their nefarious purposes. Taking their cue from Morse, other clergymen echoed the same fearsome sentiment. Newspapers and magazines picked up the hysteria and printed countless diatribes against the deist Jefferson and those around him as tantamount to all things subversive and heretical.⁷⁴

Fearing that the Jeffersonians would hijack the press and “be read and approved by multitudes, as long as there are base and unhallowed passions in human nature to be gratified by them,” Boston’s Fisher Ames acquired the *New England Palladium*, to be the voice of Federalism.⁷⁵ Republicanism, in Ames’s view, was far too fragile to be left in the hands of ordinary men. People were too naturally depraved, selfish and limited not to see beyond the lies of a demagogue such as Jefferson. “Our mistake is in supposing men better than they are.

⁷² Fischer, “Myth of the Essex Junto,” 206.

⁷³ Jedidiah Morse quoted in Gary B. Nash, “The American Clergy and the French Revolution.” *William and Mary Quarterly* 22 (1965): 192-412.

⁷⁴ Conrad Edick Wright, *The Unitarian Controversy: Essays on American Unitarian History* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1994), 67.

⁷⁵ Fisher Ames quoted in Jeffrey L. Pasley, “*The Tyranny of Printers*” *Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 255.

They are bad, and will act their bad character out.”⁷⁶ Launching an all-out assault on Jefferson and his men, including Lincoln, Ames penned a number of essays “to prove the dreadful evils to be apprehended from a Jacobin President” a term synonymous with licentiousness, atheism, and anarchy. But even worse, Jefferson the atheist, “would destroy religion, introduce immorality, and loosen all the bonds of society. Laws and a strong federal government preserved and defended republicanism. The only hope for the country’s survival lay in government by natural aristocracy as a restraining and guiding force.”⁷⁷ To Levi, more government in the Amesian view courted monarchy. To Ames, less government in the Jeffersonian view meant mobocracy and anarchy.

A practical politician, Lincoln joined his adversaries in the print arena. He launched an offensive against Federalism by starting a new unabashedly partisan Republican journal in Worcester, *The National Aegis*. In a departure from other partisan papers that frequently contained mostly reprinted articles, the *Aegis* aimed to speak more directly to Worcester’s voters.⁷⁸ By providing people with a clear understanding of Jeffersonian “principles & the measures of the past & present administration” they could both recruit and keep voters on the Republican side.⁷⁹ The paper would also be Lincoln’s preferred venue for his essays entitled *A Farmer’s Letters to the People*, nine of which had already appeared in the *The Worcester*

⁷⁶ Fisher Ames quoted in John W. Malsberger, “The Political Thought of Fisher Ames,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (1982): 6.

⁷⁷ Cunningham, *In Pursuit of Reason*, 224-225. For an overview of how newspapers became the popular forum for political debates see Pasley, “*The Tyranny of Printers*” and William C. Dowling, *Literary Federalism in the Age of Jefferson: Joseph Dennie and The Port Folio, 1801-1811* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999). Ames’s attempt to counter Republican popularity through the press ultimately failed, perhaps because he was preaching to the converted and was winning very few new adherents. In 1803 he quit *The Palladium*.

⁷⁸ Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 206.

⁷⁹ Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, July 25, 1802 quoted in Pasley, 204.

Spy beginning August 19, 1801. Since the *Spy* was sounding more Amesian every day, the *Aegis* would publish the tenth and final essay in its premier edition on December 2, 1801.⁸⁰

Lincoln wrote *A Farmer's Letters* for several reasons. One was to endorse Edward Bangs, Sr., who was running to fill Lincoln's vacated seat in Congress. Another was to offer a defense of Jefferson against the Federalist vituperation railing against him. The essays reflected the Republican view of human perfectibility and optimism, infused with a dose of Lockean rationalism. He agreed with Federalists that the success of the republic depended on the virtue of its people. He also agreed that the nation needed wise, dispassionate, and disinterested men to know what was best for society. But unlike his Federalist opponents, Levi believed that the people would rise to their responsibility, would exercise their better selves and good judgment in their choice of leaders. Virtuous people would naturally select those who advanced the ideals of mobility, expansion, opportunity, self-reliance, and equality. Good government depended on clear-minded educated people who were unimpressed by the opposition's false diatribes.⁸¹

Levi saved his harshest reproach for the most despicable of Federalist manipulations -- the clergy who distorted Jefferson's religious views and branded him an atheist. Undermining public confidence in elected officials made clergy guilty of political meddling. The Federalists who solicited clerical support for their propagation of "sedition, slanders, libels"

⁸⁰ The use of a pseudonym had been common practice since the pre-war period in which gentlemen camouflaged their identities so to appear to as an Everyman as well as shield them from reprisals. But it was a thin sobriquet. Most everyone knew that *The Farmer* and Levi Lincoln were one and the same. Lincoln may have selected the moniker in the spirit of emulating Cincinnatus, the Roman farmer who became the republican model of a modest, disinterested public servant. Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 35.

⁸¹ Ibid.

were equally culpable.⁸² “The constitution of this Commonwealth as provided for the support of the teachers of religion, piety and morality generally; not for the propagators of sedition, slanders, libels and modern federalism,” he wrote.⁸³ In other words, the constitution supports teachers or religion, but not partisan zealot ones. The pulpit was no place for political pontifications. Furthermore, Fisher Ames’s *Palladium* was guilty of insurrection by slandering and insulting the “majesty of the People” through disparaging and discrediting their lawfully elected representatives.⁸⁴

Coming by way of the United States Attorney General’s office, the Farmer’s essays did not sit well with the Worcester Federalists nor with the Federalists in Boston who believed Lincoln was abusing his office.⁸⁵ The essays effectively roused Federalist indignation to new heights as the exchange of attacks between the *Aegis* and the *Spy* were staggeringly bitter and personal. The Farmer sparred with an array of Federalists writing under pseudonyms of “Fidelis,” “Quintilian,” “The Citizen,” and “Sulpicus,” who was quickly revealed to be Samuel Austin, pastor of Worcester’s Calvinist First Church. “Sulpicus” felt it his duty to “expose the malignant malice of a secluded misanthrope” and called Lincoln a liar, ignorant of the law, cruel, vindictive, artful, tedious, confused, deficient “in want a good early

⁸² Levi Lincoln, *A Farmer's Letters to the People* (Philadelphia: Robert Johnson, 1802), 89.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Levi Lincoln, *A Farmer's Letters*, 91.

⁸⁵ In his famous diary, William Bentley noted on December 3, 1801 “A most serious dispute has opened in the Gazette in regard to the Clergy. The Clergy had so plainly spoken & written upon the subject of the present administration, that a writer said to be the Attorney General of the U.S. under the signature of a ‘Farmer’ in his 10 number has openly attacked them. The blow is serious, & the more & the more the Clergy and their friends attempt to defend themselves, the more severe are the strokes upon them. The subject was never so freely handled in New England & never did the Clergy suffer a more serious diminution of their influence & of their power.” William Bentley, Joseph Gilbert Waters, Marguerite Dalrymple, and Alice G. Waters, *The Diary of William Bentley, Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts* (Salem, Mass: Essex Institute, 1914), 407.

education,” and guilty of “puerile sophistry.” The derision did not stop there. “Sulpicus” charged “The Farmer” with fomenting civil war and went so far as to gleefully imagine the Farmer’s house burning down in the conflagration that was sure to come.⁸⁶ For his part, Levi referred to his adversaries as “minions of despots, these creeping things.” He called ministers “fomenters of political feuds, sharpening their tongues with more cruelty than the dagger of the assassin” but Lincoln preferring a more defensive than offensive approach, restrained himself from dipping into the invectives that peppered Sulpicus responses.⁸⁷

The essays fixed Levi’s reputation among Federalists as a dangerous and “violent Democrat,” and made him formidable enemies, especially among the clergy, who never lost an opportunity to attack him.⁸⁸ In 1802 the *Palladium* charged him with dereliction of duty for collecting fees from his private practice during his term as Attorney General forcing the government into the unnecessary expense of hiring other attorneys. The *National Aegis* and other Republican newspapers quickly took issue with the accusation as a “scandalous fabrication.”⁸⁹ The charge was never proven and eventually faded away.

In truth, in 1802 Levi Lincoln was not the fanatic the Federalists portrayed him to be. He opposed clergy using their power to influence their congregations but he was not anti-church and he honestly deplored parties. What Federalists found most offensive was his

⁸⁶ “Miscellanies Federal Republican,” *Massachusetts Spy*, January 6, 1802, January 13, 1802, January 20, 1802, February 24, 1802, April 4, 1802. Austin was popular with only a few of the most rabid Federalist and managed to offend many. Austin was the minister of the Old South Church in Worcester and had been at the center of the controversy that concluded with a splitting of the church in a movement led by Levi Lincoln.

⁸⁷ Levi Lincoln, *A Farmer’s Letters*, 17.

⁸⁸ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 71.

⁸⁹ *Worcester Aegis*, June 16, 1802; Petroelje, 127-8.

service as Jefferson's chief advisor on patronage in Massachusetts.⁹⁰ Though Lincoln recommended that only the most extreme Federalists be replaced by Republicans, leaving room for moderate Federalists to remain in office, he left it as his prerogative to identify the untrustworthy extremists and target them for removal. Federalists found their nemesis in Lincoln and berated him relentlessly. Before long the attacks and accusations turned Levi into the rigid partisan his adversaries had always accused him of being.

Lincoln, who in his early career had found a home with the Federalists, had committed an act of political apostasy when he declared himself a Republican in 1795. Now that he had a place in the highest echelons of power and Republican strength in Worcester had increased, Federalists would never forget and never forgive him for his betrayal.⁹¹ But Lincoln was not always so popular with his own party either.⁹² Even his friends tended to view him as a radical, especially because of his anti-clerical stance. To some the democrat Lincoln was thought "to be just the opposite, in all respects."⁹³ He was said to treat his subordinates like minions and he certainly appeared ruthless in his acquisition of foreclosed property of Revolutionary War heroes who had the misfortune of stumbling in business.

In spite of all the harsh words, accusations, and recriminations, Lincoln thrived as an elite landholder in Worcester society and as a leading Massachusetts Republican. He had risen to the pinnacle through talent, good timing, dogged perseverance, and a tenacious loyalty to Jeffersonian principles. He fearlessly offered himself as Jefferson's point man in an environment hostile to Jefferson, a move that cost him support from moderates. And

⁹⁰ Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln Sr." 77-8.

⁹¹ Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 78.

⁹² Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 79.

⁹³ Charles Tappan, "Worcester in 1799," in *Reminiscences of Worcester From the Earliest Period, Historical and Genealogical* ed. Caleb Arnold Wall (Worcester, Mass: Tyler & Seagrave, 1877), 304.

Calvinist clergy never forgave him for his *Farmer's Letters*. Still, Lincoln's shrewd choices served him extremely well. So well, that the consequences of his success reverberated through the generations that followed him, shaping and influencing his children's choices. They would always be identified first as sons or daughters of Levi Lincoln, Sr. of Massachusetts. How successfully they accommodated their father's legacy in their own lives varied. Levi would raise two future Republican governors, two future wives of respected local lawyers, one civic-minded merchant and militia officer, one lawyer and historian, and one bitter disappointment that was his second son, Daniel Lincoln.

CHAPTER TWO

“Your Dutiful Son,” The Early Education of Daniel Lincoln 1784-1806



Fig. 5. Looking East from Denny Hill 1800 by Ralph Earl. Reprinted, by permission, Worcester Art Museum, “Early American Paintings in the Worcester Art Museum,” <http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/American/1916.97.html>

The ink on the Treaty of Paris had been dry a year when Daniel Waldo Lincoln, Martha and Levi Lincoln’s second child, arrived in 1784. With his four brothers and sisters, Daniel grew up on acre upon acre of rolling Massachusetts countryside just outside Worcester’s town center. The Lincoln’s neighbors were the old and new Worcester elite – the William Paine family with their five children, the Aaron Bancroft family with their thirteen children (including little George Bancroft who grew up to become one of the most acclaimed American historians of the nineteenth century) as well as the Chandler, Waldo (Martha

Lincoln's parents, brother and two sisters), and Salisbury families.¹ For the Paine, Lincoln, and Bancroft children their abutting farms created a playground of some 400 acres offering countless diversions such as skating and coasting in the winter, gathering butternuts and apples in the fall, and swimming and canoeing in Lincoln's Pond in the summer.² Nestled somewhere in the recesses of the estate was Lincoln's Grove, a meeting place for the besotted who routinely carved their initials into the tree-trunks.³ Martha Lincoln's turkeys, ducks, geese, hens, and chickens wandered the woods and her luxuriant garden was the pride of the family.⁴ Three barns sheltered a variety of livestock. The large white house sat a short distance from the Boston Post Road surrounded by hedges of fragrant syringa.⁵ If Daniel had looked out the window on October 15, 1789, he would have seen George Washington in a chariot drawn by four bay horses accompanied by a retinue of forty local dignitaries pass by the house on his way to Boston after a brief Worcester stopover.⁶

Even though Levi Lincoln's political career was on the rise during Daniel Lincoln's earliest years, Levi was not absent if he could help it. The attorney general was not required

¹ Elizabeth Orne Paine Sturgis, "A Sketch of the Children of Dr. William Paine," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity* 20 (1904): 133-4. Paine had been a vociferous Royalist who left Worcester under pressure from local patriots and spent the war as an apothecary to British troops in North America. He returned to Worcester and his father's home in 1792

² Ibid.

³ Worcester Bank & Trust Company, *Some Historic Houses of Worcester A Brief Account of the Houses and Taverns that Fill a Prominent Part in the History of Worcester Together with Interesting Reminiscences of Their Occupants* (Worcester, Mass: Worcester Bank & Trust Company, 1919), 11.

⁴ Ibid., 9. ; John S.C. Knowlton and Clarendon Wheelock, *Carl's Tour in Main Street*, (Worcester, Mass: Sanford and Davis, 1889), 3-6.

⁵ Elizabeth Orne Paine Sturgis, "Old Lincoln Street," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity* 18 (1900): 123.

⁶ Knowlton and Wheelock, *Carl's Tour*, 72-3.

to live in Washington until 1814 and until that time most chose to live elsewhere.⁷ Lincoln understandably preferred his verdant Worcester farm over Washington D.C., which in 1800 was little more than a “fever-stricken morass” that contained only a “single row of brick houses and a few isolated dwellings within sight” where men clustered in boarding houses without benefit of amusement, markets, or shops.⁸ The Judiciary Act of 1789 conceived of the attorney general position as a part-time post with two chief responsibilities: managing litigation for the federal government and advising the president on legal matters. The government provided him with no office space, no clerk, and no supplies. As a part-timer he was paid accordingly, receiving half the pay of other cabinet heads, around \$3,000 per year.⁹ As an embryonic one-man operation it was the attorney general’s personal responsibility to pay for any extra expenses he may incur out of the fees he received from the cases he prosecuted. Since few cases found their way to the Supreme Court in the early years of the office, maintaining a private income was essential.

More than personal finances and the turbid climate of Washington prompted Levi to stay in Worcester as much as he could manage. He had seven children in need of education and parenting. During his absences, his wife was left to manage the farm and his growing family. At the time of his attorney general appointment, he wrote Elbridge Gerry that “I fear in my acceptance of it, a great dereliction of the means of domestic happiness, an (sic) loss in

⁷ Leonard D. White, *The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History 1801-1829* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1951), 336.

⁸ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), 23-4.

⁹ This would calculate to about \$36,000 in 2007 United States dollars. The Inflation Calculator, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/infl.cgi>.

advancing the education of my children.”¹⁰ Lincoln’s parenting philosophy may not have been so different from his evolving political philosophy. Just as when he rejected the blacksmith shop for Harvard and became a lawyer instead of a minister, then a Republican instead of a Federalist, the enlightened philosophical currents of the era opened him to the possibility of seeking another way paternally as well as politically. His generation had committed virtual patricide with the overthrowing of the George III on the grounds that the divine right of kings was a fallacy, that the king’s power was illegitimate, that hereditary succession ridiculous, that monarchy was superfluous and unnecessary, and that when a king turned tyrannical it was the duty of the people to overthrow him. Power lay in the people, not the king.¹¹

The significance of overthrowing the king patriarch reverberated beyond the political realm and shook traditional family hierarchies as well. Patriots who rebelled against British tyranny were also rebelling against the strictures of hierarchy and the assumptions of place and role that their families of origins had bequeathed to them. Just as the Patriots disdained the role the British had proscribed for them simply because they were born into it, the same dynamic of rebellion can be viewed in microcosm within the family that now questioned destiny, place, and status in society and rejected their legacy if legacy meant limitations. When the structure of government becomes one of laws, not men, because men are fallible, wrong, misguided, and sometimes tyrannical and destructive, the power of the king/father was

¹⁰ Marvin Junior Petroelje, “Levi Lincoln, Sr.: Jeffersonian Republican of Massachusetts,” (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1969), 72.

¹¹ Winthrop D. Jordan, “Thomas Paine and the Killing of the King, 1776,” *Journal of American History*, 60 (1973): 294-308.

likewise diminished and the power of the children/subjects enhanced. So if nineteenth century fathers could no longer claim the absolute authority over their children as their fathers had just because they were fathers, or as kings had because they were kings, what kind of relationship could they expect to have with their children in the new, post-Revolutionary world they had created? It was a troubling conundrum reflective of the argument that consumed Federalists and Republicans: how to put the brakes on Revolutionary rhetoric before it cascaded into anarchy, how to restore authority and centrality but not despotism?¹²

The parents and grandparents of preceding generations in the Calvinist tradition tended to view children as feral bodies seething with uncontrolled passions desperate for authoritarian guidance to bring them under control. Enlightened parents of the late eighteenth century saw things differently. The republican patriarch's most important task for his family and his country was to raise the next generation of virtuous and honorable citizens, not by demanding conformity and obedience, but by fostering enlightened thinking, free inquiry, that would, if all went well, produce honorable citizens. Through persuasion and emulation, children would look to their parent's exemplary lives as the model for their own.¹³ Looking to the ideal of republican harmony built on bonds of mutual respect and affection, enlightened fathers such as Levi Lincoln sought to create a familial republic within the larger one by

¹² See Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Fliegelman cites John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1692) as the foundation for a change in conception of the meaning of patriarchy.

¹³ Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims*, 2. See also Rodney Hessinger, *Seduced, Abandoned, and Reborn: Visions of Youth in Middle-Class America, 1780-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). The Lockean ideal for regulating behavior by internalizing parental prohibitions and values presages Sigmund Freud's tripartite theory of personality of id, ego, and superego.

carefully reasoning with his children to do right, to engage them intellectually, and to control themselves emotionally. To his children he bequeathed the responsibility of protecting the longevity and vitality of the republic and it was up to him to prepare them for it. Therefore, a dishonorable, delinquent child became the parent's greatest shame and greatest failure, a reflection of their own lack of control, no matter what else he may have done in his life. "The present generation are the guardians for posterity," he wrote in *A Farmer's Letters*. "Extreme will be the evil if the trust is betrayed."¹⁴

As leading citizens in Worcester the Lincoln boys grew up in ways unlike the farm families that surrounded them in rural Massachusetts. For one thing, their privileged station guaranteed they would not have to be apprenticed to a blacksmith the way Levi had been as a young man. Rather, their chief ambition would be to receive a preparatory formal education. Finding the route to realize that ambition was another matter, however. The war had disrupted normal operations of the town's constant grammar school to the effect that Worcester children received no publicly financed education during the war years. Between the farm families of the outskirts and the families of the town center there was little agreement about how and where basic schooling would be provided after the war ended. Farm families preferred to resurrect the old "moving school" system that consisted of an itinerate teacher who instructed their children for three months before moving on to the next town. Families in the town center felt three months of education annually was inadequate. They lobbied for a permanent

¹⁴ Levi Lincoln, *A Farmer's Letters*, 24.

constant grammar school, such as they had before the war when John Adams had been schoolmaster in 1755.¹⁵

Several of the leading men of Worcester, including Levi Lincoln formed a joint stock company with the purpose of setting up both a lower school and an “academy for the higher branches of education” that they called The Seminary. In spite of great initial enthusiasm, the school soon foundered due to a scarcity of subscribers and students. It closed in 1799. Since Worcester lacked its own academy, the closest one of any repute was some five miles away in Leicester, Massachusetts. The Leicester Academy had been incorporated in 1784, about the same time as The Seminary. The Seminary, however, deliberately eschewed the identity of the elitist term “academy” as a means to appeal to a broader constituency.¹⁶ But while the Seminary failed, Leicester Academy thrived because it vigorously courted and won elite patronage, mostly Federalist.¹⁷

Finding common ground with his political adversaries on the importance of a classical education to the nation, Levi served on the academy’s board of trustees from its incorporation (around the same time he was breaking ground for the Seminary) until 1802 when his professional obligations left him little time to invest in other interests. The last two years of his appointment he served as board president.¹⁸ As a trustee, he was instrumental in elevating

¹⁵ William Lincoln and Charles Hersey, *A History of Worcester Massachusetts From Its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836* (Worcester, Mass: Charles Hersey, 1862), 252-3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ John Brooke, *Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1731-1861* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 260.

¹⁸ Emory Washburn, *Brief Sketch of the History of Leicester Academy* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and company, 1855), 75.

the content of the curriculum from utilitarian to scholarly.¹⁹ Levi Lincoln, Junior, attended Leicester and graduated around 1800. The record is silent as to how many other Lincoln children (the school also enrolled girls) attended the Academy, but with a father on the board engaged in refashioning the curriculum, chances are strong that Daniel, John, Enoch, and William all followed Levi Junior to study the classics at Leicester so to prepare them for entry into another more famous seminary at Cambridge.²⁰

At the same time that Levi Lincoln's serial polemic *A Farmer's Letters* was making its contribution to the imbroglio of Massachusetts politics, Daniel stood before a table of seven examiners at Harvard College. For five hours the board interrogated the young man in a variety of topics: Latin, Greek, Geography, English grammar, history, Cicero, Virgil, and algebra (in which he was found "considerably deficient.")²¹ When it was all over, the exhausted candidate received the good news that he had been accepted as a member of the junior class. In spite of his triumph, Daniel was far from sanguine about his prospects there. First of all, he did not feel very well. Secondly, although the place was pleasant enough, it was not Worcester.²² At Harvard he was not only a stranger, but as the son of a very public,

¹⁹ Ibid., 22.

²⁰ William W. Rice, "Historical Address," *The Centenary of Leicester Academy Held September 4, 1884 Including the Historical Address by Hon. William W. Rice and The Poem by Rev. Thomas Hill, D.D. With Historical Supplement* (Worcester Printed by Charles Hamilton, 1884), 13-4. Leicester Academy enrolled girls from its inception. Female students were expected to master the same curriculum as their male counterparts, a rather radical notion at a time when female education typically consisted of instruction in "the polite branches." For a few years right after the school was established, girls were also permitted to take part in the annual exhibitions. The school discontinued the practice after only a few years. Washburn, *History of Leicester Academy*, 27-9

²¹ Harvard University. Records of the College Faculty, Copies of Minutes, Vol II, 1797-1806, August 18, 1801, 183. UA III, 5.5.2, Harvard University Archives.

²² Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, nd, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers (DWL Papers).

very “violent” high-ranking Jeffersonian Republican, he was a political outsider as well. Levi’s anti-clerical diatribes offended Boston’s Congregational clergymen, three of whom made up the Harvard faculty, all of whom were Federalist.²³ The college president, Joseph Willard, was a Congregational minister and a well-known staunch Federalist.²⁴ Daniel’s examining committee may have found little common political ground with their applicant, but his social and preparatory school pedigree, coupled with a period of declining admissions due to upstart colleges in the rural areas, predisposed the admissions committee to accept the candidate at an advanced standing.

At its founding in 1636, Harvard declared its mission: "To advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches."²⁵ One hundred sixty five years later when Daniel entered, classics and divinity continued to dominate the curriculum. In fact, Harvard’s pedagogy had evolved little since the days of its first president, Henry Dunster. The curriculum consisted of the tried and true texts that had been the foundation of a Harvard education for generations. Six days a week students were required to meet with tutors and rehearse their lessons for morning and afternoon sessions, offering the instructor a memorized parcel of text unfettered by intellectual exploration, inquiry and

²³ The faculty included David Tappan in Divinity, Samuel Webber in mathematics and natural philosophy, and Eliphalet Pearson, who was particularly hated by the students for his intrusive, overbearing personality, was professor of Hebrew. See Conrad Wright, *The Unitarian Controversy: Essays on American Unitarian History* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1994), 5-6.

²⁴ “Joseph Willard 1738-1804,” *Cambridge Historical Society On-line Collections*, http://www.cambridgehistory.org/HLN_House/HLN_Library/collection_pages/JOseph%20Willard.html#Hist.

²⁵ “History Lore and More,” *The Harvard Guide Website*, <http://www.hno.harvard.edu/guide/intro/hist2.html>.

analysis.²⁶ Students were expected to give only literal interpretations of classical texts of Livy, Horace, Homer, Sallust. No tutor or professor prodded students for insights into use of language, imagination, or ideas. History was a string of dates and facts memorized from the five volumes of Abbe Millot's *Elements of Universal History*. The esteemed and elderly divine David Tappan instructed the students out of English dissenter Philip Doddridge's theological lectures written a generation earlier. One student described Tappan's lectures as exercises "in which religious truth was sought to be proved by the geometrical formula, which led us to expect the same certainty that we found in our mathematics.... we began to doubt the truth of what we were taught, till we gradually lapsed into skepticism."²⁷ In mathematics students were expected to master plane geometry, trigonometry, and mensuration of heights and distances. They scrutinized William Enfield's *Institutes of Natural Philosophy* and Jean Jacques Burlamaqui's *Principles of Natural Law*. Burlamaqui, a popular but unoriginal eighteenth-century philosopher who has since faded into oblivion, posited that natural law, as revealed by God through human intellect and morality, was the foundation of domestic and international law.²⁸

Gentlemen who aspired to leadership must also possess a command of proper oratory and rhetoric. Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* served as the model of

²⁶ Robert Hallowell Gardiner, *Early Recollections of Robert Hallowell Gardiner* (Hallowell, ME: White & Horne, 1936), 44.

²⁷ Ibid., 43. Tappan was one of the first of the Boston clerics who voiced opposition to the French Revolution in an earlier period when many were still supportive of it. See also Gary B. Nash, "The American Clergy and the French Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 22 (1965): 392-412.

²⁸ Giorgio del Vecchio, "Burlamaqui and Rousseau," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 23 (1962): 421.

learned written and oral discourse. Students spent two years ingesting the nuances of Blair in their quest to cultivate a command of language and literature that would be a mark of their advanced education.²⁹ Freshmen and sophomores practiced their rhetoric privately, but all junior and senior declamations were held publicly in the college chapel with the entire college in attendance. Two days each week Daniel listened to a forensic (a scientific inductive form of argument based on evidence) and a syllogistic (a classical argument based on inference or deductive reasoning) disputation.

One of the few opportunities for relaxation came at mealtime. Unfortunately, the fare was both notoriously paltry and indigestible. Although by the time Daniel arrived on campus the commons had been relocated away from the pigsty so that the fragrance of the animals need not compete with the aroma of dinner, the dining experience continued to generate universal complaint.³⁰ Breakfast consisted of a biscuit and butter, frequently rancid. Boiled or roasted meat accompanied by a potato and dandelion greens (if in season) was dinner. Meat was usually bought in bulk and reappeared week after week, sometimes in the form of meat pies reputed to be better as missiles than meals. For his evening repast the student was given chocolate, bread, and milk served together in a bowl to eat in his room. The bread, according to one peeved diner, tasted like vinegar and if by chance impaled upon an eye (apparently by

²⁹ As one father told his student son in 1798, "To write your own language with grammatical correctness; to read and speak it with propriety; to discern its beauties; and to be able to distinguish those beauties by their proper names, are objects highly deserving the attention of a scholar." John Clarke, *Letters to a Student in the University in Cambridge* (Boston: Samuel Hall, 1796), 54.

³⁰ Samuel F Batchelder, *Bits of Harvard History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1924), 97-124.

being launched as a missile) would cause permanent damage. The tepid milk was diluted with water. Cider was preferred and served in a quart can passed down the table from man to man. About eight sat at a table which was unassigned but typically broke down by class year.³¹ Since attendance in commons was mandatory and overseers steadfastly refused to improve the victuals, circumstances there created a perfect storm for student protests.³²

A Congregational Calvinist, President Willard was saddled with the unenviable responsibility of bringing the college back to some degree of normality after the convulsions of Revolutionary wartime. He is credited with starting Harvard's medical school, raising admissions standards, and instituting a new and controversial system of prizes designed to stimulate competition. He was also the first Harvard president to deliver his commencement address in English rather than Latin. But his innovations end there. A formal, distant man, disinclined toward any degree of familiarity toward students, Willard appeared "lean, austere, and of an insufferable circumspection." His lack of oratorical talent and imagination was said to induce colossal boredom in his listeners.³³ He famously disdained modern dress and wore a white, horse-hair full bottomed wig at all times which may have earned him more ridicule than respect from his charges. Even his son, Sidney Willard thought the wig a poor idea. "It was a

³¹ Sidney Willard, *Memories of Youth and Manhood* (Cambridge, Mass: J. Bartlett, 1855), 192-3.

³² Leon Jackson, "The Rights of Man and the Rites of Youth Fraternity and Riot at Eighteenth Century Harvard," in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Geiger (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 52.

³³ Francisco de Miranda quoted in Andrew Schlesinger, *Veritas Harvard College and the American Experience* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2005), 63. "Biographical Sketch Joseph Willard 1738-1804," *Cambridge Historical Society On-line Collections*, http://www.cambridgehistory.org/HLN_House/HLN_Library/collection_pages/JOseph%20Willard.html

great disfigurement however much sanctioned by the fashion of the times and by an association of reverence for his calling.”³⁴

In the early nineteenth century the college’s laws and customs were beginning to show signs of wear. Rational thought, free enquiry, enlightened philosophies of child rearing, and of course the Revolutionary War, threatened traditions of deference and gentility that had been the hallmark of educated Harvard men for generations but had become less acceptable to the post-war generation. Harvard students could no more divorce themselves from the excitement of a changed world than they could relocate to a different planet. Choice, not compliance, excited them. The Calvinist orthodoxy that had for so long dictated the purpose of the school, influenced its rules, and shaped the conduct of its students, was now viewed by some as crippling. Students wanted change. They preferred to learn French not Hebrew, longed for an improvement in the food, and wished for an end to the mind-numbing routine of recitation in favor of independent thinking and discussion. This new way, not the old way, was the road to virtuous future republicans.³⁵ As one student put it, “Where a manly independence is construed into insolence and contempt of authority; and a meek spirit of passive obedience and non resistance the only road to college honor...what are the state to expect? Courtiers or Republicans? Creatures or men?”³⁶

³⁴ Sidney Willard, *Memories of Youth and Manhood*, 209. His imposing white head inspired John Quincy Adams to quip when a Harvard student in 1787, “By this almighty wig I swear/Which with such majesty I wear/ And in its orbit vast contains/My dignity, my power, my brains.” John Quincy Adams quoted in Schlesinger, *Veritas*, 60.

³⁵ William J. Austin, *Strictures on Harvard University* (Boston: Folsom Printers, 1798), 5-7.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

Willard believed in a tight-fisted authoritarianism designed to squelch disobedience and disrespect from willful miscreants. Accordingly, each new student received a multi-paged pamphlet entitled, *The Laws of Harvard College* that dictated what every student should wear, where he should go, when he should arrive, and how he should conduct himself once he got there. More to the point, the pamphlet set out the punishment for every infraction that ranged from fines, private admonition, public admonition, degradation (lowering of students academic standing in his class), suspension (leaving school for varying periods of time to study with a minister), rustication (suspension and degradation plus good report from their pater familias before being allowed to return to college), and finally expulsion. So tight were the rules that nearly every student would be found guilty and punished for some misdeed during their Harvard careers. Most were guilty of many. Students found the laws infantilizing, exasperating, and insulting.³⁷

Willard was not, however, completely insensate to the influence of Lockean philosophy on education. He installed a system of public examinations and competitions designed “to excite the students to a noble emulation.”³⁸ For Willard the plan had two obvious benefits. First, students would be forced to work longer and harder on their recitations in order to win the esteem of their community or at least avoid public disgrace. Second, the competition would act as a kind of public relations tool to put on public view Harvard’s best and brightest. Students already bracing under Willard’s rigid regime detested

³⁷ Ibid., 18.

³⁸ Josiah Quincy, *The History of Harvard University* (Cambridge, Mass: John Owen, 1840), 297.

the idea of public exposure and petitioned to be excused. Predictably, their appeal was denied. The unhappy scholars attempted to sabotage the event by putting an emetic in the common's cooking boilers. Although the predictable gastrointestinal reaction made attendance at examinations impossible for almost everyone, the troublemakers succeeded only in delaying not derailing the event. Willard simply rescheduled the examination after rustivating the offending students.³⁹

Try as he might to resuscitate the hallowed curriculum of old while instilling high standards and Christian morals, Willard's approach failed to produce an obeisant and respectful student body. Students who chafed under Willard's policies, craved intellectual stimulation, and longed for a good meal, found their pleas landing on deaf ears. They found their own ways to enliven college life by forming social clubs. Clubs offered a happy alternative to cold dormitories, bad food, and stilted conversation. One such group was the Porcellian Club whose genesis lay in a clandestine evening of a few friends who gathered for strong drink and roasted pig. The Porcellians quickly became one of the most coveted memberships on campus, known chiefly for their prodigious drinking and conviviality. The Phi Beta Kappa, The Hasty Pudding Club, singing clubs, and speaking clubs also imbibed freely but added literary discussions for entertainment.⁴⁰ These groups provided their members with camaraderie and a program of contemporary political, religious, and literary

³⁹ Benjamin Homer Hall, *A Collection of College Words and Customs* (New York: M. Doolady, 1859), 180-2.

⁴⁰ Quoting Amos Kent in Charles P. Curtis, "Liquor and Learning in Harvard College, 1792-1846," *The New England Quarterly* 25 (1952): 346-7.

topics that stimulated rather than anesthetized.⁴¹ Many sought membership but the clubs were as exclusive as they were exhilarating. New members had to be approved unanimously. The doors opened to only a few of the most desirable candidates.⁴² Daniel Lincoln was not among them. His name does not appear on any Harvard society roster. Perhaps he was invited and declined. Or perhaps he was never invited. Arriving as a junior, Daniel had been out of step with his peers from the start. The rest of his class had already endured two years of endless recitations, bad meals, and prying priggish tutors that strengthened class bonds and loyalties. Levi Lincoln's public position and Jeffersonian politics tainted Daniel. Although students may have wanted their curriculum to be modernized, they were still politically conservative and overwhelmingly Federalist. If it was Levi's politics that kept Daniel out of Harvard's most elite social clubs, that might also explain why his brother, Levi Lincoln, Junior, had been excluded as well. Or, perhaps, other students simply did not like him.

During his first few months at school, Daniel was completely miserable "Grievances and anxieties" depressed and dispirited him. He trusted no one and suspected every one of callousness and deceit. "Too often are smiles the masks of villainy," he complained to his friend Joseph Caldwell. "Lurking mischief is concealed in smiles, like whited tombstones, they cover rottenness of heart."⁴³ Filled with adolescent angst and longing, he penned long bleak elegies about death and cemeteries to his mother. He wrote discourses on the corrupting power of wealth and the misery of the poor and friendless whom prosperity passed by. He

⁴¹ Jackson, "The Rights of Man," 72.

⁴² Ibid., 74.

⁴³ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Caldwell, April 19, 1802, DWL Papers.

envied the departed who had been released from their earthly pain “To me death seems a long wished for happiness,” he gloomily wrote Caldwell. Death was the great leveler and would come to everyone, even tyrants, Federalists, and Porcellians. There was some solace in knowing that “the impartial grave no difference yields twixt king and peasant.” If power and beauty were ephemeral, what mattered? “Tis virtue only blossoms in the dust,” Daniel concluded.⁴⁴ How to be virtuous in a culture that rewarded competition and celebrity troubled Daniel. In a verse entitled “Purity of Heart,” a paean to his hero Thomas Jefferson, Daniel declared that the ambitious statesman, the powdered flopling, and the rugged soldier wore virtuous public masks that masked private ambition, superficiality, and destruction. By bending to their selfish passions these poseurs separated themselves from a pure and generous heart. The truly virtuous subordinated selfish interests and dedicated his energies to the improvement of all. “Who solely anxious for his country’s good/Crost by no faction by no power withstood/Greatly consenting to a liberal plan/Has sworn allegiance to the rights of man/With vigorous sense & independence sought/Dares nobly think & boldly speak his thoughts/Heavenly goodness e’re beholds distress/And kindly pities what he can’t redress.”⁴⁵ Pondering philosophical questions did not quench Daniel’s lonesomeness but may have exacerbated his isolation, especially as an admirer of Jefferson among those viewed the third president as a Jacobin traitor. He often felt like a “poor Arab in the desert” to whom letters

⁴⁴ Daniel W. Lincoln, “Missing in a Churchyard,” DWL Papers.

⁴⁵ Daniel Lincoln, “Purity of Heart,” April 26, 1803, DWL Papers.

from home provided a soothing oasis. More than anything else, during his first year at Harvard he wanted to be in Worcester, “the exact epitome of the world.”⁴⁶

Beside his family, Daniel had other reasons to miss his home. He was in love with a Worcester girl, Charlotte Caldwell. Charlotte was the sixteen-year-old daughter of Worcester’s sheriff, William Caldwell, and the sister of Joseph Caldwell, one of his closest friends. Without Charlotte’s company he confessed to feeling downhearted and morose. “I have become unsocial & gloomy. The sun rises here as before, it is true, but there is no cheerfulness in his beams to chase away melancholy. Aurora wakes not to me for my morning star shines in another sky.”⁴⁷ Yet in spite of his isolation and dejection, or maybe because of it, the forlorn student kept to his studies. At the end of his first year the faculty awarded him the Hopkins Prize, a book prize provided by the estate of Edward Hopkins for those “who have made decided improvement in scholarship.”⁴⁸

Daniel’s school life in his second year bore little resemblance to the monastic existence of his first. The difference may have been William Sewall. Sewall later became a lawyer in Portland, known for his “diffidence and modesty” which by some accounts made him a better writer of almanacs (his avocation) than a litigator.⁴⁹ But as a young man at Harvard, Sewall was a bon vivant; a member of the Porcellians and Phi Beta Kappa. Although the very social

⁴⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, September 15, 1801, DWL Papers.

⁴⁷ Daniel Lincoln to William Sewall, July 18, 1803, DWL Papers.

⁴⁸ Hall, *A Collection of College Words*, 158. Harvardians called the book that came from the Hopkins estate a Detur from the Latin “let it be given.” The college still makes the awards to sophomores who earned the highest grade point average as freshmen.

⁴⁹ William Willis, *The History of the Law, the Courts and the Lawyers of Maine* (Portland, ME: Bailey & Noyes, 1863), 491.

Sewall could hardly have lacked for companionship, he took Daniel under his wing and introduced him to the world of women and drinking. Daniel took to it with unbridled gusto. Suddenly life did not have to be about cemeteries and duplicitous peers. It held more intriguing and exciting possibilities. Toward the end of his second year Daniel recounted his time spent with Sewall. "The buxom girls with bosoms Bear, the gallantries & amusements, the interesting incidents "honi soi", the belles, coquettes, beaux, dangles, walks & Parties, all are reviewed by me with the ghosts of past days. The social enjoyments I have there known, are also recollected. To you I am indebted for most of them & to you am proportionally grateful." ⁵⁰

Daniel and William were hardly the only college students to take their imbibing seriously. Drinking at college had become rampant in the early nineteenth century and a way by which disgruntled students could express their unhappiness with the old-fashioned classical curriculum and exercise some independence from the draconian Harvard laws.⁵¹ For Daniel, drinking and the new world that came with it was an eye-opening liberation. Tortured soliloquies disappeared. No more pathos for the dispossessed. Questions about the meaning of virtue evaporated. Instead, Harvard Faculty Records reveal that the once-reclusive and dutiful Daniel now held the distinction of having the highest number of petty infractions in his entire class. His record cites a series of small acts of rebellion such as making a disturbance at public declamations, sleeping in chapel, going out of town without leave, scattered absences

⁵⁰ Daniel Lincoln to William Sewall, June 28, 1803, DWL Papers.

⁵¹ William Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 139-40.

from lectures and recitations, neglecting an English composition, and omitting forensics.⁵²

These minor infractions can be easily attributed to adolescent rebellion but for Daniel they were a harbinger of what would become a perilous pattern of how he would typically cope with the pain and contradiction life would inevitably hand him.

Daniel and William drifted apart after college. Their paths crossed again a few years later, but by then their relationship had changed. After 1803 mentions of William are few and soon faded away entirely. Daniel may well have regretted the relationship. When his brother Enoch began his studies at Harvard a few years later, he warned him against forming many acquaintances. "After you shall become informed of the characters of all you may make your selection. By a cautious reserve at the present time you'll avoid the future embarrassment of a connection with those who may be disagreeable," Daniel warned his brother. Much better that Enoch concentrate on courting Blair than belles as Daniel had done.⁵³

If William Sewall succeeded in introducing Daniel to a social life in Cambridge that got him fined for his misdoings, Daniel was not so distracted as to abandon his studies

⁵² Harvard University. Records of the College Faculty, Copies of Minutes, Vol II, 1797-1806, August 18, 1801, 252 and 270. UA III, 5.5.2, Harvard University Archives.

⁵³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 10, 1805, DWL Papers. In spite of his brother's admonitions, Enoch also ran into trouble during his Harvard years. His involvement in a student fracas in 1807 got him expelled. Although the school government offered to readmit him if he should make an appeal, Enoch refused on principle, probably with the support of his father. Two years earlier in 1805, Levi Lincoln had chaired a committee of Overseers at Harvard and had supported the student's demands for improvement in commons in a similar rebellion. His recommendations on behalf of the students was partly politically motivated and an attempt to undermine the Federalist authority that controlled Harvard. Lincoln's plan was very narrowly defeated prompting the Harvard government to petition the state legislature to permit the university to elect their own overseers and reduce their numbers. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard, 1636-1936* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1936), 211-2. Morison incorrectly states that Levi Lincoln was Lieutenant Governor at the time of the controversy. Levi Lincoln became Lieutenant Governor in 1807.

entirely. At the end of his final year he was awarded the distinction of delivering a “Poem in English” for the 1803 commencement ceremonies, a significant achievement. Assignment of commencement parts was the faculty’s opportunity to single out their finest students to be recognized not only by the school but by the entire Cambridge and Boston communities. Commencement Day ranked second only to the Fourth of July as a day of public festivity and celebration. Throughout Boston and Cambridge, shops and banks closed so that everyone who wanted to attend could do so. The formal ceremonies took place in the old Congregational Meeting House where dignitaries, faculty and townspeople assembled to bear witness to and pass judgment upon the speeches, disputation and poetry of Harvard’s best students.⁵⁴ Consequently, the awarding of parts was not free of controversy and produced bitter feelings from those not chosen. William Austin, a member of the class of 1798 who did not receive a part reproached the university for rewarding unoriginal students who were rewarded more for their dull obedience than their brilliance.⁵⁵

In July, Daniel returned to Worcester to compose his verse for the late August commencement. He was not in a good mood. Charlotte was away making him “unsociable and gloomy.” Drinking did little to assuage his unhappiness. “The strains of the vial are as cheery but the voice of merriment is disgusting for melancholy is the companion of thy friend,” he reported to William Sewall.⁵⁶ He needed to find a worthy subject for his commencement poem. After discarding “Idolatry” as a theme too wearying to pursue, and

⁵⁴ Hall, *A Collection of College Words*, 98-102.

⁵⁵ William Austin, *Strictures on Harvard University* (Boston: Folsom Printers, 1798), 15-9.

⁵⁶ Daniel Lincoln to William Sewall, July 18, 1803, DWL Papers.

“Woman” as “a damnable subject” he settled on a more emotive theme that had occupied him for months: the loss of natural goodness to self-interest and false gods. He entitled his work “Benevolence.” After five day’s labor he wrote William an exalted, relieved missive full of bravado. “Thanks to all the Gods & Goddesses, Gods in heaven, Gods on earth, Gods in the water & Gods in help, my monologue for commencement is finished. It is a work of fancy I assure you, the true, honest child of fancy; for I neither feel nor believe one sentiment in the work. Tho' really I esteem the best piece I have ever written.”⁵⁷

Daniel's exuberance quickly passed. Only a few weeks after he sent his ebullient note to Sewall, a fatal wave of dysentery swept through Worcester, claiming Daniel’s three-year-old brother, Waldo. Daniel and his sister Martha were also stricken, Martha seriously so. In an unusually personal letter to Jefferson, Levi described the sad event. “My family was healthy and happy on my arrival. They have experienced a distressing reverse. The dysentery has raged on many places and in some of our towns more mortally than the yellow fever in the cities....It has robbed me of a fine son. ...The survivors are recovering their strength but are as yet feeble & sorrowful.”⁵⁸ Still recovering and with only days before commencement, Daniel wrote William Sewall that he was uncertain he would be well enough to deliver his poem.

According to the Harvard rules, speakers were required to submit their poems or speeches to the president for approval several days before the ceremonies. Still too ill to convey his poem himself, Daniel asked William Sewall to deliver the 112-line verse to Willard

⁵⁷ Daniel Lincoln to William Sewall, July 29, 1803, DWL Papers.

⁵⁸ Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, September 10, 1803. Letter from Library of Congress, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1606-1827*. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:31:/temp/~ammem_UC7J.

for his inspection. The poem's first few lines laid out the familiar ideal of man moving from a state of savagery into one of perfect cooperation and equal laws that protected personal autonomy and popular sovereignty. War, vice, deceit, sordidness, and ambitions were unknown in this paradise. Benevolence ruled with a loving hand. But since that perfect time "disorder, tumult, violence & rage" had torn through the world. The plundering Spanish explorers, the tragedy of the enslaved African, and the wars in Europe wrought havoc on the perfect plain of human cooperation. Salvation lay with the leadership of virtuous men.

Some few there are, a firm & faithful band.
 The lure of garish splendor that withstand.
 Some, that to Baal have not bowed the knee,
 Steadfast, unshook in their integrity.
 Some, that on human misery have not preyed;
 Some, that from virtue's path have never strayed.
 Some, that have watched with care, the vestal flame,
 Their lives a satire on their neighbor's shame.
 They grant to fortune's plaything in their gate,
 A safe asylum from the wrongs of fate.
 The wretched sufferer they will never shun
 "Whether he worship twenty gods or one."
 The rights of others never will refrain,
 Who think with Watson, or agree with Paine.
 'Tis thus some sphinx worthies erst have done,
 'Thus too has Franklin, thus great Jefferson.
 Their noble deeds elude the vulgar ken,
 Sages, in wisdom & in feelings men.
 Papists had sainted those of half their worth,
 Applied their maxims as the test of truth.⁵⁹

Daniel's reverential evocation of Jefferson alarmed Willard and he refused to approve the poem, claiming it would "give offense." He directed Daniel to rewrite it. Weak from illness

⁵⁹ Daniel W. Lincoln, "Benevolence A Monologue," DWL Papers.

and mourning the loss of his brother, Willard's rejection may have been exactly the tonic Daniel needed to make the trip to Cambridge.

Unfortunately for the class of 1803, the usual festivities that delighted town and gown alike were canceled due to the sudden death of David Tappan, the Hollis Professor of Divinity only two days earlier. In deference to Tappan's demise, Willard requested that there be no applause or noise-making at any point during the ceremonies. Performances that were traditionally greeted by ovations received a still and eerie silence instead. A funeral dirge substituted for the "fiddles and fifes and rams horns" that usually accompanied the processional ("Why do we mourn departing Friends? Or shake at Death's Alarms? 'Tis but the Voice that Jesus sends To call them to his Arms.")⁶⁰ The somber audience heard the 1803 graduates perform an oration in Latin, an English conference on the "Comparative Efficacy of Advice, Commendation, and Satire on the Manners of Society," a dissertation on "The moral tendency of representations of fictitious distress," an oration in Greek, an English colloquy on "The influence which the discovery of America has had on the state of mankind," and a poem by Daniel Lincoln entitled "Benevolence."⁶¹

Aware of Willard's request that he amend his poem, Daniel defied authority and delivered his poem in its original form. Willard's concerns were not unfounded. John Pierce, a Harvard alum who had the unusual distinction of attending every Harvard commencement for fifty-eight years (missing only one that happened to coincide with his mother's funeral)

⁶⁰ John Pierce quoted in Charles Smith, "Some Notes on the Harvard Commencements, 1803-1848, from the Journal of Rev. Dr. John Pierce," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 5 (1889-1890): 168-9.

⁶¹ *Order of the Exercises for Commencement. August 31, 1803*. Harvard University in Cambridge. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, (Cambridge, Mass: University Press, 1803).

wrote, “The poem by Lincoln was worthy a discipline of Voltaire.”⁶² This was hardly a compliment when Federalists viewed the deist Voltaire as the promoter of licentiousness and evil. Diarist William Bentley, a Republican Unitarian minister from Salem was not offended by the content but remarked that “the class which graduated was small in number as well as gifts.”⁶³ For Daniel, however, the day was a great triumph. His public rebuke of Willard was also a public endorsement of his father who had been skewered in the Boston press ever since Daniel arrived at Harvard. The outcome of the episode so pleased Levi that he sent a copy of the poem to Jefferson along with a note describing Willard’s attempt to censure the work. “The circumstances show the spirit of the governors of that Seminary,” wrote Levi.⁶⁴

Daniel’s feelings about Harvard never softened. Cambridge was a painful memory of isolation, turmoil, and depression. “At college one may see all the subtle folly of the world & learn to fence with villains. This is the advantage of a public education that we may learn all the feints & wiles of experienced players & learn too to guard against them.”⁶⁵ Four years later, after his younger brother Enoch Lincoln had been expelled from the college for his participation in a student rebellion, Daniel consoled him by pointing out the many shortcomings of Harvard’s pedagogy. “There is neither a pleasure nor advantage in the monastic discipline of New England seminaries. Repetition of senseless prayers & rehearsals of useless exercises consume the most part of the terms. Learning is not traditional... Let

⁶² Smith, “Some Notes on the Harvard Commencements,” 169.

⁶³ William Bentley, Joseph Gilbert Waters, Marguerite Dalrymple, and Alice G. Waters. *The Diary of William Bentley, Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts* (Salem, Mass: Essex Institute, 1914), 40.

⁶⁴ Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, 10 September 1803. Letter. From Library of Congress, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers*. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:31:/temp/~ammem_UC7J.

⁶⁵ Daniel Lincoln to William Sewall, 28 June 1803, DWL Papers.

blockheads drudge in the solemn round superstitious reverence for ancient practice has established. Genius soars on daring wings & directs her own course.”⁶⁶

Harvard College behind him, Daniel returned to Worcester to study law with his father.⁶⁷ In order to gain entrance to the bar and to keep it free of “pettifoggers and men of little distinction” prospective lawyers were required to apprentice with established barristers and attorneys.⁶⁸ For those who possessed a college education, the apprenticeship would last for three years followed by two years at the Court of Common Pleas. By all accounts, legal education was a dreary business. Students dedicated much of their time to copying documents especially when law books were difficult to come by.⁶⁹ Most, however, slogged through the “flinty highway” of Sir Edward Coke’s *Commentaries on Littleton’s Tenures*.⁷⁰ At the completion of his clerkship, the new attorney was introduced and recommended to the bar by an established lawyer who would vouch for his etiquette and morality.⁷¹

With a tutor who also happened to be the United States Attorney General, Daniel would have been privy to one of the best and highest-placed legal educators in Massachusetts. As Attorney General, Levi Lincoln had been the chief advisor on the nation’s most noteworthy legal decisions at the highest level. He played a central role in the controversy surrounding John Adams’ midnight appointments. It was Lincoln not James Madison, whom Jefferson ordered to hold the commissions for Adams appointees. (Lincoln had been Acting

⁶⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, 7 December 1807, DWL Papers.

⁶⁷ In 1803 there was only one law school in the United States: Litchfield Law School. Harvard Law School did not open until 1815. Gerard W. Gawalt, *The Promise of Power: The Emergence of the Legal Profession in Massachusetts 1760-1840* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 132.

⁶⁸ Charles Warren, *History of Harvard Law School* (New York: Lewis Publishing, 1908), 53.

⁶⁹ Gawalt, *The Promise of Power*, 131-2.

⁷⁰ Warren, *History of Harvard Law School*, 136.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

Secretary of State in the first days of the Jefferson administration when Madison was delayed getting to Washington after his father's funeral.) That episode resulted in *Marbury v. Madison*, the foundation for judicial review.

Lincoln also advised Jefferson on his letter to the Danbury Baptists in which Jefferson defended himself against Federalist charges of atheism while famously putting forward his views on the separation of church and state. Lincoln advised Jefferson to delete a particularly partisan section of the letter that Lincoln felt could backfire by offending more politically neutral church goers.⁷² Jefferson obliged. As a strict constructionist, Lincoln expressed discomfort over the constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase believing that the Constitution did not allow for new territory to be added to the nation by executive purchase. He did, however, see the merits of expansion and advised Jefferson to add the additional 827,000 square miles to the existing states. Jefferson and the rest of the cabinet (Albert Gallatin especially) rejected Lincoln's suggestion, preferring a broader interpretation that made acquisition of new land constitutionally permissible. A large part of Lincoln's work as Attorney General involved interpreting international law as it related to neutral American shipping vessels caught between the belligerents England and France who were waging war in the Atlantic.⁷³

In 1805 Levi retired from his active law practice and handed it over to his eldest son, Levi Junior. It had been a difficult few years for the older Lincoln. During a Supreme Court appearance in 1804, Lincoln suffered a profound public humiliation. As Attorney General, he appeared at the Supreme Court as the defense council for the government in a case involving

⁷² James H. Hutson and Thomas Jefferson, "Thomas Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists: A Controversy Rejoined," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 56 (October 1999): 775-90.

⁷³ Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln, Sr.," 77.

tax collection of manufactured refined sugar: *Pennington v. Coxe*. The case was brought chiefly as a means to demonstrate Jefferson's intent to roll back federal control of the tax bureaucracy, installed by Jefferson's predecessor, John Adams. Jefferson felt Adams's tax scheme diluted the authority of the states and he needed a public forum such as the sugar case to broaden popular support for his revised tax plan.⁷⁴

It is impossible to know what happened to Levi as he stood before Chief Justice John Marshall in that crowded court room but what occurred next was calamitous for the dignified Lincoln. He may have had a slight stroke. Midway through his opening argument, Lincoln suddenly became flummoxed and confused. He stood silently, all eyes upon him, for fifteen interminable minutes trying to recover his composure. When he began to speak again it was in a "wild, incoherent and unargumentative manner." Exhausted and overcome, he slumped into his chair, unable to continue. Alexander Dallas, the famous Philadelphia lawyer, was called in to substitute for Levi. In the end, Supreme Court Justice Marshall ruled against Lincoln and Dallas, although Lincoln's shaky performance probably had little bearing on Marshall's decision. No references to the incident have been found in Levi's letters, but the Federalist press made hay of his embarrassment and gleefully added it to the rancorous arsenal they used to discredit him. Some pounced on Lincoln's humiliation with a giddy vengeance and hypothesized the Jefferson was so embarrassed by Lincoln's performance that he fired him.⁷⁵

For years Levi had suffered from deteriorating vision which may have contributed to losing his way as he read his brief. Such a public embarrassment was hardly the example of

⁷⁴ See Charlotte Crane, "Pennington v. Coxe: A Glimpse at The Federal Government in the Early Republic," *Virginia Tax Law Review* 23 (2003): 417-69.

⁷⁵ Charles William Janson, *The Stranger in America 1793-1806* (London: James Cundee, Albion Press London, 1807; reprint New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1935), 150-1. Janson was a British tourist and writer who loathed everything American. Nothing in the record substantiates Janson's claim.

self-control and erudition he wanted to show the world. Although Federalists jumped to use it as an indication of his ineptitude, fellow Republicans made little of the matter. After the incident but before he resigned as attorney general, the national Republican caucus nominated Lincoln for the office of Vice President. But he polled a distant third in the balloting, well behind George Clinton of New York and John Breckenridge of Kentucky.⁷⁶

In December 1804, Lincoln resigned the office of attorney general. In his letter to Jefferson, he declared his desire to be with his “young and numerous family in want of parental care and assistance in the course of their education” as well as increasing difficulties with his eyesight. He assured Jefferson in a heartfelt three-page letter that his respect for him remained as undiminished as did his disdain for the Federalists. Toward the end of the letter, Levi makes a single cryptic reference to a “successor professing probably a greater quickness of conception & readiness of recollection,” which may or may not have been a cryptic reference to the *Pennington* episode.⁷⁷ In his response Jefferson regretfully concurred that the “sacred duties” of family life demanded more of Levi’s time and attention. “You carry with you my entire approbation of your official conduct, my thanks for your services, my regrets on losing them, and my affectionate friendship,” he wrote.”⁷⁸ Lincoln remained a steadfast and loyal friend to the third president and continued to act as Jefferson’s unofficial envoy to New England for the remainder of Jefferson’s presidency and beyond.

Resigning, however, did not mean Levi was ready to sit in Martha’s English-style garden with her turkeys and hens and watch the sun set on his 3,000 acres of Massachusetts

⁷⁶ Petroelje, “Levi Lincoln, Sr.,” 129-30.

⁷⁷ Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, December 26, 1804, Letter. From the Library of Congress, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers*, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:22:/temp/~ammem_6WDz::

⁷⁸ Ibid.

farmland. Rather, he set his political ambitions closer to home. At fifty-five, he still had a good deal of fight left in him and there was still a good amount of fighting left to do. The political sparring in Worcester showed no signs of diminishing but remained as bruising as ever, especially with the approach of the 1804 election. Although by 1804 most men identified themselves as either Federalists or Republicans in Worcester, many still refused to accept the reality of a party system. Because parties had not yet coalesced into stable organizations, various voluntary societies became the means through which members could formalize and politicize its members. Masonic Lodges, Agricultural Societies, Fire Societies, and local militia organizations all had political as well as nonpolitical, civic purposes. For Daniel's generation these voluntary societies, especially military associations, also functioned as an incubator for a new kind of civic manhood.⁷⁹

Worcester instituted a voluntary militia in 1781, but by 1803 it had degenerated into a motley conglomeration of transient young men whose attendance at meetings was irregular, whose uniforms were slovenly, and whose interest in defending Worcester if put to the test

⁷⁹ Brooke, *Heart of the Commonwealth*, 245. Albrecht Koschnik looks at the development of partisan voluntary societies in Philadelphia. Koschnik credits their creation to an effort to court public approbation in an era that disdained political faction. Presenting themselves first as voluntary associations warded off criticisms of anti-republicanism while also fomenting political identity. Koschnik's work focuses on associations catering to young Federalist men and traces the evolution of voluntary groups after Federalist power eclipsed around 1812 when the group's interest shifted into more literary and cultural concerns. It is not clear if the same dynamics could be applied to Republican groups. What does seem universal, however, is the opportunity groups gave young men to establish their credentials as soldiers and citizens at the ready to defend the nation in the republican spirit of the founders, however differently interpreted. See Albrecht Koschnik, "Young Federalists, Masculinity, and Partisanship during the War of 1812," in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, eds., Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, David Waldstreicher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

was questionable. Their parades were said to be more displays of burlesque than bravery.⁸⁰

The problem was serious. Jefferson's Military Peace and Establishment Act of 1802 reduced the regular army to about 3,200 men. The Act satisfied Republican demands for frugality in government as well as a renewed reliance on citizens' militia as the first line of defense against enemy invaders. They believed a large standing army was dangerous to the republic especially when it was staffed as it largely was in 1800 by Federalists.⁸¹

Worcester's militia badly needed improvement. Creating a more efficient one not only answered the civic and constitutional mandate for military training but offered an opportunity to young men to "assist in an effort which, if crowned with success, will retrieve lost opportunities, and respectability to their characters as soldiers, and place them in a situation to be the example and the boast of the division to which they belong."⁸² Three of Worcester's best and brightest sons, Levi Lincoln, Jr., Joseph Caldwell, and Ledyard Goodell, presented Governor Caleb Strong with a petition signed by thirty-four others seeking permission to form the Worcester Light Infantry. "Should your honors see fit to grant the prayer of this petition," wrote Levi Jr. "A large number of raw, undisciplined, ununiformed

⁸⁰ Major Fredrick Green Stiles, "A Sketch of the Worcester Light Infantry, 1803-1922," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity* 17 (1901): 616.

⁸¹ Lawrence Delbert Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 151. Cress notes, "The Revolution of 1800 promised both a return to the federal balance that ensured republican government and a revival of the citizen militia upon which all republican societies had been based." Theodore Crackel takes a different view of Jefferson's Military Peace and Establishment Act of 1802. He argues that Jefferson did not wish to reduce the army but that during the Adams administration, the Federalists controlled the army, a situation reminiscent of their domination in the court system. Rather than reduce the army, Jefferson wanted to Republicanize it which he attempted to do by establishing a military academy at West Point in 1802. In 1803 when Levi Lincoln, Junior petitioned the governor for a new militia in Worcester, the nation still relied upon local militias. This would change with the War of 1812. See Theodore Crackel, *Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment* (New York: New York University Press, 1987).

⁸² Levi Lincoln, Jr. quoted in Stiles, "Sketch of the Worcester Light Infantry", 617.

young men who already have associated & who immediately would enlist, will soon become a well-disciplined, uniformed and equipped corps.”⁸³ In January 1804 Strong approved the request. Daniel Lincoln enlisted as the corps’ first orderly sergeant and clerk.⁸⁴

At its inception the Worcester Light Infantry was a beacon to the elite young Republicans of Worcester County. As volunteers, the enlistees were responsible for their own uniforms and weaponry, which immediately set them apart from the old rag-tag militia as a select corps. They met and drilled frequently so that by the following June they were ready to stage their first public parade. Maneuvers and parades were followed by convivial dinners highlighted by political tributes and numerous toasts.

Daniel was nineteen years old when he joined the militia, a newly minted college graduate just beginning his law studies. As a young man, he did not yet possess the requisites of manhood: financial independence, professional success, and a family of his own. The Infantry provided Daniel with a respected society whose purpose for the protection of the public welfare came at a transitional juncture in his life. Here he could find likeminded men of his age that had eluded him at Harvard. He could demonstrate to the public his partisanship, discipline, masculinity, and readiness to assume the full responsibility of manhood in the future. Mostly importantly, it would be an ideal showcase for his public virtue. An exhibition on the Fourth of July would demonstrate for all the Worcester Light Infantry’s deportment and patriotism.

Worcester observed the Fourth of July with patriotic zeal. The day evoked both celebration and ceremony: an opportunity to celebrate collective identity as Americans, to pay

⁸³ Levi Lincoln Jr., quoted in Herbert Lincoln Adams, *Worcester Light Infantry 1803-1922* (Worcester, Mass: Worcester Light Infantry History Association, 1924), 27.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 30.

tribute to the nation's founders and veterans, and to recommit to republican ideals. It was an occasion to renew patriotism, promote nationalism, and most important, to provide a point of reunion to the party faithful. Although the ritual may have been unifying within parties, the celebration failed to ignite a sense of a shared American identity among the participants. Rather than unifying them, the day divided Federalist and Republican partisans even more. The festivities became a staging ground for competing interpretations of the legacy of the Revolution, with Federalists and Republicans vying for who could be the most patriotic and most faithful to American principles.⁸⁵ The rivalry became so unbridgeable that in many cities and towns Federalists and Republicans held two separate celebrations with two parades and two orations.

The 1805 July Fourth celebration in Worcester was not quite so contentious, but nearly so. The town had only one parade and one oration organized by Republicans. Although the *Worcester Aegis* claimed that in the spirit of the great day Federalists were welcome to participate, most stayed away preferring to celebrate the day in the privacy of their own homes well away from the Republican hoopla. Their absence prompted the *Aegis* to assert that Federalist nonparticipation was a kind of "negative treason" and a "sin of omission." What more evidence was needed to confirm that Federalists were callous and "dead to sentiment" preferring to pass over the day in "cold and sullen silence?"⁸⁶ Perhaps in a display more gratuitous than genuine, Republicans issued invitations to Federalist clergy to join them in the celebration. Aaron Bancroft refused, citing the previous year's event during which he had been publicly ostracized for omitting Thomas Jefferson from his prayers. For

⁸⁵ Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth: Independence Day and the Rites of Nationalism in the Early Republic* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 1-14.

⁸⁶ *National Aegis*, July 3, 1805.

the Federalist faithful, there was no escape from Republican reproach. By attending, they risked public censure. By staying away, they risked being called unpatriotic but at least they could suffer Republican aspersions privately. Cleared of the Federalists, Republicans in Worcester owned the day.

Several months before the event the Republican town leaders had selected Daniel Lincoln to be the day's orator. Traditionally, the honor went to an educated young man of promise and consequence whose July Fourth oration debuted his talents and abilities.⁸⁷ "From the Republican principles, correct taste and classical acquirements of this Gentleman we anticipate much, and are confident that our anticipations will not be disappointed," heralded the *Aegis*.⁸⁸ Levi Lincoln, Jr. had delivered the previous year's oration. Now it was Daniel's turn. Already known for his oratorical skills he was also known to possess a fearless political ardor, necessary ingredients for an exciting and memorable speech.

Typically, a July Fourth oration functioned as a kind of exegesis: a recap of the events and principles leading up to independence, followed by a rousing discourse on the Revolution's meaning and the responsibilities of its inheritors.⁸⁹ Since the first July Fourth celebration in Boston in 1777 (codified in 1783), orators had taken the occasion to remind their listeners of the "feelings, manners, and principles" that led to the Revolution. Other towns soon adopted the tradition and the "Boston style" that came with it; an oratorical form noteworthy for its "exclamations, hyperbole, and melodramatic oppositions."⁹⁰ This included references that soon became common: the blessings of natural abundance, heroes (especially

⁸⁷ Kenneth Cmiel, *Democratic Eloquence: The Fight over Popular Speech in Nineteenth-Century America* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 23-54.

⁸⁸ "July Fourth," *National Aegis*, May 29, 1805.

⁸⁹ Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 48-9.

⁹⁰ Paul Goetsch and Gerd Hurm, *The Fourth of July Political Oratory and Literary Reactions 1776-1976* (Tübingen: G. Narr, 1992), 61.

Washington) who have led and saved the nation, the importance of a citizen's militia, the genius of the Constitution, and the evidence of God's hand in American destiny as proof of American's exceptionalism.⁹¹

The festivities in Worcester began with a cannon firing and bells ringing. A parade under an escort by the Light Infantry wound from Johnson's Inn to the South Meetinghouse, where a jubilant crowd gathered to hear Daniel deliver his oration.



Fig. 6. Old South Meeting House, Worcester, Massachusetts Reprinted, with permission, from Preservation Worcester, "Historical Virtual Tour," <http://www.preservationworchester.org/Pages/histor/tourhistoric.html>.

Daniel's address drew on his familiarity with Hugh Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric* he studied at Harvard. But he also wanted to entertain. He understood that the listeners "congregate not for instruction but amusement; not for improvement but frolic." He knew he must "strike the harp then & charm their senses with the witchery of modulation. Song will please them more than lectures in philosophy. Strike the harp, for it discourses the language of passion."⁹² As a declamatory speech, he engaged in an elegant, florid style, abundant with ornamental language, smatterings of Latin, and numerous classical references. He avoided the specific

⁹¹ Howard Hastings Martin, "Orations on the Anniversary of American Independence, 1777-1876," (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1955), 101-22.

⁹² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 23, 1809, DWL Papers.

and tended toward the general, also in keeping with a more romanticized approach that deliberately distanced the listener so that he might absorb the message from afar.⁹³ Like most orators, Daniel led his audience through the events that culminated in the revolution, painting the British as “unnatural” parents who carelessly abandoned their American children to fate when they produced little of value, only to hungrily pounce and exploit them when successful. He then paid tribute to the fallen heroes “noble martyrs of our cause” and paid due homage to the Constitution and the immortal Washington, untying Washington from exclusive Federalist possession.

With few Federalists in attendance Daniel warmed to his audience. His oration was not as much an effort to illuminate Republican ideals of liberty and preserving its founding principles as it was an occasion to berate Federalists for their abuses that threatened the very survival of the nation. His speech brimmed with fiercely partisan rhetoric sure to delight a highly partisan crowd. He combined a laudatory discourse of Jefferson with a hortatory, more emotional discourse on Federalists.⁹⁴ He recalled the horrors of the Revolution as a reminder of what liberty had cost, all of which was nearly lost under Adams’s Alien and Sedition Acts, the XYZ Affair, and Indian wars. “Shall I waken in your ears the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, the shrieks of violated chastity, and the screams of murdered helplessness?...Shall I direct you to the dungeons of despotism, the nurseries of pestilence, where the gorged vulture snuffs the tainted wind, where rank contagion withers the vigor of

⁹³ Martin, “Orations on the Anniversary of American Independence,” 305.

⁹⁴ See Andrew W. Robertson, *The Language of Democracy: Political Rhetoric in the United States and Britain 1790-1900* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

the arm, extinguishes the luster of the eye, and stifles the expiring sigh of bravery enthralled?” He then unleashed a lengthy encomium to Jefferson as peacemaker, champion of freedom, and engineer of prosperity to whom the nation owes its happiness. If “Washington was our Romulus,” said Daniel, “Jefferson was our Numa.”⁹⁵ After a final declaration “Mother of Genius, Nurse of Arts, Happy America! Live Forever!” the crowd returned to Johnson’s Inn where they dined, listened to music, and raised their glasses to seventeen official toasts and many more unofficial ones, far too many to be documented by the press.⁹⁶

A week following the festivities the oration was published in pamphlet form so that its Republican message might spread far beyond the crowd gathered on a single July afternoon in front of the old South Meetinghouse. Locally, the *Aegis* praised Daniel for delivering an “elegant, spirited, and highly Republican oration.”⁹⁷ The *Monthly Anthology* a Federalist publication in Boston, did not share the *Aegis*’s enthusiasm. “Though juvenile performances may claim indulgence, by withholding the rod we may injure the child,” the critique began. Daniel, they wrote, was “too much elevated with his own consequence to be hurt by the reflections of another” for the critique to make much difference to him. Nevertheless, the editors soldiered on, accusing him of “mistaking acrimony for wit” and being “peculiarly unfortunate in his declamatory endeavors.” Worse, the critic accused Daniel of producing a dull oration that relied on dredging up old wounds and retelling Revolutionary War atrocities

⁹⁵ Daniel Lincoln, *An Oration Pronounced At Worcester on the Anniversary of American Independence, July 4th, 1805* (Worcester, Mass: Sewall Goodridge, 1805). Numa Pompilius was the legendary second king of Rome after Romulus. His people venerated him for his wisdom and piety.

⁹⁶ “National Independence,” *National Aegis*, July 10, 1805.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

merely for the sake of exciting the crowd. Moreover, the thrashing of the Federalists had grown tiresome, “The same wave, attended with the same froth and the same roar, is continually unbosoming itself.” They had hoped for something more from a “gentleman and a scholar.”⁹⁸ The poor reception of Daniel’s oration by the Federalist *Monthly Anthology* probably surprised no one. The fact that the critic deigned to review the oration at all testified to its significance as many other orations were passed over by its editors as too frivolous to merit notice.

The speech deeply pleased Daniel’s most important critic, his father. As he had done with Daniel’s commencement poem two years before, Levi promptly forwarded a copy of the speech to Thomas Jefferson. He admitted that the work written by “a young disciple of the new school” needed improvement, but nevertheless it stood as “a silent witness of his & my zeal to serve the public ... and in every way expressive of the real feelings of your devoted friend.”⁹⁹ As an extension of himself and his values, Levi presented his son to the sitting President of the United States to be a protector of the Republican ideal for future generations. It was a triumphant moment for Levi as a Republican, patriot, and father.

⁹⁸ *The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* (Boston: Monroe & Francis, 1805), 436. The Boston Anthology Society began meeting in Boston in 1803 and was part dinner club, part literary society. The magazine it produced under William Emerson as its editor lasted only until 1811 when disorganization, disinterest, internal divisions, and defection of its members led to the group’s dissolution. The younger members, however, reorganized and in 1815 founded the North American Review under the editorship of William Tudor, a former Anthology Society member. Lewis P. Simpson, “A Literary Adventure of the Early Republic: The Anthology Society and the Monthly Anthology,” *The New England Quarterly*, 27 (1954): 168-90.

⁹⁹ Levi Lincoln to Thomas Jefferson, July 30, 1805. Letter. The Library of Congress, The Thomas Jefferson Papers. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:17:./temp/~ammem_5yeE::

Whatever exhilaration and accomplishment Daniel felt after his July Fourth performance, tragedy ended it almost immediately. On the day following his oration, his beloved Charlotte's father, William Caldwell, died from complications of an earlier suicide attempt.¹⁰⁰ A few weeks later, Charlotte's mother, Charlotte Blake Caldwell, also died. Within a few weeks the Caldwell survivors sold the family estate in Worcester and moved to Hingham to live with maternal relatives. Daniel despaired that Charlotte had left Worcester. "Misfortune has separated me from the friend of my bosom & I am here alone. My gratifications are derived from the recollections of former joys. And much sweeter is their remembrance than the enjoyment of any within my attainment."¹⁰¹ As lonely as Daniel was without Charlotte in Worcester, two months later his dejection turned to despondency. On January 14, 1806, Charlotte Caldwell, aged eighteen, died. The loss devastated Daniel. "The destroyer has plundered from the wreath of my social pleasures its fairest blossoms but the cord of its texture was entwined with the threads of existence & the cherished remembrance of its beauties will be lost but with life," he lamented to his mother.¹⁰² Disconsolate, alone, and grief stricken, Daniel withdrew into his grief. He sought comfort in alcohol launching a cycle of pain temporarily dulled by alcohol, then redounding accompanied by even blacker feelings of depression, guilt, shame, remorse, and alienation. In time the damage alcohol

¹⁰⁰ Franklin P. Rice, *The Worcester Book A Diary of Noteworthy Events in Worcester, Massachusetts From 1657 to 1823* (Worcester: Putnam, Davis and Company, 1884), 84. "His death was caused in part by an attempt at suicide some time before, while suffering under depression of spirits." "On account of ill health and mental depression, he cut his throat but recovered from the wound." Charles Nutt, *History of Worcester and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1919), 71. Caldwell's son had died only a few months earlier.

¹⁰¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 17, 1805, DWL Papers.

¹⁰² Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, August 21, 1806, DWL Papers.

abuse inflicted on his still developing brain inhibited the normal processing of the painful vagaries of life in a way that prevented acute sadness to fade in time. Drinking kept the pain alive and festering for the rest of his life.¹⁰³

Heavy drinking in the early nineteenth century was nothing extraordinary. Even women and children drank daily, starting with a little cider at breakfast. It was not uncommon for school teachers, ministers, and other community figures to appear drunk in public. Any kind of community event from house raisings to July Fourth celebrations involved drinking.¹⁰⁴ When the Worcester Light Militia gathered in celebration of itself, for example, meetings were marked by innumerable toasts to the country, the president, and each other, down the line to the sum of twenty-five or more toasts in the course of an evening. Although drinking in the company of distinguished men signified masculinity if not patriotism, as the nineteenth century progressed excessive drinking began to be viewed less impassively, thanks in large part to the contributions of Benjamin Rush, the famous Philadelphia physician and patriot. Rush published a widely-read pamphlet in 1784 entitled *An Inquiry into the Effects of Spirituous Liquors* that equated drunkenness to anti-

¹⁰³ James R. Milam, "The Alcoholism Revolution," *Professional Counselor* (1992): 5. Milam maintains that the psychogenic model of alcoholism (alcoholism as a result of a core defect in personality, such as depression) and the biogenic model (an addictive response to alcohol) are mutually exclusive. In his view, people who drink to ease their depressive symptoms do not become alcoholics. They may be alcoholic and depressed but not alcoholic because they are depressed. The psychogenic paradigm comes loaded with moralistic connotations and perceptions of alcoholics as willfully misbehaving. Furthermore, some of the symptoms of depression could actually be due to the exaggerating effect of alcohol on the brain, not on a separate psychological condition.

¹⁰⁴ During the first two decades of the nineteenth century drinking reached its zenith (or nadir) of an average yearly consumption of more than five gallons per person. Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 2-41.

republicanism and suicide.¹⁰⁵ To Rush, initial forays into drinking indicated a loss of control and weakness and courted disease and addiction. Long term drunkenness brought not only untimely, premature death but threatened the growth and survival of the nation. Public drunkenness that may have been excused in the non-elite was increasingly viewed askance by those setting themselves up as models of republican decorum and stability.¹⁰⁶ Daniel's drinking was so great and so public that it crossed into the unacceptable for men of his station and responsibility. Drunkenness meant self-indulgence and self-interest, the opposite of virtue. Consequently, Daniel's drinking courted dishonor and disgrace to himself and his family.

In the months after Charlotte's death, Daniel found no happiness in Worcester. His drinking bruised his public reputation. Friends wrote to one another of his "certain habits" that caused his father great distress.¹⁰⁷ Such behavior, even as a consequence of profound grief could only reflect poorly on Levi as a father if it was to become protracted. Furthermore, Levi's recent re-entry into public service may have heightened the worry. Levi had been elected to serve on the Executive Committee for Governor Caleb Strong in June 1806, a first step in expanding his political authority in Massachusetts. Accusations of dishonor invited public censure at a time when Levi depended upon an honorable reputation as essential political capital.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Richard J. Bell, *"Do Not Despair: The Cultural Significance of Suicide in America, 1780-1840"* (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2006), 415-53.

¹⁰⁶ Lender and Martin, *Drinking in America*, 36-40.

¹⁰⁷ Edward Bangs to Nathaniel Howe, December 22, 1807, DWL Papers.

¹⁰⁸ See Joanne Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

By August 1806, Daniel needed a new start, far away from agonizing memories of Charlotte and the humiliation of his bruised reputation. A move to the District of Maine seemed a promising solution. Just as Worcester had offered unprecedented opportunities for the intrepid Levi in 1776, Portland in 1806 was frontier territory and young man's game, ripe for the bold who possessed the initiative to make their mark. Portland needed lawyers and Daniel had the professional credentials in hand. With the help of his father's well-positioned friend he could set up a law practice quickly. In addition, the time was right politically. Federalists looked vulnerable when Caleb Strong defeated Republican James Sullivan by a slim 533 votes in the 1806 gubernatorial race.¹⁰⁹ And after the Republican *The Eastern Argus* published a secret circular revealing Federalist plans to organize county committees in the District to boost their presence there, Massachusetts Republicans knew if they ever hoped to capture the State House they could ignore the growing Federalist threat at their own peril.¹¹⁰ Daniel's pedigree along with his political and oratorical talents could be of great use in soliciting Republican votes. So the stage was set for Daniel to make his way in life. He had suffered a setback and had tasted failure, but he could still reclaim his future. Now it was up to Daniel to make a name for himself as a member of the bar, a Republican, and a man of virtue and honor.

¹⁰⁹ "Massachusetts 1806 State Election for Governor," *New Nation Votes American Election Returns 1787-1825*. http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1806.00002

¹¹⁰ Louis Clinton Hatch, *Maine: A History* (New York: The American Historical Society, 1919), 70.

CHAPTER THREE

“In Sincerity,” Daniel Lincoln in Portland 1806-1810



Fig. 7. Congress Street, Portland, 1800 Etching by Charles Quincy Goodhue Reprinted, by permission, from Maine Historical Society, “Maine Memory Network,”
<http://images.google.com/imagres?imgurl=http://hwlongfellow.org/Media/images/135/75/14879.JPG&imgrefurl>.

Portland August 14th 1806

At 8 o'clock this morning, I arrived in this town. On my passage, I tarried in Watertown during the first night of my departure, was with Enoch on Wednesday morning, & am now in Portland. From Boston as far as Kennebunk the roads were as fine & thence as far as Scarborough as bad as any, and which I have ever traveled. Throughout Massachusetts proper, & New Hampshire the appearance of country is beautiful-the soil fertile, & the husbandry highly improved; but barrenness fills the intermediate space to Portland, which seemed like a rose in a desert. It was actually passing through the wilderness to the land of promise. My coming was expected, I find. Those gentleman to whom I have been introduced, have treated me with the utmost politeness. I occupy the office built for Samuel Freeman, (who has become a shoemaker) by his father for the present, but shall remove to the building with the Custom House, Insurance Office & Portland Bank, as soon as Mr. Mellen who now improves it can have his own finished--rent \$50. I board at Mr. Graffam's with Newcomb, who has established himself here in the practice of physics. Mr. Potter & Bray attys, a French General & a Mr. Reed, Merch. at \$4 per week¹ The decease of

¹Daniel Newcomb received a medical degree from University of Pennsylvania and lived and practiced in Portland until 1807 when he moved to Boston. Once settled in Boston, Newcomb

Mr. Chase who was the first & oldest of the attorneys at this bar has rendered the situation by far more eligible for me that it would otherwise have been. Mr. Symmes the next in age & former standing is worse than dead--a confirmed fact. Mr. Kinsman, Mr. Pope had been very attentive & given me invitations to dine today. I will introduce them all to you in my next & give you the characters as I learn them. Tell my father that the appearance of the place precedes my expectations and that my wishes would not change a single circumstance that can affect me.

With affection yours cordially

*Dan W. Lincoln*²

The population of Maine had been on the rise since the end of the Revolutionary War, thanks to the influx of thousands of immigrants swept up in the spirit of liberalism and opportunity that infused the nation. Between 1783 and 1820 the district saw a 450 percent increase in growth, rising from 56,000 to 300,000 people.³ Most were farmers seeking land of their own. They hailed largely from other parts of New England with just enough money in their pockets to get to the sparsely settled, densely forested Maine frontier, but no farther.⁴ They barely had enough to build a crude cabin on the few acres they laboriously cleared and staked out for themselves. They endured bitterly cold winters, coaxed what they could out of

became an evangelical Christian while continuing to research cancer. His promise remained unrealized as he died of consumption at age 24 in 1809. *The Panoplist, and Missionary Magazine United for the Year Ending June 1, 1810* Volume II. *New Series. Conducted by an Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth Under the Patronage of the Massachusetts, Hampshire, Berkshire, Maine, and Rhode Island Missionary Societies* (Boston: Farrand and Mallory, 1810), 94. Prentiss Mellen had been practicing in the District since 1792, had moved to Portland only a few months before Daniel. Mellen would later become the state's first chief justice. Graffam, Daniel's innkeeper was also an entrepreneur who launched a business transporting people and newspapers between Portland and Hallowell by sleigh in the record time of under two days. William Willis, *The History of Portland, from 1632 to 1864, with a Notice of Previous Settlements, Colonial Grants, and Changes of Government in Maine* (Portland, Me: Bailey & Noyes, 1865), 588.

² Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, August 14, 1806, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers (DWL Papers).

³ Alan Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 2-6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

the land, and lived at a subsistence level because they believed in the promise of freehold land. As a group these newcomers were overwhelmingly Republican and looked to the Jeffersonians to champion their cause for cheap land and a free market economy.⁵

Not only small farmers but other disparate groups that included religious dissidents and ambitious entrepreneurs migrated to Maine seeking a more comfortable existence than the hardscrabble lives they were anxious to leave behind. They believed a better future lay in the Jeffersonian vision of individual rights and a meritocracy without limits within the nascent market economy. As the Maine frontier filled up with Republican farmers, and the towns made way for upwardly mobile laborers and artisans, the Federalists who had been the power elite since the end of the Revolutionary War worried that the monopoly of power they had enjoyed for generations had started to slip away.⁶

The Great Proprietors, groups of landowners who claimed many thousands of acres of Maine's countryside dating back as far as the 1630s, held a different interpretation of the Revolution's legacy. They believed that the war was fought to protect them from parliamentary taxation. To them, their ownership was unassailable. The proprietors were almost all Federalists and long time believers in authority, orderliness, structure, and hierarchy. They wanted what they felt was their due from the squatters and poachers, but they feared a repeat of a Shaysite rebellion if they should push their case too hard. In order to contain the settler unrest, the proprietors scrambled to consolidate power at the county, state, and national level so to quell the possibility of an uprising.⁷

⁵Charles E. Clark, "James Sullivan's History of Maine," in *Maine in the Early Republic From Revolution to Statehood* eds. Charles E. Clark, James S. Leamon and Karen Bowden (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1988), 2.

⁶Taylor, *Liberty Men*, 4-9.

⁷Ibid.

The town of Portland had long been a Federalist stronghold and continued to be so in the early years of the nineteenth century. In the immediately post revolutionary world, however, most Portlanders were more interested in the prosaic task of improving their material lives through commerce than developing their inner virtues through disinterested benevolence. As a shipping center located a little over three miles from the open sea on Casco Bay, Portland boasted a protected ice-free harbor lying along the Fore River on its southern coast that connected the town to the backcountry and Canada. For generations colonial Portland had been the entrepot for Maine timber, supplying the British navy with spars and masts as well as the structural timber necessary for building the wharves that loaded and unloaded the Maine-built crates loaded onto Maine-built cargo ships that carried British goods around the world.⁸

Known as Falmouth during colonial times, the town had been leveled by a single day of relentless British bombardment in 1775. As soon as the fires were extinguished, its inhabitants set about reorganizing and rebuilding their town. They separated the commercial shipping center on a three-mile long peninsula known as The Neck from the rest of Falmouth and rechristened it Portland.⁹ Revitalized, Portland numbered about 3,700 people in 1800 and more than double that number by 1810.¹⁰

⁸ Charles P.M. Outwin, "Thriving and Elegant town Eighteenth-Century Portland as Commercial Center," in *Creating Portland History and Place in Northern New England*, ed., Joseph A. Conforti (Durham: University of New Hampshire Press, 2005), 24-9 and Joseph A. Conforti, "Placing Portland," in *Creating Portland*, xiii.

⁹ The story was that a British commander named Henry Mowat had been taken captive by some overzealous minutemen from Brunswick, Maine. Although the patriots soon released Mowat, the British wrecked vengeance upon the town anyway. They opened fire and destroyed 136 dwellings and left nearly 2,000 people homeless. See James S. Leamon, "Falmouth, the American Revolution, and the Price of Moderation," in *Creating Portland*, 44.

¹⁰ Charles Calhoun, "Longfellow's Portland," in *Creating Portland*, 74. The exact number is 3,704 in 1800 and 7,169 in 1810. William Willis, *Guide Book to Portland and Vicinity: To*

When Daniel Lincoln arrived in Portland in 1806, the town boasted over 600 homes and scores of businesses. Still powered by massive exports of timber, shipping tonnage increased from 5,000 tons in 1789 to 45,000, making it the pre-eminent center for shipping in Maine and coming in a close second to Boston as the busiest port in all of New England.¹¹ Ongoing warfare between France and England and the advantage of American neutrality made possible heretofore unseen profits in commercial shipping of lumber, fish, and sailing vessels with both belligerents. Under such fortuitous conditions, Portland's maritime merchants rapidly expanded their trade on an unprecedented scale.¹²

Portland was also the county seat of Cumberland County making it home to county officials, lawyers, and courts, and other wealthier, better educated professionals. As monuments to their affluence and gentility, these reputable men commissioned resident architect Alexander Parris to build them gracious homes in the Greek Revival style made popular by Bostonian Charles Bulfinch. The details of Parris's new buildings, the Portland Bank building in particular, bore witness to the striving for elegance of Portland's nouveau-riche merchants. Their grand houses and elegant commercial buildings appealed to polite society who could gather with one another in comfort, creating an island of refinement in a great sea of frontier wilderness.¹³ "No place in our route hitherto, could for its improvement be compared with Portland....Few towns in New England are equally beautiful and brilliant,"

which is attached a Summary History of Portland (Portland, Me.: B. Thurston and J.F. Richardson, 1865), 62.

¹¹ Richard M. Candee, "Maine Towns, Maine People," in *Maine in the Early Republic*, 50.

¹² Willis, *History of Portland*, 561-6.

¹³ Candee, "Maine Towns," 51-52. For a discussion on how Americans sought to emulate their English counterparts in the trappings of fine material culture see Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

wrote Timothy Dwight who visited in 1807.”¹⁴ Daniel described it to his mother as a “rose in the desert.”¹⁵

Unlike other eager young newcomers, Daniel arrived with more than a wish for professional success on his agenda. To be sure, he wanted to make his name as a lawyer and to further the Republican message throughout the District, but he also needed to repair the damage his drinking had done to his relationship with his family. He had no sooner unpacked his bags at Mr. Mellen’s boarding house when he set out to mend his familial bridges. He wrote his father a conciliatory and apologetic letter, taking full responsibility for his misconduct. He tried to temper the gravity of the situation by presenting his conduct as evidence of an overabundance of sensitivity rather than a lack of self-control. “I have become very sensible to the childishness of my former conduct, & acknowledge it with shame & regret. When I should have tilled my field, I have strayed to gather the flowers of the spring; and seduced by their attractive ruddiness have plucked useless haws when I should have dressed my vineyard,” he admitted. Fortunately for everyone, he believed he possessed the discipline to save himself. There would be no room for frivolities in his new temperate life. He would be a serious, sensible, and sympathetic man.

With the opinion of Sir William Jones, that ‘the law is a jealous science, & will not have any partnership with the muses,’ I have adopted his prudent determination; to desist from courting them, to abjure their acquaintance forever; & to devote myself to law & oratory. The severer discipline of the law will, so far from being irksome, become no less pleasant, than the cultivation of belles-lettres. The one is ornamental the other greatly useful too. The one is productive of amusement; & private satisfaction; the other of public benefit; distinction & preferment reward the attainment. I have halted in the course, but despair not of saving my distance. Future exertions may

¹⁴ William Willis, *History of Portland*, 570.

¹⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, August 14, 1806, DWL Papers.

avail to retrieve past lapses, and in future exertions, I will not be found wanting.¹⁶

Daniel composed a separate letter to his mother, seeking more understanding than forgiveness. To her he relived the anguish of losing Charlotte that had left him drowning in grief and dissipation. Only by leaving the scene of lost happiness could he save himself. Redemption required restraint and purpose. “The desire of usefulness & distinction in life has recalled my thoughts, employs the mind & gives scope to the exercise of its faculties....Again I hear the calls of ambition. They shall be obeyed. Again the demands of duty are attended to, & shall be answered. Be assured, my dear mother, the hopes of my friends shall not be disappointed.”¹⁷

Daniel had much to prove to Portland as well. In the new commercial world of the early nineteenth century masculinity was being redefined. A man could earn the esteem of his community by creating an economically independent life of his own making. Privilege, luxury, and dependency in any form, including dependency on alcohol meant weakness and frailty.¹⁸ Those who failed in business, remained unmarried, or drank too much revealed their lack of drive and self control, subversive influences to society. If self-improvement and financial success were trademarks of manliness, how would a man whose reputation rested in part upon his father’s achievements and who earned his living as a lawyer, be measured where free competition rewarded ambitious self-starters?¹⁹ How would an unmarried Republican who struggled with self control be measured by these standards? Daniel might be forgiven

¹⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, September 8, 1806, DWL Papers.

¹⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, August 21, 1806, DWL Papers.

¹⁸ Michel Kimmel, *Manhood in America A Cultural History* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 21.

¹⁹ E. Anthony Rotundo, “Body and Soul Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920,” *Journal of Social History* 16 (1983): 30.

his bachelorhood because of his youth. But as an elite and young Republican leader, his intemperance signaled not the ribald celebration of robust individuality, but weakness and loss of control. Leaders were not permitted the same privileges as followers, especially those aspiring to a greater moral purpose. Daniel knew that he would not be forgiven his intemperance, even by those who drank too much.²⁰

Just as Levi's arrival in Worcester in 1775 had been fortuitous for a young ambitious lawyer, similar opportunities presented themselves to Daniel in Portland. The growing population needed legal services of every kind and Cumberland County had only nine lawyers to provide them.²¹ Older lawyers were retiring or dying and their replacements had only started to trickle in. Politically, the reputable men of the Cumberland Bar were overwhelmingly Federalist, but with the arrival of Daniel and several other young lawyers, the ratio of Federalist to Republican evened a little. The older established Republicans welcomed the new men. William Widgery helped Daniel find an office in Alexander Parris's new bank building and introduced him to other Portland Republicans, laying the foundation for a social and professional base. Daniel Ilsley, who had served in the General Court, also welcomed a son of Levi Lincoln, and shepherded him through his first few months in Portland.²²

In spite of the best efforts of Levi's associates to ease the way for Daniel, moving to Portland was a lonesome undertaking. At first letters from home were few and far between.

²⁰ The new emphasis on the self is described in E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 18-25.

²¹ Salmon Chase had practiced in Portland since 1789 and had died just weeks before Daniel's arrival in 1806. Stephen Longfellow, the father of the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow had been practicing in Portland since 1801. William Symmes arrived in Portland in 1790 with a black mistress by whom he had a son in 1805. The scandal left Symmes socially ostracized and "worse than dead." He died in 1807 a year after Daniel's arrival. Willis, *History of Portland*, 632.

²² Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, August 14, 1806, DWL Papers.

Feeling neglected and irritable, Daniel chastised his brother Enoch for his silence and then when Enoch did write, Daniel criticized his penmanship. “Your chirography requires amendment. A good hand is easily attained. The purchase is trifling & the acquisition valuable.”²³ Daniel’s comments were not exactly an inducement for Enoch to write more often and indeed did not appear to motivate Enoch to improve communication, at least for a while. Gradually though, Daniel expanded his circle of acquaintances by befriending Nathaniel Howe, a merchant and friend of Enoch’s and Edward Bangs, an old family friend and publisher of the *National Aegis*. Daniel was quite taken with Howe. In a wonderful descriptive phrase, he described him as “a great melon with a rough outside & much sweetness under it.”²⁴ Soon Daniel also grew fond of Joseph Pope who would become a lasting friend, law associate, and regular correspondent.

Among the younger Republican lawyers, none were closer to Daniel in his early Portland days than Henry A.S. Dearborn, the son of Henry Dearborn, Jefferson’s Secretary of War who had served with the elder Lincoln in Jefferson’s first administration. Daniel had initially thought Dearborn “too fond of amusements” to achieve great professional eminence, but the two young men located their law offices across from one another and quickly found common ground and friendship.

To his mother, he described his new friend in a way that he hoped would guarantee her approval. “His (Dearborn’s) manners are elegant, his temper generous, his heart cordial & sincere & his morals pure. A delicate sense of propriety & honor directs his conduct.

²³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 12, 1806. DWL Papers. Correspondence from Enoch found in the Lincoln Family Papers confirms Daniel’s negative view of Enoch’s scrawl.

²⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, n.d., DWL Papers.

Dignified independence is his character.”²⁵ This was no small compliment from Daniel who, surrounded by Portland’s parvenu, had developed a keen awareness of his social position and had become a finicky and unforgiving social critic. Although Daniel revised his earlier impressions of Dearborn, Dearborn’s mother Dorcas Osgood Marble, whom Daniel called “a lady termagant of a family” was not so fortunate and did not escape Daniel’s censorious eye. Poor clumsy Mrs. Dearborn lacked the polished deportment that came so effortlessly to the Lincoln women. In a statement meant to be more charitable than critical, Daniel deigned to overlook Mrs. Dearborn’s deficiencies to see “what is proper to be seen & be unconscious of everything else.”²⁶

The old *bon soitt* William Sewall from Daniel’s Harvard days also chose Portland for his home and professional base. Daniel, however, neglected to inform his parents of Sewall’s presence and never mentioned him in his letters. Given the elder Lincoln’s sensitivity to questionable company, the news might have discomfited them. If Daniel’s move to Portland came about in part so that he would rehabilitate his habits and restore his reputation to his parents and friends, it would not have been to his advantage to reveal that his former drinking companion was also a neighbor. Undoubtedly the two former friends saw each other often since Portland had few lawyers and their offices were in the same building. But Sewall was also a Federalist, wrote essays for the Federalist newspaper and partnered with Prentiss

²⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, January 13, 1807, DWL Papers.

²⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, September 3, 1807, DWL Papers. Dearborn later became Brigadier-general of the Massachusetts militia in 1814, United States Congressman in 1832, adjutant-general of Massachusetts in 1835, and mayor of Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1847, a post he kept until he died in 1851. James Spear Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 362.

Mellen, a Federalist judge and cohort of Harrison Grey Otis. The political divide had become a social divide.²⁷



Fig. 8. William Sewell later in life. Reprinted by permission, from John Rees, William Bartlett Sewall, *Sewall or Sewell of Coventry*, <http://www.sewellgenealogy.com/ui10.htm>.

Keeping his distance from Sewall was one thing but staying away from liquor was another. During the growth years of the early nineteenth century, distilleries proliferated on the Portland wharves. The District of Maine produced some 160,300 gallons of spirits in 1810, a goodly amount but a drop in the bucket compared to the 2,852,210 gallons produced by Massachusetts proper.²⁸ As a shipping center and a hub in the rum trade, liquor in Portland was cheap and abundant. At a time when communal glass raising fostered social bonds and cemented common purposes, to be a non-participant put Daniel at a disadvantage. Abstinence

²⁷ Joseph Griffin, *History of the Press in Maine* (Brunswick, ME: Press established 1872), 37. Apparently Sewall did not take well to being a lawyer and shied away from appearing in court and never established an independent practice. Nevertheless, he became secretary of the Maine State Senate shortly after separation from Massachusetts although he always preferred making and writing almanacs to practicing law. In spite of his rather grizzly and somber appearance (see above), Sewall continued to be the *bon vivant* he was when Daniel knew him in college. “He was always, cheerful, social, and often gay. His humor was racy and the play of his mind lambent and genial.” William Willis, *The History of the Law, the Courts and the Lawyers of Maine* (Portland: Bailey & Noyes, 1863), 491-493. Interestingly and unusual for a Federalist, Sewall volunteered for the Portland militia during the War of 1812. *Records of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia called out by the Governor of Massachusetts to Suppress a Threatened Invasion during the War of 1812-14* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1913), 242.

²⁸ Moses Greenleaf, *A Statistical View of the District of Maine* (Boston: Cummings and Hillard, 1816), 62.

courted isolation and loneliness not easily assuaged by reading more law and contemplating the works of long dead philosophers.

As challenging as it may have been to stay sober in a drinking world, the ascent of Portland's *arrivistes* brought a disturbing challenge to the elite status quo Daniel had comfortably occupied. The rags-to-riches stories of Portland's citizens were legion. Daniel was incredulous. "Eight years since, Mr. Cobb was a shoemaker in Saco, worth his bench & tools. He is now worth \$100,000. Captain Clapp, but five years ago, was a poor man & is now wealthier than Mr. Cobb."²⁹ In a kind of cultural laboratory, Portland's booming economy and rising population put the Jeffersonian vision of political harmony in a competitive society to the test. Could the Republican ideal of virtue and disinterest survive alongside the liberal idea of a free market economy, commercialization, and materialism?³⁰

Looking around him Daniel concluded that the Federalist's nightmare vision of a populace drunk on rapacity was gaining ground over the Republican dream of virtuous and disinterested citizens who were striving for the public good. As Daniel saw it, ambitious

²⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Waldo Lincoln, September 1806, DWL Papers.

³⁰ Much has been written about the meaning of republicanism to the Revolutionary generation and its inheritors especially in light of the emerging liberal economy. In the early 1990s a new consensus emerged that both republicanism as a form of civic humanism *and* liberalism as derived from Lockean principles were operating simultaneously, that the two terms are not mutually exclusive. Among the numerous scholars who have discussed the Jeffersonian republican ideal of the early national period and its meanings to the "inheritors of the revolution" are Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, 1967); Robert Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 39 (1982): 334-56; Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican View of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984); Gordon Wood, "The Significance of the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 8 (1988): 1-20; Lance Banning, "The Republican Interpretation: Retrospect and Prospect," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 102 (1992): 153-79; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: the Career of a Concept," *The Journal of American History*, (1992): 11-38; Linda K. Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation: Ideology, Politics, and Culture in the Early Republic," in *The New American History* ed. by Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 31-59.

merchants had thrown aside common interest to help themselves to whatever they could grab out of the town's new economic opportunities. It did not take long for Daniel's estimation of Portland's merchants to sink into contempt. When rumors of peace in Europe rippled through Portland in 1806, merchants feared their fortunes would evaporate. Disgusted by their profiteering, Daniel denounced them to his father as depraved hypocrites. In the process he also positioned himself on the moral high ground and wondered aloud how money-grubbing merchants who murdered munificence had the temerity to call themselves honorable.

Nothing is good which is not profitable to them. They chide every wind of heaven which wafts not their cargoes to the port of destination. Their feelings are as callous as an Osnaburgh executioner... These undertakers to the charities of life are held in estimation, "Honorable Men," who arrogate the right of passing on the conduct of others, whose motives and principles of action they cannot comprehend.³¹

This was not honor as Daniel understood it but pinched commercial self-interest of the Federalist elite. Daniel saw virtue and honor in much the same way his father did, as selfless disinterest for the good of the nation. But did honor and virtue mean the same thing in 1806 as they had in 1776? Was virtue still the same thing as public service? Was honor still the same thing as probity and morality? Who now were the moral authorities? Daniel had wrestled with the questions while still a student at Harvard. Now a practicing attorney he felt no closer to defining for himself resolute principles which would guide his choices and upon which he could measure success. As the cultural landscape shifted, the principles of the founding generation seemed to slide farther and farther away.

³¹ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, October 21, 1806, DWL Papers. Daniel described the trial to Enoch in a letter a week later. He was amused that the town of Alfred had no formal court building. All legal proceedings were held in the town meeting house that had no bell. "The attorneys and suitors are summoned by the blowing of conch shells & horns." Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 28, 1806, DWL Papers.

Daniel's chance to demonstrate his own honor and political fidelity arose when he became embroiled in a dispute between the Republican newspaper, the *Eastern Argus*, and an outraged Federalist named Joseph Bartlett. Nathaniel Willis, the newspaper's editor since its inception in 1803, wandered into Bartlett's cross-hairs when he published a ferocious diatribe against Bartlett. From the beginning, Willis had had misgivings about the piece written by Thomas Thornton on behalf of Richard Cutts, Bartlett's opponent for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Willis published it only when Thornton promised him protection from the litigious Bartlett. After the piece appeared and Cutts was elected, the incensed Bartlett sued Willis for libel. Thornton vanished and Bartlett won the suit against Willis. With no means to pay the \$1,500 judgment along with over \$400 in court costs, Willis went to jail for ninety days.³² Daniel Lincoln, James Wingate, Isaac Illsley, and Henry A.S. Dearborn, posted Willis's bond of nearly \$2,000. As Willis's creditors, Daniel and Henry Dearborn attached his equipment and moved it into their offices not for collateral but for safekeeping from the fuming Bartlett who had threatened to destroy the paper. Indeed, with harmful intent Bartlett stormed the *Argus* office ready for mayhem only to find the place deserted.³³

Bartlett may have been foiled but he was not finished with Willis. In order for Willis to continue publishing the paper, have some means to provide for his family and pay down his debt, the court permitted him to leave the confines of the jail to work during the day and return in the evening. When word reached Bartlett that Willis left the yard without permission one cold night in search of water because the prison yard pump had frozen, he pounced. He again sued Willis on charges that Willis "had made an escape." The Federalist

³² Fredrick Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690-1872* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1873), 289.

³³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 28, 1806, DWL Papers.

judge hearing the case once more ruled against Willis thereby making Daniel responsible for his part of the bond. The matter was settled by “the informal arbitrament of some disinterested third party.”³⁴ For Bartlett, the Willis matter became a pyrrhic victory as public condemnation of his insufferable drive for vengeance lost him his business. He moved to Boston, alienated people there with his litigious behavior and died alone. For Willis, the experience left him disenchanted with politicians of every stripe. Although he had been instrumental in furthering the Republican cause in Maine, in 1808 he underwent an evangelical conversion, opening up a grocery store in which he refused to sell liquor. The store failed, Willis fell into debt and was forced to sell the *Argus*. He moved to Boston and for the rest of his life published *The Boston Recorder and Religious Telegraph* one of the country’s first evangelical newspapers.³⁵

Daniel detailed his involvement in the Willis case to Enoch but he failed to tell Levi anything about the episode until the following February, some four months later. Couched in a letter describing his growing business and his high expectations for success, Daniel apologized for neglecting to inform him of the Willis imbroglio. He quickly reassured his father that he will be “saved unharmed” and that the bond will not be “put in suit.” Daniel pledged obedience to the rule of conduct that he had long ago “prescribed to myself” that it

³⁴ Frederick Gardiner Fassett, Jr., *A History of Newspapers in the District of Maine 1785-1820* (Orono, Me. University of Maine Press, 1932), 138-9. Bartlett had never been a very popular man. Robert Hallowell Gardiner recalled that during his Harvard days Bartlett “inveigled students into card play in order to get all their money” and that he became “notorious for every species of low petty-fogging and was continually either a plaintiff or defendant in actions of slander.” Robert Hallowell Gardiner, *Early Recollections of Robert Hallowell Gardiner* (Hallowell, Me.: White & Horne, 1936), 42.

³⁵ Nathaniel Willis, “Autobiography of a Journalist,” reprinted in Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1873), 289-93.

was dangerous to lend money to friends.³⁶ More than the political or moral repercussions of the incident, Levi seemed to be more concerned about how Daniel used his money. The politics that motivated the episode were unmentioned yet for Daniel Willis's difficulties gave him with the opportunity to participate politically by saving the Republican voice of Portland, a most honorable endeavor that reflected well on his devotion to his political ideals.

Daniel debuted his legal abilities when William Bridgham, a doctor in New Gloucester, retained him in a malpractice suit. Bridgham had been an active Republican in Cumberland County and a practicing physician for over twenty-three years but had botched resetting the dislocated shoulder of a Mr. Morgan. In a horrific accident, the head of Morgan's humerus had torn away and became lodged in his armpit. Bridgham reset the arm but the injury was so severe that he doubted Morgan would ever fully recover. A second doctor performed another surgery, also unsuccessful, that left Morgan's arm useless. Shortly afterward, Morgan sued Bridgham, not the second doctor, for \$5,000.

Daniel was convinced that politics not malpractice motivated the suit. During his many years of practice, Bridgham's competence had never been questioned. Since it was the second surgeon, not Bridgham, who inflicted irrevocable injury to Morgan's arm, the only possible motivation for bringing the suit against Bridgham was Morgan's wish to besmirch a local Republican heavyweight. Although Daniel did not address the motivations of the plaintiff directly, he intimated in a draft of his closing argument that the suit "has been urged by a hostile coalition of envy, jealousy, private piques and party animosity....Its instigators have our pity and contempt, they will find the report of their benevolent exertions in the evil

³⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, February 10, 1807, DWL Papers.

of their own thoughts and the bitterness of their own reflections.”³⁷ The jury did not agree with Daniel, yet nor did they did not completely disagree either. Morgan won a judgment against Bridgham but the jury reduced the award to \$1,000. Bridgham appealed and the costs against him were eventually lowered to \$500.³⁸ As in the Willis case, Daniel’s involvement and interest in the Brigham case emanated from the opportunity it gave him to present himself as an honorable Republican.

“Will it gratify my mother,” Daniel asked in January 1807 after six months in Portland, “to be informed that my prepossessions in favor of Portland have become confirmed partialities: that my prospects are as pleasant & extended as I at first imagined & that I remain confident of the propriety of my choice of my scene of action.”³⁹ For proof of his commitment to industry and sobriety, Daniel entered sixty-one court actions that fall. He toed the line as he believed his parents wished him to by telling them he was living a circumscribed, yet determined life. “I burn the midnight lamp & open my shutters with the dawn. I confine my attention during the day to law & in the evening to politics.” Then in a surge of fervent determination, he concluded, “My wish is to be first & first God willing, I will be.”⁴⁰

Word of Daniel’s impressive professional start made its way to his friends in Worcester. Edward Bangs, editor of *The National Aegis*, and close friend of the Lincoln family, wrote a guardedly optimistic letter about Daniel to Nathaniel Howe. “By the number of actions you tell me Dan’l Lincoln entered the last term he must be doing an ‘immensity of business’, I think he must be very well liked in Portland to receive such patronage. If his

³⁷ Morgan v. Bridgeham, DWL Papers.

³⁸ *Supreme Judicial Court Docket From May Term 1807 to October Term 1807*, Number 7, Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.

³⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, January 13, 1807, DWL Papers.

⁴⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, February 10, 1807, DWL Papers.

habits are correct I make no doubt his advance in riches and fame will be rapid beyond expectation. He certainly possesses abilities to render him a shining character and nothing but a relapse into certain habits of which he was once suspected can prevent his rise.”⁴¹

So far, Daniel had done well resisting those “certain habits.” He knew that friends and family in Worcester were keeping track of him. He sent “assurances of my earnest & diligent endeavor to prove myself worthy of their attention & regard by such a course of conduct and shall be beneficial to society, satisfactory to my friends & honorable to myself.”⁴² His resolve, however, felt fragile, imperiled by his inner demons not yet exorcised. He wrote of the loneliness and the grief that threatened to consume him if he should give way to it. “The luxury of melancholy remembrance is a sacred indulgence to which I seldom yield,” he told his mother. Better that he should stay busy and not think of “the mementos of endearment.”⁴³ Dwelling on his lost past courted misery and misery courted intemperance. Clearly, the Worcester family could not yet trust Daniel’s continued sobriety. And when the Massachusetts Republican caucus nominated James Sullivan to be their candidate for Governor and Levi Lincoln for Lieutenant Governor, their investment in Daniel’s good conduct rose even higher.

Sullivan enjoyed a reputation as a Republican centrist appealing to moderates on the both sides of the political divide. Indeed, Sullivan’s politics were not nearly as defiantly Republican as his Lieutenant Governor’s. He kept a careful distance from Boston’s more vocal and provocative partisans and enjoyed a reputation as one who tried to temper rather

⁴¹ Edward Bangs to Nathaniel Howe, December 22, 1807, Bangs Family Papers, 1760-1866, Folio Volume 1, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts (AAS).

⁴² Daniel Lincoln to Daniel Waldo, April 27, 1807.

⁴³ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, April 25, 1807.

than inflame the political rhetoric and partisanship of the times.⁴⁴ But the widening political divide made it unlikely that any Federalist would support him no matter how temperate his politics. Choosing Levi Lincoln as Lieutenant Governor would win him no Federalist votes but it would likely guarantee him the votes of the most stalwart Republicans.⁴⁵

The incumbent governor, Caleb Strong, had been governor of Massachusetts since 1800 following four years in the United States Senate. Caleb Strong and Levi Lincoln knew each other well. As young men, they shared remarkably similar backgrounds. Strong had been Levi's co-counsel in the Quock Walker case that ended slavery in Massachusetts.⁴⁶ They both studied with Joseph Hawley in Northampton, regularly appeared at court in Worcester, served on the Committee of Correspondence, and were delegates to the state constitutional convention in 1779. Their careers diverged when Levi Lincoln declared himself a Republican and was elected to Congress the same year Strong first became Massachusetts governor as a Federalist.⁴⁷ If the two men felt a personal tie through their shared experiences, the sentiment was hidden by the cascade of political venom that colored the contest. Politics was all.

Massachusetts gubernatorial elections took place annually on the first Monday in April allowing candidates just two months to batter each other through an intensive and often vitriolic election period, mostly through the press.⁴⁸ Republicans were better organized for

⁴⁴ Paul Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1964), 100.

⁴⁵ Thomas Coffin Amory, *Life of James Sullivan* (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1859), 192.

⁴⁶ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 63.

⁴⁷ James Russell Trumbull and Seth Pomeroy, *History of Northampton, Massachusetts from Its Settlement in 1654* (Northampton, Mass: Press of Gazette Printing Company, 1902), 596-8.

⁴⁸ Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 136.

the 1807 election in the District of Maine than they had been in 1806. Electioneering had started to come out of the political closet and was becoming the accepted way of selecting candidates; especially at the town level.⁴⁹ Swept up in a spirit of filial loyalty and Republican idealism, Daniel reported the activities of the Federalists to his father and his assessment of the competition.

All the dispositions, which his adherents can make of Mr. Strong in the dark hour of adversity can avail nothing. We know that he marched not in the ranks of the brave; that his footstep was not in the field of death. His gentle spirit loved not well the strife of arms.... As soon would it be believed that Judas Iscariot would be canonized a saint & enrolled among the martyrs....If freemen will submit to this debasement, be the rattling of oppressive chain their lullaby!⁵⁰

Facts did not interfere with Daniel's attack on Strong, especially when it came to Revolutionary War heroism, a particularly potent political credential. Daniel was correct. Strong did not serve in the military but it was not due to cowardice. An encounter with smallpox as a young man left him with chronically poor eyesight for the rest of his life.⁵¹ For that matter, James Sullivan could not claim any war service either. A broken leg in childhood left him with one leg longer than the other and a pronounced limp. Sullivan also suffered from epilepsy believed to have been caused by a close encounter with a rattlesnake.⁵² Of the three men it was only Levi who had been the most able-bodied and whose nine days service record was most vulnerable to question. In fact, the Federalist *Boston Gazette* drew attention to his paltry wartime service. "Levi Lincoln...skulked into a Probate Office in Worcester, to

⁴⁹ Ibid, 111.

⁵⁰ Daniel W. Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, March 25, 1807, DWL Papers.

⁵¹ Trumbull and Pomeroy, *History of Northampton*, 594.

⁵² Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, 21.

avoid the storm of the Revolution,” they sniped.⁵³ If Daniel used Revolutionary War service as the standard for electability and respectability, he unwittingly (or unconsciously) placed his father among those who avoided the “field of death” and therefore cast himself as the heir of oppression and disgrace.

On April 6, 1807, Massachusetts elected Sullivan and Lincoln with 62 percent of the vote, thanks in large part to the District of Maine. In the Eastern Country, Sullivan prevailed by a margin of 4,419 votes which more than compensated for the 1,384 vote deficit in Massachusetts proper.⁵⁴ In Cumberland County 213 votes separated Sullivan from Strong, to Sullivan’s advantage. Daniel and his Republican associates had succeeded in delivering Cumberland County to the Republicans. Although Federalists still had a chance to obtain a majority in the State House of Representatives in the May elections, Daniel proclaimed “this forlorn expectation is the solitary buoy of their sinking fortunes, the sole stay of their declining hopes.”⁵⁵ He was right. The Federalists did not prevail in May either. For the first time since Samuel Adams retired as governor in 1797, the Republicans controlled all branches of state government.⁵⁶

Following closely on the heels of the 1807 Republican victory, Daniel learned his closest friend Henry Dearborn planned to marry Hannah Swett Lee.⁵⁷ The loss of his companion to matrimony depressed Daniel. He would not only be losing an intimate and colleague, but Dearborn’s marriage made obvious to Daniel his own prolonged bachelor status and what he had once hoped for with Charlotte. He vainly tried to convince himself that

⁵³ *Boston Gazette*, March 26, 1807.

⁵⁴ Taylor, *Liberty Men*, 214-220.

⁵⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, April 25, 1807, DWL Papers.

⁵⁶ Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, 195.

⁵⁷ *Simon Dearborn v. Henry A.S. Dearborn*, 15 Mass. 316 (1818). This case indicates that when Dearborn moved to Salem with his wife in 1809, he left his practice to Daniel Lincoln.

marriage was not a shared life but an undesirable burden. A wife who felt the pain of a husband's hardships only increased the heartache. After all, when despondent after Charlotte's death, did Daniel not suffer the added burden of his parents' disappointment when he drank to ease the pain? "The blood that wounds the breast is repeated in the bosom of a wife, the sufferer is doubly tortured by the reaction of pain...If I must meet the bolt let none else feel its violence. If I must 'bide the petting of the pitiless storm' let none else tremble at its rage!"⁵⁸ Not even Daniel was convinced by his flimsy argument. In the following paragraph Daniel described his life as a gloomy "unvaried secession of tomorrows...one stage near to eternity, one degree nearer to the attainment of the knowledge which human speculation can but surmise, our ultimate destination. Would to God I could borrow an angel's ken to penetrate the secrets of futurity which to us is 'dark as was chaos ere the infant sun had tried his beams athwart the gloom profound.'"⁵⁹ Another loss, this time Dearborn, triggered more dreary ruminations on the meaning of what mattered most in life; ruminations without answers.

As much as he had come to depend on Dearborn, Daniel was not without other friends who sustained and encouraged him, one of whom was the naval hero Commodore Edward Preble. Preble had built his reputation as a naval icon by vanquishing the Barbary Pirates in

⁵⁸ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, April 29, 1807, DWL Papers.

⁵⁹ Ibid. The quote is from Robert Blair's *The Grave*. Blair was a Calvinist preacher and an English pre-Romantic or Graveyard Poet of the mid-eighteenth century. Blair's perception of death would have found resonance in Daniel. "Blair rarely steps beyond the tight confines of the grave, presenting a bleak perspective of the world where virtually all earthly phenomena are discarded as contrary to his program of ascetic restraint.... He belligerently insists upon death as the great leveler to erase all earthly differences." Eric Parisot, "Disinterring the Grave: Religious Authority, Poetic Autonomy and Robert Blair's Fideist Poetics," *Scottish Studies Review* 8 (2007): 26-7.

Tripoli in 1803, leading the nation's first overseas naval expedition.⁶⁰ Preble was twenty three years older than Daniel, when he came home to Portland a sick and dying man in 1807. During their visits Preble gave Daniel tokens of his friendship: specimens of written Arabic taken from a Turkish ship and a copy of the Koran. When Preble died at the end of August 1807, it was yet another painful loss for Daniel. He resolved to his mother that he would no longer involve himself with sympathetic "fellow travelers" who abandon him. "I lament in his loss the deprivation of a most valuable acquaintance & a friend very dear to me. You probably never will experience how dreary is the solitude of a residence entirely among strangers, & how grateful are civilities & attention in this situation, & how conciliatory of regard. Under these circumstances the commodore called me to his fireside & I was easily induce to love one, in himself and so agreeable & whom all respected."⁶¹

Daniel's friendship with Preble transcended age and political differences. In a man of learning, respectability, and courage, Daniel had found someone whom he could unreservedly admire and emulate. Far more than the strangers without civilities with whom he was forced to mix, Preble was a man Daniel could esteem without ambivalence. Although the life he made for himself in Portland over the preceding year as a lawyer and politician brought him no closer to happiness he did not waver in his commitment to the course he had chosen. In

⁶⁰ The Barbary Pirates had been harassing American trading ships and demanding "tribute" off the coast of Morocco for years before Jefferson dispatched Preble to put an end to the Barbary scourge. In a campaign that lasted nearly four years, Preble prevailed. The Marine hymn that features the words "From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli" refers to the victorious Preble expedition. Preble received the Congressional Gold Medal for "gallantry" in 1805. See Christopher McGee, *Edward Preble: A Naval Biography, 1761-1807* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1972).

⁶¹ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, September 3, 1807, DWL Papers.

June of 1807, Daniel, Dearborn and several others took the next step up the judicial ladder and were admitted attorneys to the Supreme Judicial Court.⁶²

To most people, Daniel was a busy, brilliant, and dedicated young Republican lawyer on the rise. The pastor of the First Church of Portland, Samuel Deane, noted that Daniel was “a man of brilliant talents.”⁶³ Who better for the Selectmen of Portland to choose for the 1807 July Fourth oration than the new Lieutenant Governor’s eloquent son? With the first Republican governor of Massachusetts ensconced in the State House, Portland’s Republicans commemorated the day with unprecedented jubilation. Bells and cannon fire inaugurated the festivities. The Portland Light Infantry escorted the speaker and other dignitaries to Dr. Deane’s First Congregational Meeting House for services and the celebratory address. No copy of the oration survives, but the *Eastern Argus* described Daniel’s speech as “chaste and elegant, enriched with sound republican principles.”⁶⁴ After filing back to Union Hall and the traditional banquet, the revelers raised their glasses to eighteen official toasts and numerous volunteer salutations. The orator paid tribute to his hero Jefferson and “the administration of the federal government” by quoting the opening speech of Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labor’s Lost* in which King Ferdinand argued that only fame and honor can survive the ravages of time, a conviction that echoed Daniel’s own. “When, spite of cormorant devouring Time, The endeavor of this present breath may buy/That honor which shall bate his scythe’s keen edge/And make them heirs of all eternity.”⁶⁵

⁶² *Eastern Argus*, June 11, 1807.

⁶³ Samuel Deane, *Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith, and the Rev. Samuel Deane, Pastors of the First Church in Portland: With Notes and Biographical Notices: and a Summary History of Portland* (Portland, Me.: Joseph S. Bailey, 1849), 389.

⁶⁴ “American Independence,” *Eastern Argus*, July 9, 1807.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Five months later in January of 1808, in a move that could not have occurred without the elder Lincoln's encouragement, the new Governor Sullivan appointed twenty-three year old Daniel Lincoln as a Justice of the Peace and County Attorney for the County of Cumberland in the District of Maine.⁶⁶ For Daniel, who had already established a name for himself in Portland, the plum appointment catapulted him into the judicial elite. For Sullivan, the assignment was part of an overhaul of the state's judicial system that had for too long been a bailiwick of Federalism. Caleb Strong had increased judge's salaries and decreased the power of juries, initiatives opposed by Republicans who felt that such measures were designed to perpetuate Federalist dominance on the bench.⁶⁷ With the Republican Sullivan in office, the court system quickly became the stage for Republican muscle-flexing reorganization. Previously, the appointment of county attorneys had been the provenance of the county court that promoted like-minded Federalists.⁶⁸ After reorganization, the county attorney served at the pleasure of the governor, thereby safeguarding the republican agenda in the courts.⁶⁹ The General Court drafted the law in June 1807, effective the following September.⁷⁰

As county attorney, Daniel's duty was "to appear and act in behalf of the Commonwealth, as may be pointed out to them by instructions of the Attorney General or Solicitor General" for cases heard before the Supreme Judicial Court in Cumberland

⁶⁶ "Appointments by his Excellence the Governor," *Eastern Argus*, January 26, 1808.

⁶⁷ Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy* (New York: Norton, 2005), 120-1.

⁶⁸ Amory, *Live of James Sullivan*, 208.

⁶⁹ John Brooke, *The Heart of the Commonwealth* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 256.

⁷⁰ *An Act Respecting the offices and duties of the Attorney-General, Solicitor-General, and County Attornies*, Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts From February 28, 1807 to February 27, 1813 During the Political Years 1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812 Volume II, (Boston: Thomas and Andrews, 1813), 6.

County.⁷¹ He would prosecute criminal and other matter not represented by the state Attorney General in the Cumberland County courts. When the Supreme Judicial Court appeared in Cumberland County (the court traveled throughout the Commonwealth), Daniel was occupied with cases involving murder, forgery, arson, counterfeiting, and as a sign of the changing financial times, debt.⁷²

Daniel's appointment may also have been hurried by new developments concerning the ongoing troubles between settlers and proprietors. Partly as an effort to curry favor among the settlers who were historically Jeffersonian-leaning and partly because the need to settle the ongoing tension rising from the land claim disputes had grown increasingly urgent, in January 1808 Massachusetts state senator, William King, proposed land reform legislation known as The Betterment Act. King proposed that settlers who had lived on their land for at least six years without legal claims could purchase their improved land at the unimproved land value price. If they chose to leave the land, the proprietors could pay them for the value of their improvements. Payments by those who chose to purchase the land could be made over several years. The final bill as it emerged from the General Court weakened King's original proposal to one heavily favoring the proprietors. The unimproved land value price was not the \$1 per acre that it had been immediately after the revolution when most of the settlers arrived, but at the considerably higher 1808 land values. Furthermore, settlers were given only one year to pay off their claims.⁷³ The amended proposal became law in March 1808.

⁷¹ Theron Metcalf, Asahel Stearns, and Lemuel Shaw, *The General Laws of Massachusetts From the Adoption of the Constitution, to February, 1822 : with the Constitutions of the United States and of This Commonwealth, Together with Their Respective Amendments, Prefixed* (Boston: Wells & Lilly and Cummings & Hilliard, 1823), 172.

⁷² *Records of the Supreme Judicial Court*. Supreme Court Docket Number 7, May Term 1808 and October Term 1808, Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.

⁷³ Taylor, *Liberty Men*, 220-5.

As Cumberland County Attorney, Daniel investigated claims in dispute between the Pejeboscot Proprietors and the settlers. The Pejeboscot Proprietors were a group of nonresident landowners, mostly from Boston, whose claim to a large swath of interior Maine lay within Cumberland County, four miles on both sides of the Androscoggin River from its mouth to the Brunswick Falls. The claim rested on vague seventeenth century royal letter patents and equally disputable Indian deeds.⁷⁴ During the economic depression induced by the Embargo, the contention between proprietors and settlers grew more heated, each claiming the right to the land as a means to forestall or recoup money demanded by their creditors.⁷⁵ Daniel first asked his father about information concerning the claims at the end of 1808 but he did not start traveling the county taking depositions from the settlers until the spring of 1809. (The claims would not be settled until after Daniel left office.)⁷⁶

Sullivan and Lincoln came into power just when the heady days of rapid commercial growth and wealth in Massachusetts were fading, thanks to the ongoing hostilities between Britain and France and their mutual blockades. In late 1806 Napoleon issued the Berlin Decree, blockading all trade with Britain. Any ship trading with Britain would be considered an enemy vessel subject to capture as a prize of war. Matching blockade for blockade, Britain retaliated with the Orders-in-Council that required any ship trading with France to obtain licenses from England. It also warned that neutral ships trading with France could be seized.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 12. Three other groups of proprietors owned two other parcels of land dating from the same period and of the same doubtful legitimacy, often with overlapping boundaries. Added to the mix were a number of smaller squatter claims made by people who had sunk every ounce of their labor and every penny of their resources into making the land far more valuable than what it had been when they arrived.

⁷⁵ Alan Taylor "Stopping the Progress of Rogues and Deceivers" A White Indian Recruiting Notice of 1808," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 42 (1985): 90-103.

⁷⁶ The case dragged on until 1813. It was finally settled in favor of the Proprietors at which time Daniel was finally paid for his labors after he petitioned the General Court for reimbursement. Taylor, *Liberty Men*, 226.

The warring blockades caught American shipping in a web of European hostilities, vulnerable to both French and British aggression.⁷⁷

The British were especially hostile to American trading vessels. British ships accosted American merchant ships, seized American sailors numbering in the thousands and forced them into the British navy. Diplomatic efforts to quell British harassment and impressments failed. On December 22, 1807, in an effort to stop England and France from interfering with American ships and to apply economic pressure in a diplomatic effort to stay out of the war, Congress passed the first of Jefferson's Embargo Acts prohibiting all American vessels from sailing to foreign ports. Two more laws passed in January and March 1808, tightening the first law and attempting to close any loopholes by including fishing vessels and other small craft as subject to the Embargo while also increasing penalties for smuggling into Canada. In addition, foreign vessels were not permitted to take on cargo in the United States.⁷⁸

By denying the warring nations supplies, Jefferson hoped to force them to terms and save American commerce. To Jefferson, an Embargo posed a great test of republicanism. Warfare was the way of the old world. Not only did war result in the expected waste of human life and resources, but as it had proven so often in Europe, war opened the way to crime and corruption in government.⁷⁹ Its success depended on the support and cooperation of likeminded Americans, especially those in the great shipping state of Massachusetts and Jefferson was hard pressed to find it there.

⁷⁷ Garry Wills, *Henry Adams and the Making of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 222-3.

⁷⁸ Douglas Lamar Jones, "'The Caprice of Juries': The Enforcement of the Jeffersonian Embargo in Massachusetts," *American Journal of Legal History*, 24 (1980): 311-3.

⁷⁹ Adams, *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson*, 6th ed., (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), 1115.

The Embargo drove Portland's economy into freefall. Eleven commercial houses went bankrupt within the first few months. By the end of the first year, thirty mercantile firms had failed. Customs receipts plummeted from \$340,000 in 1806 to \$41,000 in 1808. Poor houses filled up, soup kitchens opened, ships sat idle and rotting in the harbor while grass grew on the neglected wharves. Not only shippers, but fisherman, farmers, dock workers, and anyone dependent upon commerce were distressed by the Embargo. Determined merchants evaded the law by smuggling goods out of the harbor or by claiming their vessels had been blown off course and damaged by storms as far away as the West Indies where they were "forced to sell their cargos." Even if apprehended, Embargo violators frequently faced no conviction as sympathies from local juries ran deep.⁸⁰

Many of the town's leading citizens declared bankruptcy and the Portland Bank suspended business in 1808.⁸¹ An 1808 Portland protest march featured a longboat christened "O-Grab-Me" (Embargo spelled backward), pulled through the streets to the accompanying tune of a funeral dirge. In October of 1808, some 200 disguised men seized the wharves from federal officers probably by bribing them with liquor and flour, loaded two ships with cargo, and sailed out to sea.⁸² Such flagrant disregard for the law incensed Daniel and hardened him further against Federalist merchants. He wished them the worst. "I do most devoutly wish that the Atlantic were a lake of substantial & eternal flame. We should then be eminently a happy, virtuous & independent people."⁸³

⁸⁰ Jones, "The Caprice of Juries," 327. Jones writes that juries had about an 18% conviction rate on cases involving Embargo violations.

⁸¹ Willis, *History of Portland*, 186.

⁸² *Greater Portland Celebration 350* (Portland: Gannet Books, 1984), 46-47 and Joshua M. Smith, "Maine's Embargo Forts," *Maine History* 44 (2009): 150.

⁸³ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, November 8, 1808, DWL Papers.

Not all the merchants deserved such harsh rebukes from Daniel, although in desperate circumstances many resorted to questionable, possibly unlawful, means for survival. Counted among those who failed was John Taber, a tanner by trade who like many others, had built his business during Portland's heyday. A Quaker, Taber enjoyed a reputation for honesty and integrity. When the General Court of Massachusetts barred the newly incorporated Portland Bank from issuing bills in denominations of less than five dollars (part of an effort to control the number of small bills circulating in from other states) Taber issued his own redeemable bills for one, two, three, and four dollars in silver. Taber bills became sought after commodities of exchange in Portland, a much more reliable medium than the numerous counterfeit bills that floated through from other states. Unfortunately, Taber's son, Daniel Taber, did not share his father's probity, and an accumulation of debts led him to recklessly produce and distribute Taber bills to his creditors. Once the effects of the Embargo rattled Portland and Taber & Sons failed, the bills once so sought after, were completely worthless.⁸⁴

Portland resident Thomas Bailey held useless Taber bills once valued at sixty dollars. He enlisted Daniel to represent him in an action against the Tabers. Unimpressed by Taber's Quakerism and his reputation for honesty, Daniel accused the insolvent Taber of deliberately practicing fraud representing the interests of not just Bailey, but any of the many Portlanders who held a Taber bill. "The honest simplicity of the Quaker's garb gave their makers seeming integrity....In common with others we received for our goods & in the negotiations of trade for their nominal value & thus we are holders & bearers of the notes & plaintiffs in this action. The defendants have the effrontery openly to avow intentional knavery and to claim from the country immunity from the obligation of their promises....The mistake of the man

⁸⁴ William Goold, "John Taber & Son of Portland, and Their Paper Money," *Collections and Proceedings of the Maine Historical Society*, 9 (1898): 128-32.

who has 100 of Taber's assignats in his desk will consider himself cheated as well as he who holds but one.” Taber’s lawyer argued that if the notes were issued after April 1, 1805 (when the federal government voided promissory notes under the value of five dollars) then they were worthless and the receiver should have known that they had no value. Daniel countered that they were issued before April 1, 1805 therefore Taber must remit their full worth to Bailey. Taber had abused Portland’s trust and they should be held accountable for knowingly passing worthless currency. The court ruled in favor of Bailey, at least initially. After Taber’s appeal, however, the court reduced the amount owed from sixty to nine dollars.⁸⁵

Many in Portland blamed Jefferson for their hardships, but not Daniel. He believed the fault lay with merchant greed. “All the difficulties & embarrassments of the inhabitants are imputed to the Embargo; although in a great degree are chargeable on their own desperate speculations & private misfortunes previously sustained,” Daniel asserted to his father. Still, he was not unaware of the vulnerability Republicans faced and Federalist efforts to capitalize on it. Two weeks before the election, Daniel and five other high profile Republicans ran a circular in the *Federalist Gazette*. In language that resonated with the best of Daniel’s political rhetoric, the article underscored the blessings the republic enjoyed since the Revolution. Thanks were due to the incumbent powers for protecting their liberties and keeping the nation out of war.⁸⁶ A brief notice that preceded the article pointed out the Republicans responsible for the circular and added for the benefit of the gullible unknowing

⁸⁵ *Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Volume V containing the Cases from the Beginning of the Year 1809 to the End of October Term in Barnstable in the Same Year* (Newburyport, Mass: Edward Little, 1810), 286-90 and 452-3.

⁸⁶ “Be Vigilant and Be Safe,” *Portland Gazette and Maine Advertizer*, March 28, 1808.

that “four of these gentlemen hold lucrative offices either by the appointment of Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Sullivan.”⁸⁷

The Republicans fared badly in the 1808 election and Federalists regained control of the General Court. Sullivan and Lincoln, however, managed to hold onto their offices albeit by a much slimmer margin than in 1807, thanks especially to the influx of Republicans into Maine’s interior.⁸⁸ Daniel’s home base of Cumberland County, however, went to the Federalist opponent Christopher Gore by a little over 400 votes.⁸⁹ The Federalist majority in the General Court guaranteed that the executive would be as toothless and ineffectual as they could possible make him.

Sullivan’s support of the Embargo had been tepid from the start, much to the annoyance of Jefferson. At the outset Sullivan signaled that it would be nearly impossible to prosecute offenders. Worse, Sullivan warned Jefferson that the Embargo played into Federalist hands by creating a North/South division, fueling speculation that the Southerner Jefferson sought to punish Massachusetts shippers who had continually refused to support him. Levi Lincoln was left supporting the measure as a loyal Jeffersonian but as Lieutenant Governor he had no means of enforcing it. Meanwhile, Sullivan ingratiated himself to the Massachusetts electorate by issuing special licenses permitting the importation of flour from other domestic ports which meant that ships sailed wherever they wished and happily engaged in illicit trade. Jefferson, wise to Sullivan’s machinations, called on Lincoln to assume

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Formisano, *Transformation of Political Culture*, 77. Gore won by approximately 2,374 votes out of 83,686 votes cast. “Massachusetts State Election for Governor 1808,” *A New Nation Votes* http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1808.00003.

⁸⁹ “Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor 1808,” *A New Nation Votes*. http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1808.00007.

control of issuing permits, but Lincoln in a rare display of opposition, declined the president's request asserting that most imported flour came into Massachusetts over state lines and not by sea.⁹⁰ Jefferson was unconvinced. Fearing insurrection from the Federalists, Jefferson imposed military law by stationing armies along the Canadian frontier and dispatched gunboats to survey the coast.⁹¹

Reputedly in an effort to protect the citizens of the District of Maine from possible incursions by the British navy, Secretary of War Henry Dearborn commissioned several forts to be built along Maine's coast, supported by gunboats manned by local militia. Federalists, even those who were not particularly party zealots, took a very dim view of the forts for several reasons. First, the construction of the forts and the management of them fell to Jeffersonians, chiefly Daniel's friend Henry A.S. Dearborn. Secondly, they questioned the purpose of the forts, as it seemed to many that rather than protecting Portland from British vessels that might invade their harbor, the forts were really built to police their maritime activities and catch smugglers who intended on evading the Embargo laws.⁹²

The controversial fort was named in honor of Daniel's friend and mentor Commander Edward Preble. Daniel was asked to pronounce the dedication oration. "The fete was graced by the presence of ladies and gentlemen of the highest respectability," reported the *Eastern Argus*. "An appropriate address was pronounced on the occasion by D.W. Lincoln, Esq. inspired by the ardent feelings of the orator and responded by according sentiments of every patriot bosom."⁹³ Daniel took a more ironic and deprecating view of the occasion, but still

⁹⁰ Marvin Junior Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln, Sr." (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1969), 152.

⁹¹ Adams, *History of the United States of America*, 1104.

⁹² Smith, "Maine's Embargo Forts," 143-54.

⁹³ "Fort Preble," *Eastern Argus*, December 4, 1808.

managed to convey the scene to his brother with his usual poetic and evocative flourish. “It was a very cold day,” he told John. “The soldier’s jaws chattered a response to every discharge of the guns & the shawls & tresses of the ladies waved over the parapet like the misty locks of Ossian’s ghosts of the darkling eve. I pitied the silly creatures who exposed their delicacy to the eager & biting air of a wintry day to gratify an idle curiosity.”⁹⁴

During the fall of 1808 when James Madison was running for President, an impassioned Daniel appealed to the virtue of Maine voters to re-elect his friend Daniel Ilsley to the United States Congress. He implored his audience to respect the Embargo laws in the interest of national independence from foreign powers and in the spirit of the revolutionary heroes of his father’s generation. “Consider the solemn obligation you owe to your country, to yourselves, to your friends, to your children, to the memory of your fathers, to the heroes who conquered & the heroes who fell in achieving your independence,” Daniel implored his audience. If their resolve should fail, they risk being traitors to liberty by courting a “foreign master.” Future generations would know bondage and slavery. Rising to the passion of his rhetoric, Daniel vowed that if he should have within him one ounce of such faithless blood, he would “drain every artery dry lest the accursed drop should linger the last.”⁹⁵ Daniel’s emotional appeal was unequal to the Bay State’s outrage. Not only did Daniel Ilsley fail to be elected but an outraged General Court threw John Quincy Adams out of the United States Senate because his support of the Embargo made him an apostate of the most unforgivable kind. In the presidential contest the legislature chose Federalist electors to cast all nineteen votes for Madison’s rival, Charles Pinckney.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 5, 1808, DWL Papers.

⁹⁵ Daniel W. Lincoln, Caucus Speech, October 4, 1808, DWL Papers.

⁹⁶ Willis, *History of Portland*, 14; Adams, *History of the United States*, 1122.

In the midst of the all political commotion during the fall of 1808, Daniel unexpectedly fell in love again. This time he was smitten by a seventeen-year-old Portland girl named Mary Hodges. Born in 1791, Mary was the daughter of Jane Robinson and Thomas Hodges of Portland. After Thomas Hodges's early death, Jane Robinson married Robert Ilsley in 1803, who was the Postmaster General of Portland and an enthusiastic Republican whom Daniel knew and whose name appeared with Daniel's as one of the leading Cumberland County Republicans.⁹⁷ Her political and social pedigree assured, Daniel set out to court the young Mary.

As a way of introduction to his family, Daniel excitedly wrote to his sister Martha and asked for her assistance in presenting Mary in the best possible light to their parents. He portrayed Mary as accurately as his besotted heart would allow.

Mary's figure is taller than Aunt Elizabeth's & quite as slender & she is perfectly erect yet easy & graceful in her carriage, her features are small, & her face oval, more expressive of thoughtfulness, then gayety, when she is silent & Nature has written good nature so legibly there that no one can misrecite the legend. Her manners are gentle & artless as an untutored child's....She can make a pudding, a loaf of bread & apple pie, can make up linen, darn a tattered stocking, patch a ragged elbow & besides the accomplishments which she possesses in common with my sisters, draws with taste, sings & plays admirably well....Her friends discover in her, uncommon quickness of perception & veracity of thought, a delicacy of mind & goodness of heart which cannot fail to attract and secure regard....Our grandmother will inquire further if she belongs to a good family. None in Maine is more respectable or more wealthy.⁹⁸

Daniel's view of women could hardly be called enlightened even by early nineteenth century standards. The idea of political rights for women, while not widely accepted or popular, was not completely unknown either.⁹⁹ To most people, however, the Lockean notion of natural rights remained the prerogative of white men. But not everyone shared the view

⁹⁷ Deane, *Journals*, 252.

⁹⁸ Daniel W. Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, May 12, 1808, DWL Papers.

⁹⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her famous essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792, some fifteen years earlier.

that those excluded from the privilege of civic participation by virtue of color or gender were entirely without rights either. Many viewed women's rights as something akin to but different from men's rights. Women had the right to take care of their families, their husbands, and future citizens and to protect them from the rabble of the outside world.¹⁰⁰ They had the right to exercise their domestic arts to bind the wounds of factionalism and party strife within a loving home. Women had the right (which was synonymous with duty) to be helpmeet to the republic.¹⁰¹ Exposure to weighty philosophical thought and participation in politics masculinized women and distracted them from their greater republican purpose.¹⁰²

If Mary possessed scholarly or political interests, they paled next to what Daniel valued far more: her genteel domestic talents. He emphasized to his sister her nimble thimble and small delicate face rather than her perceptive mind. Daniel was eight years older than Mary but their age difference and life experiences did not dissuade him from pursuing her. They were both of marriageable age, at twenty-five he especially so.¹⁰³ In fact he found her innocence and youth especially attractive. "I would not give a fig for a girl who has been in love a dozen times. Their affections become as hackneyed as their airs & graces," he pronounced. Still he worried that losing Charlotte, whom he still loved more than anyone,

¹⁰⁰ Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser. 55 (1998), 220-2. Zagarri quotes Republican orator and lawyer Jeremiah Perley whose 1807 July Fourth Address in Hallowell, Maine just down the road from Portland, addressed the women in terms Daniel would have agreed with. "You will not consult a Wollstonecraft for a code of 'The Rights of Women.' Do not usurp the rights of man; they are essentially distinct."

¹⁰¹ Rosemarie Zagarri, "Women and Party Conflict in the Early Republic," in *Beyond the Founders*, ed. Jeffrey L. Pasley, et al, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 119.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰³ Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), 23.

made him the bearer of a “heart of disappointed hopes.” Wooing and winning “the devotion of virgin love” would require courage.¹⁰⁴

The promise of a fine republican home with Mary as a sanctuary from the wild and woolly world of political rabble appealed to Daniel. Furthermore, the conventional roles of Mary as unworldly and domestic and Daniel as worldly and public, boosted his sagging sense of power and manliness during a period in his life when he doubted his mastery and control. Mary as a passive, adoring woman made him feel better about himself as a man. His public reputation lay in being regarded as learned, virtuous, and sympathetic. Mary’s femininity and weakness called upon him to provide fortitude and strength.¹⁰⁵ “Female hearts may swell with passion, female bosoms heave the sigh of sorrow, the tears of woman’s weakness pour these floods of woe,” he wrote. “But Man! Lamentation becomes not the roughness of thy nature. The sternness of thy temper yields not to the pressure of misfortune. The Oak resists the boreal blast with sullen firmness, but the pliant branches of the willow tumble at its coming & mourn its roughness in melancholy cadence.”¹⁰⁶ Daniel had not been the oak he thought he should and could be. In fact he had been more willow-like. The “sighs of sorrow” he felt after losing Charlotte, undermined this vision of ideal masculinity. An adoring, devoted wife and a comfortable home as refuge from the tumult of the world would anchor

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Rothman, *Hands and Hearts*, 11. Erik Erikson famously discusses the importance of the love object in early adulthood as a positive reflection of the idealized self. See Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1968).

¹⁰⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, January 15, 1809, DWL Papers.

him and give him definition and purpose beyond himself.¹⁰⁷ What could be more honorable than a virtuous family life?

Over the course of the summer and into the fall, Daniel and Mary kept company away from “the counterfeit gaiety of genteel mobs.”¹⁰⁸ But after seven months of courtship, Mary abruptly ended the relationship. In the immediate aftermath of the separation, Daniel refused to take any responsibility for its failure except to cite his natural vulnerability, tenderness, and an “open heart where love may fly in & out like a bat through a summer window” as making him particularly vulnerable.¹⁰⁹ His only culpability, he believed, lay in trusting her. Love had battered and bruised him, he told Enoch, implying that Mary was something of a coquette and had led him on. She was not the picture of dependable domesticity he had presented to his family.¹¹⁰ He vowed he would rather “pour my tears on the grave of my poor Charlotte than to pillow my head on the fairest bosom that heaves the sigh of affection.”¹¹¹ Months later, however, he admitted the truth. Mary broke with him because of his drinking. He agreed that she was probably wise to do so “... for she should not have entrusted her fate to one of my then habits.”¹¹² Whether Daniel had been drinking throughout the courtship or if he had indulged in a single binge that offended and frightened Mary, it is impossible to know. He does not disclose specifics of what occurred. But during a period when he claimed to be blissfully delivered from his grief over Charlotte and anticipated marriage and a family with

¹⁰⁷ This was not an unusual ideal for many young men finding their way in the early nineteenth century. See John Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 31.

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, October 17, 1808, DWL Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Rothman, *Hands and Hearts*, 41-42.

¹¹¹ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 5, 1808, DWL Papers.

¹¹² Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 25, 1808 and Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, July 26, 1811, DWL Papers.

Mary, he had much to gain by abstention. That he continued to drink reveals not only an ambivalence toward the prospect of a married life but an inwardly directed, self-destructive impulse that lay at the root of his depression and his drinking behavior.¹¹³ For her part, Mary was no shrinking violet. Free as many nineteenth century women were to exercise her prerogative in the choice of mates, she denied him.¹¹⁴

News of the episode that ended the relationship with Mary soon made its way to Worcester. Apologies and promises more imploring and desperate than ever, cascaded into the Lincoln home in early January 1809. “The only atonement I can make for the uneasiness & anxiety I have caused & the only alleviation of my regret and account of it, will be the satisfaction of correct & honorable conduct....Pray be convinced & persuade my father that the goodness of my parents will not be lost on me,” he beseeched his mother.¹¹⁵ Daniel had reason to be anxious and remorseful. On December 10, 1808 Governor Sullivan had suddenly died making Levi Lincoln chief magistrate of the Commonwealth. Daniel was now the son of the acting governor who would soon be running for the state’s highest office in his own right.¹¹⁶ It was imperative that Daniel be more prudent than ever. The elder Lincoln had gambled on his son to be sober and judicious. He had positioned him as County Attorney presumably

¹¹³ Psychoanalytic theory posits that the depressed patient is frustrated and angry at the internalized love object, usually the parent, which is compounded by self-reproach and guilt. “The individual with a tendency to depression is one who has feared that his hatred and aggression are stronger than his love, and who thereby, during infancy and afterward, is always threatened with loss of the love object because of this hatred and aggression.” Walter Bonime, “The Psychodynamics of Neurotic Depression,” *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, 4 (1976): 304. In other words, Daniel’s self-sabotaging drinking was rage directed toward his internalized parents whose expectations, even in his choice of women, he alternately feared and resented.

¹¹⁴ Rothman, *Hands and Hearts*, 60.

¹¹⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, January 13, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁶ Amory, *Life of James Sullivan*, 314.

as a stepping stone to higher elective office and to be a second generation of Lincolns to lead Massachusetts. The potential repercussions of Daniel's bacchanals were never higher, especially as Federalists showed no compunction to use whatever they could to smear Levi Lincoln openly. The public dishonor of Daniel's fall could only be eclipsed by Levi's personal disappointment.

As part of his contrition, Daniel left his male boarding house for the private residence of James Deering, a prosperous Quaker merchant in hopes of sparing himself "the inconvenience of a noisy crowd of strange & various characters."¹¹⁷ Better that Daniel should live a quiet life with abstemious Quakers because Levi could ill afford to hand Federalists more ammunition with which they could slander and embarrass him. The election was only four months off and he faced a thorny situation with an incensed General Court. Their outrage over the Embargo had been unabating and gathering momentum from other corners. The matter was made even more pressing when Congress passed the Enforcement Act in December 1808 inflicting severe penalties for those caught evading the law with the added provision that suspicious goods could be seized without a warrant. As governor of Massachusetts it was up to Levi to enforce the act and now as commander of the state militia, he also possessed the muscle to do it.

Town meetings throughout Massachusetts wrote outraged remonstrations calling the measure unconstitutional and grounds for secession. Ship owners hastily dispatched their vessels to sea to avoid confiscation. Four thousand people gathered at Faneuil Hall led by Levi Lincoln's old nemesis Samuel Dexter (whose Congressional seat Levi had taken in 1800 when Dexter became secretary of war) to draft a petition to the General Court protesting the

¹¹⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, April 15, 1809, DWL Papers.

act on the grounds of its unconstitutionality. The following day an even stronger resolution declaring the intention of the people to “not voluntarily aid or assist in the execution of the Enforcement Act” because the Act was “unjust, oppressive, and unconstitutional” and “not legally binding” was passed by the legislature.¹¹⁸

Lincoln quickly vetoed the resolution.¹¹⁹ In his address to the General Court on January 26, 1809 as acting governor, he condemned such remonstrations as seditious, improper, and dangerous. He scolded Massachusetts for showing itself to the rest of the nation as “distracted with divisions, prepared for opposition to the authority of the law, and ripening for secession from the Union.”¹²⁰ Furthermore, as a devoted Jeffersonian and law-abider, he had every intention to follow the Enforcement Act to the letter. He advised the Commonwealth that to oppose decisions reached by the duly elected federal government was wrong, especially if based on misrepresentations and lies. Lincoln concluded that the people could be too easily misled by demagogues especially when circumstances such as the Embargo, required personal and painful sacrifice.¹²¹

Federalists were determined to defeat Levi Lincoln unequivocally and on every issue including public works such as road improvements, manufacturing, and protection from counterfeiting. No matter the cause, if a proposal came from Lincoln, Federalists set out to not only kill his proposals, but humiliate its sponsor. Although the Embargo at least temporarily resurrected Federalism in Massachusetts, Federalists were leaving nothing to

¹¹⁸ Adams, *History of the United States*, 1210-11.

¹¹⁹ Thorp Lanier Welford, “Democratic-Republican Reaction in Massachusetts to the Embargo of 1807,” *New England Quarterly*, 15 (1942): 54.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Charles Warren, *Jacobin and Junto or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames 1758-1822* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1931), 218.

¹²¹ Petroelje, “Levi Lincoln, Sr.,” 169-72

chance. They pounded away at Lincoln in the press, calling him an “infidel,” “with low cunning and artifice in place of wisdom.”¹²² They accused him of embezzlement, laughable incompetence, avarice, and self-interest. The time was right to play their trump card and they exhumed Lincoln’s 1804 humiliation in front of the Supreme Court, publishing verbatim the account as it had appeared then in the Federalist *National Intelligencer* adding “Mr. Lincoln is haughty, reserved, vindictive, and overbearing. Mr. Lincoln is noted for his blind partiality to France.”¹²³ When Levi broke protocol by issuing orders directly to the militia officers to enforce the militia instead of going through the state Adjutant General who would surely have stonewalled it, the Federalists gleefully accused him of acting illegally. Forthwith they formed a three man committee, composed entirely of Federalists, to investigate any wrongdoing.¹²⁴

In a show of political bile meant to embarrass Lincoln, the General Court set aside February 16 as a day of fasting and prayer “for deliverance and favour.” The public announcement that included an invitation to attend the services pushed Lincoln into an untenable position with no graceful way out. If he attended, he would appear to be sanctioning the day which was designed as a repudiation of the Embargo. If he did not attend, he opened himself to accusations of infidelity. He tried instead to avoid the whole conundrum. Lincoln asked to be excused claiming his wife was sick and he needed to be with her in Worcester. To make sure there was no ambiguity in his position as a Christian and believer in religion as a private affair, he published a statement declaring that “religion is truth

¹²² “Levi Lincoln’s Qualifications for Governor,” *Portland Gazette and Maine Advertiser*, March 27, 1809.

¹²³ *Who Shall Be Governor?* (Worcester, Mass: Printed at the Spy Office, 1809).

¹²⁴ Petroelje, “Levi Lincoln, Sr.”, 160.

and sincerity, a holy transaction of the heart, between the creature and the creator....invoking... quiet and peaceable lives for those in authority, and those under it.”¹²⁵

Daniel read his father’s message to the public in the *Portland Gazette* and was outraged he had not been informed that his mother was ill. He fired off an impulsive and angry letter to Enoch. “Am I so entirely exfamiliarated that domestic concerns of so interesting a nature are to be known to me only through the medium of public prints? If such be the case, let me be assured of it that I may return future letters (if perchance I should receive any) from former friends unopened.”¹²⁶ When the circumstances were clarified to him later and Daniel was reassured his mother was healthy but his father needed to escape Boston, he reproached Levi (albeit indirectly to Enoch) for “political contrivances” that he viewed as cowardly. If it were he, he declared he would have faced the issue squarely.

The purposes of a generous man are direct & his course straight & plain. If a retreat could not be affected otherwise, fighting will achieve it. But why shrink from the brunt of the battle? I would always do as I thought right & defend my conduct tho’ I should provoke encounter with the host of hell. One ought not to do what he cannot readily justify.¹²⁷

Although the exchange was a private one between brothers, it was a rare instance of Daniel criticizing his father. He accused him of being weak and ungenerous, a direct and unusually harsh knock on Levi’s virtue. By diminishing his father, Daniel briefly held the upper hand even if his position was only theoretical. Perhaps it came as a surprise, both welcome and disappointing, to discover that even his father had, at times, feet of clay.

In a stroke of bad timing that might have saved Levi Lincoln’s candidacy if had it come earlier, the United States Congress repealed the Embargo Acts on March 1, 1809, a few

¹²⁵ *Massachusetts Spy*, February 18, 1809, quoted in Petroelje, 183.

¹²⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, February 18, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹²⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 17, 1809, DWL Papers.

days before Thomas Jefferson left the presidency and James Madison assumed office.

Northeastern Republican loyalty to Jefferson, already thin, had started to falter and the hoped for results of the measures never fully materialized. Without popular support, without juries and judges willing to convict violators, with Federalists protesting and filing suits against it and Republicans wavering, with too many willing to turn a blind eye, the Embargo laws were unenforceable.¹²⁸ Its unpopularity in New England stemmed more from a general abomination of Jefferson that long predated the Embargo than from losses borne by shipping merchants. In fact, Southern planters suffered far more from falling prices of cotton and tobacco than did the Northeast merchants whose creative evasions had continued to bring in healthy profits.¹²⁹ The laws had kept the United States out of the European conflagration but had failed to force the warring European nations to rescind their orders and halt their assault on American ships. Jefferson (and his disciple Daniel Lincoln for that matter) never stopped blaming the evaders and the resisters, especially the Essex Junto, for the Embargo's failures.¹³⁰

Between the repeal of the Embargo and Election Day, Levi Lincoln had only one month to appeal to enough voters to retain the State House. The Federalists ran their favorite son, Christopher Gore, in the 1809 election, the same man Sullivan and Lincoln had narrowly defeated in 1807 and 1808 and one of the authors of the Massachusetts resolution protesting the Force Act. Lincoln's friends in the Republican newspapers volleyed acrid taunts that the wealthy Gore was a puppet of the Essex Junto, the son of a Tory, and a lover of luxurious aristocratic trappings. Gore had lived in England between 1796 and 1804 as a United States

¹²⁸ Wolford, "Democratic-Republican Reaction to the Embargo," 55.

¹²⁹ Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 132.

¹³⁰ Wills, *Making of America*, 240-2.

commissioner negotiated claims for Americans. He returned to Boston ambivalent about returning to the law but was convinced by Fisher Ames it was to his financial benefit to do so.¹³¹ Modeling himself on the British landed gentry he admired, Gore had a weakness for mansions, velvet coats, plush carriages, and powdered wigs. Bostonians frequently spotted him in his open carriage drawn by four long-tailed horses.¹³²

Republicans held up Levi as a true and patriotic American, “a rack on which the storms of calumny beat harmlessly.”¹³³ The Republican *Boston Patriot* published a letter from John Adams who opposed a war against France that Gore allegedly advocated. “Let not the people of Massachusetts be harried into excesses by the intemperate proceedings of the State Legislature,” Adams wrote. “Let Massachusetts rather listen to the counsels of the first revolutionary statesman and patriot.”¹³⁴

Back in Portland Daniel feverishly did what he could to get his father elected, trying again to prove himself worthy to his father by taking up the cudgel against Federalists with a renewed vehemence. He reported an increase in Republican enthusiasm in the interior that he hoped would balance the increase in Federalist numbers on the coast. On Election Day he watched while Federalists, who had taken a page from the Republican electioneering book, made sure every Federalist cast his vote. “They carried the palsied in his litter & placed the ballot in the hands of dead men who had sufficient lingering vitality to keep them yet on the

¹³¹ Tamara Platkins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life Among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1989), 31.

¹³² Helen R Pinkney, *Christopher Gore: Federalist of Massachusetts 1758-1827* (Waltham, Mass: Gore Place Society, 1969), 116; Thaxter P. Spencer, “Christopher Gore Brief Life of a Philanthropic Bibliophile: 1758-1827,” *Harvard Magazine* (2001), <http://harvardmagazine.com/2001/11/christopher-gore.html>.

¹³³ “Levi Lincoln,” *Boston Courier*, March 23 and 30, 1809.

¹³⁴ “Lincoln or Gore,” *Boston Patriot*, March 31, 1809.

upper side of the sod, but not enough muscular activity of motion to enable them to open their fingers, to drop their votes...Probably the returns from the District of Maine will correspond, in the aggregate, with the votes at the last gubernatorial election.”¹³⁵ Daniel’s optimistic estimates turned out to be correct, but also too little to make the difference. Cumberland County failed to turn the tide for Lincoln and favored Gore with 2,859 votes over Lincoln’s 2,465. The District of Maine as a whole, however, preferred Lincoln by over 1,000 votes.¹³⁶

At another time it might have been enough to cast the dandified Gore as a seditious Anglophile and Federalist hothead and to call on John Adams to refute his policies, but in 1809 Massachusetts had suffered too long and too much to forgive so quickly, especially when four-fifths of the commercial businesses of 1807 were gone by 1809.¹³⁷ Voters decided that the embattled and beleaguered Lincoln should surrender his office to Gore on April 3, 1809.¹³⁸ In spite of Federalist jubilation at having recaptured the State House, Gore defeated Lincoln by 2,500 votes out of over 80,000 cast, a tiny two percent margin.¹³⁹

After the election, Daniel soldiered for the duration of his tenure in the county attorney’s office but he was tired, conflicted, and cynical, especially about the law. He had failed in his temperance promises and disappointed those who were closest to him. In his chosen profession, he saw a disturbing contradiction of republican principles. Law was supposed to be the venue reserved for educated men committed to furthering republicanism

¹³⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, April 6, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹³⁶ “Massachusetts State Election for Governor 1809,” *A New Nation Votes*.
http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1809.00001

¹³⁷ Wolford, “Democratic-Republican Reaction to the Embargo,” 56.

¹³⁸ Petroelje, “Levi Lincoln Sr.,” 192-3.

¹³⁹ Goodman, *Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 196. By the time the Embargo was repealed, unemployment in Portland was reported to be an astonishing 60 percent. Goodman, 187.

and virtue. It was through their labors that the republican ideal would be protected. Instead he found law to be a world of hypocrisy and drudgery. “We are the drudges of oppression, the ministers of vengeance & call our profession honorable,” he wrote Enoch. In a vivid passage, noteworthy for its frustration and misanthropy, Daniel’s literary knife surgically eviscerates his chosen profession.

This is the flimsy delusion of the world. We nickname our actions, denominate our works of most absolute, damned villainy praiseworthy & sanctified iniquity. Murder is the act of heroism, cunning the exercise of discretion, hypocrisy a system of prudence & a hell of plotted mischiefs, meditated cheats & knavish devices, wisdom. The man who grows rich in the practice of law deserves a life of wretchedness. His table is furnished from the crumbs of poverty & the cup of his joys is brimmed with the tears of distress. It is a miserable state of society when leeches are necessary to the body politics. I wash my hands of it & am pleased with the reflection that I never received a fee that made a poor man’s child cry for his breakfast.¹⁴⁰

As much as he may have wanted to, Daniel could not wash his hands of the law as long as he was County Attorney. (The position became something of a political light switch, turned “on” with Republicans, and “off” with Federalists. The new governor promptly abolished the office in 1809.)¹⁴¹ In the spring of 1809, however, Daniel was still occupied “in pursuit & procurement of evidence on behalf of the Commonwealth to be used in their action against the Pejeboscot Proprietors.” In the course of interviewing settlers, he traversed the Androscoggin River, familiarizing himself with the Maine wilderness interrupted by “flourishing towns of Bowdoin, Lisbon, Lewiston, rich in a fertility & cultivation.”¹⁴² The

¹⁴⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 24, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹⁴¹ *The General Laws of Massachusetts*, 210.

¹⁴² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, May 29, 1809, DWL Papers.

scene did little to comfort his growing discontent. Instead, the grandeur of the countryside underscored human temporality and raised the essential question of what can life mean if it everything must die. Even the great and mighty die and disappear. There was something simultaneously troubling and reassuring about the thought that death makes no exceptions. “I note the wrinkles in the statesman’s brow & am diverted with the thought that a simple worm has countermined the sagacious contrivances of a polite plotting brain. I behold the structures of grandeur & the accumulations of avarice resolved to their original dust; & I learn to despise all men.”¹⁴³ Everything -- the law, the politicians, their grand memorials to themselves -- mattered little to the forlorn and forsaken Daniel Lincoln. Statesmen had either shunned him or humiliated him as dishonorable. In return Daniel disparaged their accomplishments as little more than worm fodder and dust. Confused, disappointed, hurt, and uncertain, Daniel wrestled with the unanswerable and concluded, at least for the moment, that all men were despicable because they thought him to be so.

Shelving his cynicism to the public, Daniel was back on the oration circuit a week later. He delivered an address to the Portland Republicans in a celebration commemorating the lifting of the Embargo, excoriating Federalists, and “paying tribute justly due to the excellent policy adopted by the late President Jefferson.”¹⁴⁴ Federalists mocked him for his “larning” after he misspoke the cost of the Embargo (\$170 million in property and 50 million seamen). Untroubled by their taunts, he prepared his third July Fourth oration this time for the Republicans of Oxford County after which he planned to visit his family in Worcester. His friends awaited his arrival with some trepidation. “I am greatly afflicted at your

¹⁴³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 2, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁴ “Tenth of June,” *Eastern Argus*, June 15, 1809.

information respecting D.W. Lincoln,” wrote Edward Bangs to friend Nathaniel Howe. “I was in hopes he had reformed. But habits once rooted are hardly exterminated.”¹⁴⁵

The Worcester visit garnered mixed reviews. Daniel’s friends greeted him warily and subjected him to their concerned yet patronizing eye. “I cannot recollect whether my last letter was subsequent to Mr. Lincoln’s visit, or, if so, whether I informed you that he at least made a show of having abandoned his unfortunate habits of intemperance and all the time he was here would not even take a glass of wine to the great satisfaction of his respectable father, who has been exceedingly troubled at the circulation of reports to the dishonor of his son. I hope and trust that this conduct was not an artifice to deceive his family; I have too high an opinion of Daniel’s integrity to believe him capable of such deceit. I rather suppose it to have been an effort of reason which may be victorious but I fear is more likely to be fruitless.”¹⁴⁶ Bangs suspected that the salubrious effect of being under Levi’s roof for a period was at best temporary and at worst fraudulent. To Bangs, it would have been better to be honestly drinking than dishonestly sober, a peculiar challenge for a reforming republican.

Nathaniel Howe noticed an improvement in Daniel and conveyed his impressions to Bangs, but Bangs’ optimism remained guarded. “I cannot but cherish some faint hopes that he has at last extricated himself from the slavery into which he had fallen. If however he has not, I fear he will never be reclaimed. I shall grieve for his loss to his family, to republicanism, to his country, to mankind, all of which he might have ornamented and honored. My father has conversed with his father on the subject. Judge Lincoln was no means ignorant of his son’s infirmities.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Edward Bangs to Nathaniel Howe, August 7, 1809, Folio 1, Bangs Family Papers, AAS.

¹⁴⁶ Edward Bangs to Nathaniel Howe, October 1, 1809, Bangs Family Papers, AAS.

¹⁴⁷ Edward Bangs to Nathaniel Howe, January 12, 1810, Bangs Family Papers, AAS.

As for Daniel, the trip had given him the opportunity to bask in the “parental smile” suggesting he received their forgiveness and acceptance. He asked Enoch to “inform my parents that my conclusive & absolute determination comports with their wishes & that I shall not be so distant a dweller from them next year.”¹⁴⁸ But for now, back in Portland, Daniel resumed his business of “pleas, demurrers, joinders & all the tactical molds of squabbling in the courts” and recommitted himself again and again to a strict and temperate life. It was his to shape through “resolute perseverance” with “courage & fortitude.”¹⁴⁹

Daniel’s return to Worcester presented him with a dilemma as it had in 1806 when he left it for Portland. Worcester could not be separated from a host of painful memories but at the same time it was the place he felt most loved. “Recollections painful to the heart crowd upon me when imagination carries me to Worcester,” he told his sister.”¹⁵⁰ Would hope in the future or memories of the past have greater power in directing where and how he lived his life? Both courted danger and both evoked pain and solace in equal measure.

Hope appears as a fascinating coquette, greeting with an universal smile tantalizing & cheating every suitor. The witchery of her charms captivates & entrances the soul....I trusted her and was deluded.....Memory is a record of truth. She does not cheat you...she does not seduce to betray you...There is comfort even in her afflictions. Many recollections of scenes of trouble, grief, despondency & despair haunt me, like the shades of the unburied dead; but for all of the joys of fortune, grandeur & power I would not forget them.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 28, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 12, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹⁵⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, November 6, 1809, DWL Papers.

¹⁵¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 30, 1809, DWL Papers.

Daniel began 1810 with a salute of “filial piety” to his father and a familiar refrain. “The new year is mine & I will improve it to virtue, to fame, to my friends & myself.”¹⁵² He wrote contritely to his mother, “God forbid that my soul should be burdened with the offense that my friends should suffer in my continued dissolution & my enemies triumph in my debasement.”¹⁵³ Daniel had long trumpeted the importance of determination to control fate and reshape personal destiny. The new year of 1810 gave him another opportunity to prove he could live up to his own dicta. He had failed in Portland and wanted to start again in a new setting, but it could not be Worcester. He conceived a plan that would put him in closer proximity to his friends and family while sparing him the painful memories of home. Taking a leap and looking to the future, banking on hope in spite of all its glittery trappings and untrustworthiness, Daniel made up his mind to boldly fly into the eye of the Federalist storm and move to Boston. “I shall leave Portland & endeavor in the vicinity of my friends to revive their dormant, of not alienated & estranged regards. To be seen, one must be present & must be frequently conversant, necessary indeed, to be loved. Affection, during absence, like a picture in crayons, loses a portion of its beauty & richness daily.”¹⁵⁴ He prepared himself to do battle with his enemies and to amend his public image with his friends. “They imagine that I have been imprudent & am less estimable than aforetime. If I have wandered from my orbit I am no falling star. I may remind them of their present sentiments when they will wish their expressions of them forgotten.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, January 1, 1810, DWL Papers.

¹⁵³ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, February 4, 1810, DWL Papers.

¹⁵⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 15, 1810, DWL Papers.

¹⁵⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 23, 1810, DWL Papers.

Daniel's brother John was deeply skeptical that Daniel would be able to transform himself as he had promised. In a candid letter to his cousin Francis Lincoln, whom Daniel had already asked to help him find lodgings and an office, an exasperated John warned Francis that Daniel could not to be trusted.

My father has consented to his coming to Boston, as the only means of saving him, believing that any place is better than Portland & as he has yet some reputation to lose he hopes that he may be induced to leave off his bad habits & pay his whole attention to his professional pursuits, if he does that he may yet retrieve his lost character & make himself respected. He certainly has talent & if deserving, will have Friends who will assist him....I am desirous that he should make the attempt if he has determined to destroy himself he can do it any place. Of him I can truly say "I hope, I fear, I tremble." You can best judge of a suitable place for him to board, but should wish that it should be in a family whose habits are the very reverse from his that he may not meet with any temptation that can be avoided but should advise you as a friend, not to take him into your own family until you are satisfied that he has redeemed the promise he has made to his Parents & Friends of an entire change in his Conduct.¹⁵⁶

Daniel was determined to go to Boston in spite of familial advice to the contrary. With the termination of the County Attorney position in 1809 and with his practice suffering from unpaid fees in the aftermath of the Embargo, Daniel had little to lose professionally by the move. He left his practice with his friend Joseph Pope and promised to continue his involvement but none of the pending cases compelled him to stay on. Mary Hodges had rejected him and Henry Dearborn had pushed on to Salem with his new wife. He had other friends, Joseph Pope and Nathaniel Howe, but they had not kept him from depression,

¹⁵⁶ John Lincoln to Francis Lincoln, March 8, 1810, Octavo Volume 29, Box 3, Folder 2, Lincoln Family Papers, AAS.

loneliness, and inebriety. As long as he abided by paternal rules he would feel alien in a culture that strived to loosen the bands of Daniel's class prerogatives.

Daniel's experience in Portland had made clear that as much as he disdained social ambition, he could not deny the unstoppable trajectory of a growing and spreading material democracy as a clear demonstration of affluence and unbridled commerce, no matter how poorly he viewed it. The expanding liberal economy defined cultural values. Men who made money by their wits were looked upon by many with greater appreciation than those who were born into it. Qualities that had once been subversive to social harmony were now celebrated as the measure of manliness. A man earned the esteem of his community by leading an economically independent and family-oriented life of his own making.

Daniel had had a high level judiciary appointment but patronage, not accomplishment had gotten it for him, a privilege that did not escape Federalist comment. Monarchs and aristocrats whose status was based on landed wealth and inheritance were not manly. Luxury was not manly. Dependency was not manly. Bachelorhood was not manly. Children, women, the infirm, the intemperate were dependent and irresponsible and could not be counted among the honorable because of their dependency.¹⁵⁷ Those who failed to prove themselves either by failing in business, failing to marry and have children, or failing in self-control were increasingly viewed as corrupting and dangerous influences to society.¹⁵⁸

As Daniel matured the conflict between his liberal politics with his conservative cultural values became more discordant. He believed in erudition, refinement, decorum, good manners, and separate spheres for men and women. He believed in virtue and honor although

¹⁵⁷ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 13-24.

¹⁵⁸ Mark E. Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 59-62.

he struggled with balancing ambition and disinterest. While he may have raised his oratorical fist at the outrages of the Federalists and the authoritarian practices of the Calvinist clergy or the Harvard faculty, he also held a deep and abiding respect for authority. He honored traditional institutions, adopted traditional manners, and obeyed paternal directions. Like many Federalists, he believed in assertion and achievement as much as he believed in self-control. The difference was that while Federalists publicly decried the liberal economy and rued the disappearance of deference and hierarchy, they also cheered the prosperity that was the result of a capitalist system they often championed. Daniel mirrored the opposite contradiction. Outwardly he disparaged hierarchy and encouraged his fellow citizens to exercise their liberties. Privately, excesses of the striving classes offended him. He viewed their exercise of liberty as license and he loathed them for it.

For Daniel the swirl of change brought confusion over roles and morals and contributed to a fragmentation of self, a loss of cohesion, anxiety, and depression made worse by his drinking. Alcohol compromised his ability to develop the psychological strength he needed to negotiate the troubling contradictions and smooth the vexations that life seemed to be handing him at every turn. Daniel had been unable to hold onto Mary because his habitual drinking trumped his resolve to be healthy and sober. His disappointment in love was especially demoralizing because it underscored his essential failure as a man. He could not be the virtuous man he wanted to be while he was controlled by alcohol. Until he could control himself he would never be able to master life's other challenges. He was doomed to feeling incompetent and small. Humiliated, he tried to cover his weaknesses by lying about it to his family. His lies and hollow reassurances created even

greater feelings of despair and ineptitude which he quieted by once again, picking up the bottle. And so the cycle continued.

Intent as he was on presenting himself to his parents as competent and self-possessed, in 1809 Daniel wrote a letter to his father that briefly opened a window on the pain of his struggle. Perhaps he had grown tired of fighting his demons on his own so he risked revealing himself in the hope of finding a deeper level of understanding and sympathy from his father. Daniel had met an eloquent and brilliant former opium addict by the name of Ogilvie. Ogilvie's courage and strength at beating back his addiction profoundly moved and inspired Daniel. Quoting Ogilvie (although the lyrical words sound very much like Daniel and raise the question if Ogilvie and Daniel were one and the same) he wrote:

‘I suffered the torments of the damned. Each individual fiber appeared to have its particular pang. Every sense was agony. Twice I rose & put the bottle of laudanum to my lips; I put it away and tasted. I was in excruciating pain, & could no longer resist; I rose for it a third time but I plucked it away a third time, opened the casement & dashed it on the ground & when I saw its fragments glitter in the orient ray, I experienced a sentiment of triumph. I felt my heart grow warm. The ground drank it with the fogs of the night. The sun exhaled it with the morning dew. I am regenerated.’ I was forcibly impressed with his description. His sympathetic enunciation & energetic stipulation make every word he utters impressive. He has obtained a glorious victory over himself. That this man of most admirable qualities of astonishing abilities has risen like Lazarus from the sepulcher. I can proudly stand up with Ogilvie & triumphantly say, I too am master of myself.¹⁵⁹

Daniel had failed to master himself but he had not given up the hope that he still might rise like Lazarus. If he could make a mark for himself as a Republican in that stronghold of Federalism that was Boston, he might have a chance to reform himself. With his reputation

¹⁵⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, June 20, 1809, DWL Papers.

and honor damaged by his scandalous activities in Worcester, with word of his intemperance spreading through Portland, with grist for the rumor mill that extended from Portland to Worcester to Boston, no one doubted that recovery would be an onerous and risky endeavor. Levi clearly saw a move to Boston as a last-ditch attempt to save what was left of his reputation. If successful, Daniel would be redeemed by demonstrating to the world he could be the man he was meant to be. If he failed, a pitiable dishonor would be his legacy. He had to start over again. In June 1810, he moved to Boston.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Yours Affectionately,” Daniel Lincoln in Boston 1810-1811

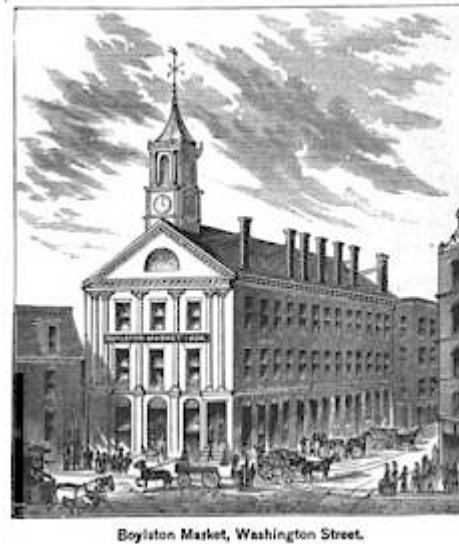


Fig. 9. Boylston Market, Washington Street, Boston Designed by Charles Bulfinch Reprinted from Moses King, *King's Handbook of Boston* (Cambridge, Mass: M. King, 1878), 319.

Boston April 22, 1810

My Dear Brother

I have commenced my professional career in this town, under circumstances apparently propitious. If I am distanced in the course, or rather, if I do not outstrip every competitor for the prize, impute my defeat to defect of talent, not default of effort. The time was, when my friends formed high hopes of me. The present, is my time for their accomplishment. I have always been unhappy, if my mind & heart were unoccupied. The one vacant, I will seek felicity in the eager exertion of my mind & hope to attain it crowned with honor. I shall avoid not only convivial, but social diversions ... society in my library, recreations in business & solitude in the crowd. Pronouncing the petty ambitions of appearing brilliant in the eyes of acquaintance; I will strive to become great in the estimation of my own heart & the world. There will be results from this system, utility to others & advantage to myself.

If I can serve you here, command me. Oblige me by accepting the sash which I have sent to you. Say every kind thing to Martha for me, present assurances of respectful affection to all friends & believe me cordially yours.

*D.W. Lincoln*¹

No one, except perhaps Daniel himself, had much hope that a move to Boston could save him. Friends wrote one another predicting Daniel would succumb sooner rather than later to the ravages of intemperance. “Heaven grant that he may prosper & gratify the fondest wishes of his friends,” wrote Levi Thaxter an old friend of the Lincoln family to John Lincoln. “I do not think myself that Boston is the place for him, particularly as I see no symptoms of returning stability, no evidence of a correction of his former habits.”² Now twenty-six years old, Daniel could choose to stay in Portland, resign himself to failure and drink or find the courage to restore himself as an honorable Republican and attorney in Boston. It would require everything he had to reclaim his reputation and put asunder his disgrace. In the spirit of opportunity and second chances for the determined, Daniel was not yet ready to surrender his future to any enemy.

If Daniel thought the Federalist invective in Portland excessive, it was pabulum compared to the rhetoric that rippled through the home of some of the nation’s most vociferous Federalists.³ In 1810 the town was home to over 33,000 souls and a formidable

¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 22, 1810, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers, Private Collection.

² Levi Thaxter to John Lincoln, April 15, 1810, Box 3, Folder 3, Lincoln Family Papers, American Antiquarian Society (AAS).

³ David Hackett Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism: The Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 187.

Federalist holdout. No matter who was in the White House or the State House, Federalism ruled Boston politically, culturally, and socially. Wealth acquired through generations of world-wide shipping had built a classically beautiful town thanks to the genius of Charles Bulfinch whose State House House (built in 1795 by Daniel's uncle, master craftsman Amos Lincoln), churches, and mansions improved not only the appearance of the town but land values as well.⁴ Boston's elite married each other, did business together, and supported each other however they could. Through their various interconnections they created a closed, conservative, Anglophile, patrician society. They were, as a rule, Harvard men. They funded a number of internal improvements, roads, bridges and wharfs that directed traffic to markets owned by them. They supported philanthropic and charity organizations to aid the indigent, the insane, the sick, and the intemperate. Their public spirit and humanitarian interest had the dual objective of preserving the social order and sustaining their storied history.⁵

Boston's elite abided by rigidly proscribed rules of social decorum and etiquette. They met in gentlemen's clubs for drink and discussion just as they did during their Harvard days. Dinner parties, balls, and cotillions were exclusively Federalist. The social code did not tolerate deviation and those who fraternized outside Federalist circles risked exile.⁶ Young Federalists of Daniel's generation formed literary societies and launched journals such as *The Monthly Anthology* the self-appointed final word on American scholarship and politics

⁴ Harold Kirker and James Kirker, *Bulfinch's Boston 1787-1817* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 113. See also Fredric Cople Jaher, "The Politics of the Boston Brahmins: 1800-1860 Boston 1700-1980," in *The Evolution of Urban Politics* eds. Ronald P. Formisano and Constance K. Burns (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 68.

⁵ Marshall Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy: Federalist Intellectuals and the Shaping of American Culture* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 2001), 135-40.

⁶ Samuel Eliot Morison, *Maritime History of Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 128-9. James Banner, *To The Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 148-9.

and, until 1811, the chief literary conduit for Federalist men of letters in Boston.⁷ Many of the young men who made up these social, literary, and political societies were contemporaries of Daniel's from college. But if Daniel expected an extended hand, he was quickly disappointed. "No professional brother of my acquaintance has favored me with a call since my arrival in town. Bestrew their little souls. Civility to me would not alienate their clients," he grumbled to his Portland law partner and friend, Joseph Pope.⁸

But Daniel did not move to Boston to dance at Federalist cotillions. He moved to Boston to challenge himself in a trial by fire and to set himself above and apart from the Federalist mainstream. The greater Boston's enmity toward him the more aggressively defiant he could be in response. And if he survived it and rose to the top, his estimable credentials would be unquestionable. The more contentious the better, he claimed. Not least Daniel was an elitist turned social pariah. "In the commencement of my professional career in Boston, I apprehended the want of that which most men deprecate as an evil – opposition. My fears were groundless. The pack have opened on me. Their baying will amuse me."⁹

Federalist power had begun to wane at the national level since Jefferson's election in 1800, but Federalist control in Boston lingered another twenty years, longer than almost any where else in the country thanks to the depth and breadth of the elite's collective histories and the willingness of younger Federalists to adapt to changing times.¹⁰ The success of the Jeffersonians elsewhere, however, had made clear the merits of a more outwardly partisan

⁷ Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy*, 72-5. This group later formed the *North American Review* in 1815 which was widely viewed as a voice of Federalism in the post War of 1812 era when political Federalism ebbed and cultural Federalism in the form of social and literary criticism rose. James Savage, one of the charter members of the Anthology Society was in Daniel's Harvard class of 1803.

⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, April 28, 1810, DWL Papers.

⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, May 9, 1810, DWL Papers.

¹⁰ Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism*, 74-5.

approach to politics.¹¹ Younger Federalists saw the necessity of broadening the party's base and were not afraid to do what was necessary to ensure the party's survival, even if it required blatant electioneering that the older, more traditional members thought vulgar.¹² Indeed, between 1810 and 1815, partisan conflict in Massachusetts, and especially in Boston, intensified.¹³

In the spring of 1810 with another gubernatorial election upon them, Boston Federalists were feeling confident. They had Christopher Gore in the state house. The detested Embargo had been lifted the year before permitting a resumption of trade with Asia, India, South America, and the Mediterranean, making the shipping merchants rich again.¹⁴ (Trade restrictions with Britain and France remained in various forms, however, causing tensions to continue to fester between merchants and the federal government.)¹⁵ Levi Lincoln, whose stalwart Republican views many felt had added to the general discord, had declined his party's call to run for the governor's office again, citing his failing eyesight.¹⁶ His withdrawal cleared the way for Republicans to select a less partisan, less radical candidate.

¹¹ Matthew H. Crocker, *The Magic of the Many: Josiah Quincy and the Rise of Mass Politics in Boston 1800-1830* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 10.

¹² Fischer, *The Revolution of American Conservatism*, 33.

¹³ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 112-5.

¹⁴ Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts 1783-1860* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 193.

¹⁵ Macon's Bill Number 2 was designed to stop French and British interference with American shipping. The law read that if England revoked its Orders in Council, America would cease trade with France. Conversely, if France revoked its Berlin and Milan Decrees, England would be the odd country out. The bill became law on May 1, 1810, only a few weeks after Daniel's arrival in Boston and the election of a Republican governor. Prescient Federalists fulminated that the Macon Bill favored France and opened the door to another war with England. Garry Wills, *Henry Adams and the Making of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005), 252 -7.

¹⁶ Marvin Junior Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln, Sr.," (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1969), 197-8.

Republicans found their man in the moderate Elbridge Gerry. Gerry had withdrawn from public life in 1805 but fearing that partisan tumult imperiled the survival of the nation, he was persuaded by his party to reenter the political stage as a kind of political savior.¹⁷ Although Gerry had been the unsuccessful Republican candidate for governor four times earlier, he had never been able to land the governor's office in spite of his impressive political credentials. He had been a delegate to the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence, delegate to the Constitutional Convention (an anti-Federalist, Gerry was one of three delegates who refused to sign the Constitution because he feared the power of the national legislature and because the document lacked a Bill of Rights). He had served in Congress and was an envoy to France in the Adams administration. Throughout his career, he had demonstrated remarkable diligence and independence bordering on the eccentric. He had a reputation for being contrary, capricious, and elitist, believing as did other elite Republicans such as Levi Lincoln, that the talents of the natural elite obligated them to lead the nation.¹⁸ With William Gray, the wealthy Salem ship owner as his Lieutenant Governor, he broadened his appeal to the less partisan merchants. To Republicans, Gerry was a unifier, bringing back to the fold those who strayed during the dark days of the Embargo.

Gerry ran against incumbent Republican Christopher Gore who had lost none of his patrician ways while serving the Commonwealth. An ill-advised tour of the interior of the state viewed from the plush seats of his luxurious carriage, his cold demeanor, and his unabashed elitism (Gore was the richest man in Massachusetts and lived in a splendid

¹⁷ George Athan Billias, *Elbridge Gerry: Founding Father and Republican Statesman* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 311-2.

¹⁸ Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 72-3. See also Mark O. Hatfield and Wendy Wolff, *Vice Presidents of the United States, 1789-1993* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997), 63-8.

mansion in Waltham) did nothing to broaden his base with the average artisan and laborer still recovering from very hard times.¹⁹ Gerry won the election by a little over 2,500 votes out of the over 90,000 cast. The voters also gave Gerry a majority in the House of Representatives but the Senate was equally divided with a particularly vociferous Federalist, Harrison Grey Otis, as President.²⁰ The best way to sway the opposition, decided Gerry, would be as Massachusetts's chief conciliator. The partisan divide would end with him.

In his inaugural address on June 13, 1810, Gerry stressed that unity and impartiality would ensure the nation's survival but as a good Republican he urged his countrymen to support Madison's efforts to preserve peace and prosperity. The House responded enthusiastically, the Senate far less so.²¹ Even among Republicans Gerry's pleas to end partisan rancor was not universally acclaimed. The more radical Republicans, Daniel Lincoln among them, were ill disposed to call a truce to political fighting as long as there was a Federalist alive agitating against them. In 1810 with a Republican in the White House and the State House, Federalists were down but they were far from out.²²

The Fourth of July arrived three weeks after Gerry's inauguration and Republicans were in an ebullient mood. Never before had the political scene been so weighted in their favor. 1810 was time for a Republican Independence Day celebration on a grand scale. Federalists organized parades, orations, and dinners to honor the day since 1763 but as the political climate became more divisive, the celebration was calculated more for political gain

¹⁹ Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 65-8.

²⁰ Gerry won the election by a little more than 1,500 votes statewide. He lost Suffolk County by 854 votes but won Cumberland County in the District of Maine by 79 votes. "Massachusetts State Election for Governor 1810," *A New Nation Votes American Election Returns 1787-1825* http://elections.lib.tufts.edu/aas_portal/view-election.xq?id=MS115.002.MA.1810.00003.

²¹ James T. Austin, *The Life of Elbridge Gerry* (Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1829), 313-4.

²² Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 73-4.

rather than a celebrating a shared national identity. Since 1803 the town observed dueling Independence Day celebrations prepared by rival political camps. As supporters of Jefferson, the author of the Declaration that made the day, Republicans claimed the holiday as theirs. The chorus of independence, liberty, and freedom from tyranny resonated more with dissenting Republicans than Federalists seeking order and stability.²³

In 1806 the Selectmen of Boston (all of whom were Federalist) blocked Republicans from using Faneuil Hall for their festivities, forcing them to celebrate at Copp's Hill instead. The next year Faneuil Hall was again unavailable as it would be the year after that and in perpetuity.²⁴ Frustrated and powerless to wrestle the building away from the Selectmen, in 1808 the Young Republicans of Boston looked across the Charles River to Charlestown. They decided to hold their fete at the bowers of Bunker Hill, where American Patriot blood spilled in the Revolutionary War. In 1809 the event was again held in Charlestown and thereafter became the group's permanent July Fourth venue organized by the new Bunker-Hill Association for that purpose.²⁵ The Association, made up of a number of prominent Republicans such as Benjamin Austin, pledged to promote and encourage "...an emulation in virtue, an imitation of the characters of the patriots, and whatever else, in our opinion may tend to the permanence and strength of our Federal Constitution, and to the common glory and happiness of this united republic."²⁶

²³ Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 9 and 83-119. See David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 205.

²⁴ Len Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 163-5.

²⁵ "Memoranda of Facts The Seven Years Last Past," *Boston Chronicle*, July 5, 1810, 3.

²⁶ *Constitution of the Bunker-Hill Association 1809* (Boston: B. True, Printer, 1809).

For the 1810 celebration the Baptist congregation of the Third Street Meeting House offered their church to the Bunker-Hill Association as the site for the commemorative service and oration. The Meeting House was among the newest of Boston's churches, completed in 1807 and designed by architect Asher Benjamin, a disciple of Charles Bulfinch and practitioner of the Federal style.²⁷

Boston's Baptists were overwhelmingly Republican, finding in the party of Jefferson a home and a path to liberation from the tyranny of the standing order Congregationalists. As dissenters from the established church, Baptists sought a way out of supporting a religious community with whom they found little agreement religiously and politically.²⁸ Their argument with the Congregationalists spanned generations stemming from differences in doctrine, opposition to Congregationalist involvement in state affairs, disagreement over infant baptism, and levying taxes to support established churches.²⁹ For the Bunker-Hill Association and Boston's Young Republicans, the Third Baptist Meetinghouse more than answered their needs. Not only was the church a haven for dissenters who had locked arms with Republicans seeking relief from Federalist tyranny, but the graceful new meetinghouse crowned a neighborhood noteworthy for its Federalist denizens.³⁰ The Baptists built their new church at the corner of Charles and Mount Vernon Streets in Beacon Hill, an area populated by Boston's wealthiest Federalist families, including Harrison Grey Otis who now

²⁷ Kirker and Kirker, *Bulfinch's Boston*, 51.

²⁸ By 1811 dissenting churches could escape payment of taxes if they could prove membership in regular worship, a difficult task for rural Baptist whose clergy were frequently itinerant. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 213-5.

²⁹ Jonathan D. Sassi, *A Republic of Righteousness: The Public Christianity of the Post-Revolutionary New England Clergy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 105-20.

³⁰ Kirker and Kirker, *Bulfinch's Boston*, 142-64.

had to contend with a dissenting congregation just blocks from his gracious Bulfinch-designed house.³¹

For the 1810 celebration, the Bunker-Hill Association Executive Committee invited Daniel Lincoln to deliver the oration. Daniel's selection gave him the perfect opportunity to acquit himself on a large and impressive venue in front of Massachusetts's most powerful Republicans. The invitation might also have come as a favor to Levi Lincoln, who had been a silent partner in the group's formation and as a former governor wielded considerable influence in that body's operation. If Daniel shined at Boston's greatest public celebration of the year; the grandfather of all July Fourth celebrations, Levi's reputation as well as his son's would shine far and wide.³²

A few weeks before the festivities the newly elected governor, Elbridge Gerry, appealed to Daniel to tone down the partisan rhetoric to make good on the unifying promise he made at his inauguration. But Daniel would have none of it. "Intimation from the Gov. has been given to me of his wish that party politics should be avoided in the July 4th oration," Daniel wrote Enoch. "The oration," he vowed, "will be mine."³³ Reminiscent of the battle he waged with Joseph Willard over his commencement poem seven years earlier, Daniel chose defiance over compliance. He would make the most out of the opportunity he was given to stand up for himself, his father, and his party, no holds barred.

Independence Day broke warm and cloudless over Boston Harbor in 1810. The town reverberated with ringing bells and canon fire, echoing between Fort Independence in the

³¹ Travers, *Celebrating the Fourth*, 164.

³² Among Levi Lincoln's papers was a rough draft of the Bunker-Hill Association Constitution that had been sent to him for his approval. Levi Lincoln Papers, Folio Volume 40, Lincoln Family Papers, AAS.

³³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 22, 1810, DWL Papers.

Charlestown Navy Yard and the Heights of Bunker Hill. Crowds lined the streets and waited for Gerry accompanied by a battalion of cavalry to make his way from his home in Cambridge to the State House where he was met by the Bunker-Hill Association and a host of other dignitaries. The Executive Procession that included the orator proceeded to the Third Street Baptist Meeting House under the escort of the Independent Cadets. The crowd that filled the church included five signatories of the Declaration of Independence: Former President John Adams, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, Robert Treat Paine, and the new governor, Elbridge Gerry. Other dignitaries included William Gray (the Commonwealth's new Lieutenant Governor), the Speaker of the House Perez Morton, and the Governor's Council. Although Levi Lincoln's name does not appear separately among the dignitaries listed, he was likely present as a member of the Governor's Executive Council, a position he had been elected to that year.³⁴ Dr. Thomas Baldwin, well-known for his dissenting views and the pastor of the Second Baptist Church, led the assembled in singing "Behold God is my Salvation" followed by passages from scripture, prayers, and several more hymns, one original for the occasion.³⁵

The religious service completed, the congregation settled in to enjoy the day's oration. Expectations ran high. That morning the *Boston Patriot* printed a notice announcing that, "The Orator for the Bunker-Hill Association it is presumed, however stigmatized by the malignancy of Juntoism, will draw as patriotic as honorable, and as valuable, if not as rich an audience as the Orator for the town."³⁶ Looking out on the august and expectant crowd, Daniel seized his moment. "Tyrants beware!" he thundered. "Dare not to invade the sacred

³⁴ Daniel Lincoln, *An Oration, Pronounced at Boston on the Fourth Day of July, 1810 Before the Bunker-Hill Association* (Boston: Isaac Monroe Printer, 1810), 20.

³⁵ *Boston Patriot*, July 4, 1810.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

rights, chartered to Nature's children by Nature's God! Dare not to provoke the vengeance of valor, the indignation of virtue, the anathema of heaven! Restrain the savage myrmidons of thy power from the sacrilegious violation of peace, the prostration of law, the destruction of estate, and the sacrifice of life!"³⁷ It was a bold beginning, veiled in ambiguity and designed to arrest the attention of his audience. "Such were the dictates of reason, ere usurping pride trampled on the prerogatives and immunities of freeman. Such were the arguments of justice, ere legislative voracity wrested from the stubborn hand of labor the wages of toilsome industry. Such were the petitions of loyalty ere wanton cruelty had curdled the mantling blood of kindred affection; or annulled the hallowed obligation of filial submission. Such were the intreaties [sic] of humanity, ere the ministers of royal barbarity were unleashed, ere ruin reveled at his harvest home, or death celebrated his carnival."³⁸ Having commanded the attention of the assembled, Daniel at last named the unholy tormentor.

"England! Be thy unnatural policy accursed! Thy protection of thy western colonies was the oppression of tyranny."³⁹ In 1810 Boston the evocation of things English had compound implications, echoing beyond the traditional meaning associated with the Revolution. The Hamiltonian Federalists of the town long admirers of England, had supported the Jay Treaty, protested, skirted, or evaded the 1807 Embargo, and relentlessly

³⁷ "Without doubt, the abrupt outbreak of the orator prompted the men of power to gaze at him, as the audience involuntarily cast their eyes upon them, desiring to know who were rebuked." James Spear Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852 Comprising Historical Gleanings, Illustrating the Principles and Progress of Our Republican Institutions* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1854), 351; Daniel Lincoln, 3.

³⁸ Daniel Lincoln, 4.

³⁹ Ibid.

attacked Levi Lincoln and other Republicans in the press as faithless Jacobins.⁴⁰ Daniel's object was not to offer an olive branch to the Federalists as Gerry had wanted him to do. Instead he seized the opportunity to publicly disparage, condemn and rebuke those who sympathized with the British, who harassed and impeded Americans on the seas. England's transgressions were legion, he continued, "...trampling on prerogatives and immunities of freeman," "wanton cruelty," pursuing "filicide" a most "unnatural policy," conjuring an image of a demented mother England killing her offspring colonies in a blind and jealous rage.⁴¹ Wherever England ruled, bloodshed and grief followed. This was the scourge of "British connexion" that "strangled Genius in its cradle and hunted virtue and valor to the tomb" and from which America is blessedly absolved thanks to the Constitution that "secured by equal laws the enjoyment of equal rights to every Citizen" and "conscience was left unconfined." With a free press as its safeguard, Americans are taught wisdom and virtue, are educated and enlightened so that they may give their country their full devotion.

So much for England's crimes. Ignoring Gerry's appeal to quiet partisan acrimony, Daniel next aimed his rhetorical guns straight at the Federalists. It was they who were responsible for "party spirit" that had "frozen the heart and paralyzed pulses of love." Where there should be a country rooted in fraternal love, Federalists had sewn fratricide. "Mark the rose dripping with blood; where brother falls beneath a brother's hand; where man is

⁴⁰ Only a few months previous to the oration during the Gerry vs. Gore campaign for governor, the *Boston Gazette* had disparaged Levi Lincoln mercilessly. The writer of a series of sarcastic articles counted Levi Lincoln's accomplishments on the "nail of his thumb" and had dug up the disastrous speech on the sugar case before the Supreme Court. He proceeded to accuse him of whining, of irreligion, of being a poor, inattentive instructor of the law, and disparaged one of Levi's former law students, W.C. White, who had become the laughing stock of Boston for his failed attempt as a playwright. White had preceded Daniel as the 1809 Bunker-Hill Association orator. "The Mirror," *Boston Gazette* February 8, 1810.

⁴¹ Daniel Lincoln, 3-20.

unhumanized and the savage is fleshed in kindred carnage!” He scolded the resisters of the Embargo laws. “Unhappy Nation! Hitherto thy escutcheon, was spotless, as the lily, which no sunbeam has freckled. Thy fame was fair and brilliant as a cloudless morn, until it was blotted with the foul disgrace of factious resistance to authority.”⁴²

International commerce should be promoted but not at the expense of the development of domestic industry. “By removing the necessity of resorting to foreign climes for supplies of the conveniences of life, domestic manufactures promote the real independence of our country; and strengthen the bonds of union between the confederate states, by establishing internal commerce and increasing their mutual reliance,” Daniel declared.⁴³ In 1810 the effects of the Embargo, Federalist pro-British relations, and the increase in the number of Republican artisans in urban areas altered Republican and Federalist attitudes alike on federal support of domestic manufactures, an idea that had been a key point in Alexander Hamilton’s idea for the national economy. Federalist merchants no longer cheered Hamilton’s idea of a national bank providing credit to small producers because they had grown wealthy without domestic competition. This was precisely why Republicans now sought it.⁴⁴

Finally, Daniel acknowledged the debt the nation owed to Jefferson and the embargo that had succeeded in keeping the country at peace while in Europe “...the sword has consumed the people, and a deluge of blood has drenched their fields, and overflowed their polluted streams...” He crowned his oration on a note of American exceptionalism and a

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Daniel Lincoln, 15.

⁴⁴ Lawrence A. Peskin, “How Republicans Learned to Love Manufacturing: The First Parties and the ‘New Economy’” *Journal of the Early Republic*, 22 (2002), 235-62.

passionate vow as a son of the Revolution to defend the principles upon which the republic rested.

The principles of our constitution of government remain unchanged; and so long as they shall endure, and the integrity of the federal union shall continue unimpaired, Americans may rejoice in the freedom, sovereignty and independence of the United States. They shall endure forever. By our brave fathers' memories, by the awful shades of revolutionary martyrs, I swear, they shall endure forever.⁴⁵

The speech concluded, the hymns sung, and the original odes performed, the crowd dispersed throughout Boston for celebratory repasts and parade viewing. Daniel joined the processional back to the State House for a light supper and a magnificent parade through Boston's narrow streets to Charlestown. (Gerry returned to his home in Cambridge for a bipartisan dinner with 100 of the disparate politicians he sought to unify.) Scores of cheering people filled the streets and watched the Washington Infantry lead the Bunker-Hill dignitaries at the head of the procession lead seventeen white horses hauling an enormous model ship named "The United States." Young men carrying flags, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, plows, mechanical machines, and looms "emblematical of the purity of the intentions of the government and symbols of Agriculture, Commerce, and Manufactures" capped the parade. They continued on to Charlestown and Bunker Hill for a celebratory feast, raising their glasses to one another well into the night.⁴⁶ Ebenezer French, the 1805 orator and Inspector of Customs in 1810, toasted the orator. "Well might his enemies endeavour to obstruct his passage to a rostrum. The name of Cicero was not more dreadful to the Catalines

⁴⁵ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁶ "National Birth-Day!" *The Boston Chronicle*, Monday, July 9, 1810; "The Fourth of July," *Boston Patriot*, July 7, 1810.

of Rome than is that of Lincoln to the Essex Junto,” he pronounced.⁴⁷ Later in the evening Gerry and John Adams joined the Association for more toasts and congratulations.

The Federalist parade was more subdued by comparison. It consisted of elected officials, magistrates, and jurists who marched from the Old South Church to Faneuil Hall following an oration delivered by Alexander Townsend. Townsend graduated from Harvard in 1802, a year ahead of Daniel, studied law with Samuel Dexter, and was saddled with a reputation as an uninspired public speaker, a curious choice to go up against Daniel Lincoln.⁴⁸ But then again, the Federalists claimed they did not wish to compete with Republicans over who sponsored the best July Fourth commemoration. Many viewed grand public parades as pandering to the public’s low sensibility and “disregarded stale and trite tricks for popularity, indicating ostentation merely without a presumption of trouble, or a probability of costliness.”⁴⁹ Instead they spread their munificence over Faneuil Hall decorated with three thirty foot monuments (Naval, Military, and Constitutional) and a large portrait of George Washington. Fireworks lit the night sky, to the delight of the 600 people who also attended the free public dinner.⁵⁰

Daniel’s oration thrilled Republicans. Pamphlets of the speech circulated around the city in two editions. “The most severe criticism that can be passed on Mr. Townsend’s oration is to publish it with Mr. Lincoln’s. The long, labored, tedious detail (without any apt figure to relieve the mind) which petrifies every reader of the former, and the lively, copious

⁴⁷“The Fourth of July,” *The Boston Patriot*, July 7, 1810.

⁴⁸ Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators*, 350-5. Townsend owned a hotel in Boston noteworthy for its dreary façade. When people complained that it was an eyesore, Townsend would tell them to go have their eyes examined. According to Loring, Townsend, “was not a popular speaker, more for his uncouth declamatory manner, than for want of forcible argument.”

⁴⁹ “Municipal Celebration of American Independence,” *Boston Gazette*, July 2, 1810.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

display of genius and fancy which animates the reader on the perusal of the latter, must leave impressions of mortification on those who attended the municipal performances of the celebration on the last 4th of July in Boston,” crowed the *Chronicle*.⁵¹ Extensive quotes from the speech appeared in papers throughout New England and as far away as South Carolina and Tennessee.⁵² The Bunker-Hill Association sent a copy of the speech to both the current and former presidents, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, for their enjoyment. No record exists of Madison’s reaction but Jefferson responded by congratulating “the father (Levi Lincoln) on the satisfaction he must have received from a specimen of talent so interesting to him, yourselves, and our common country on the future benefits it promises us. While sentiments like these are felt and approved by Americans, the ark of our freedom rests in safety.”⁵³ Levi must have been greatly gratified. Perhaps Daniel’s move to Boston would reverse the dangerous downward trajectory he had flirted with and launch him into political renown after all.

Not surprisingly there were those who disagreed with the former president’s assessment. The *Harvard Lyceum*, the college’s first literary magazine blasted both Daniel Lincoln and the “uncouth” Townsend. Townsend got the worst of the Lyceum’s invective, but Daniel’s speech, “although not marked with that limping feebleness...is yet as offensive from its noisy rant.” The nameless critic (but likely to have been the magazine’s editor Edward Everett who would later precede Abraham Lincoln in an address at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in 1863) believed Daniel’s speech too irate to be evidence of his deep love of

⁵¹ “Orations,” *Boston Chronicle*, July 5, 1810.

⁵² The database *America’s Historical Newspapers* revealed excerpts or mention of the oration in over fourteen papers throughout the nation.

⁵³ Thomas Jefferson to the Bunker-Hill Association, August 9, 1810. From The Library of Congress, *The Thomas Jefferson Papers Series*. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?mtj:1:/temp/~ammem_W3EB::

country. A real patriot does not prove himself by hating other nations, but by loving his own, the editor opined. So poorly did the magazine view the oration, that it requested that “none so pitiful will ever again insult us in a printed pamphlet.”⁵⁴ In a similar vein, the Federalist newspapers in Boston pointedly ignored Daniel and barely mentioned him at all. Fulsome accounts of Alexander Townsend’s address, the *Harvard Lyceum* notwithstanding, filled the columns instead.

The July Fourth address marked the acme of Daniel’s oratorical career. There are no further references in any correspondence to orations given anywhere else after his 1810 performance. He wanted to make an impression on Boston as a strong, principled Republican, so he risked Gerry’s ire and delivered as partisan a speech as he could muster. To be moderate and conciliatory was to be timid and feckless. His purpose was to dispel any taint of weakness and dependence that his intemperance may have left on his public reputation, as part of his driving ambition to reclaim the admiration of his friends and his family. Daniel positioned himself to be the target for Federalist rebuke, a fearless human lightning rod for Republicanism. And by vilifying Britain as the hated child-eating parent whom he must vanquish, he could retain a positive, unthreatening identification with his actual parent. Britain, not Levi, would be the target of his rage and from whom separation and independence

⁵⁴ “Celebration of American Independence,” in *The Harvard Lyceum* ed. Edward Everett (Cambridge, Mass: Hilliard & Metcalf, 1811), 35. The Lyceum was a short-lived enterprise. It was the first paper published exclusively by Harvard students with the aim of informing the outside community of events and discussions of topics of interest inside the school as well as articles and poems. The magazine appeared only eighteen times. Publication was suspended in 1811 following a terse notice that stated, “The deficiency of our subscription list has made it convenient to our publisher that the present number be the last....” Moses King, *The Harvard Register An Illustrated Monthly* (Cambridge, Mass: 1881), 357-8.

was a life and death matter. Targeting Britain allowed Daniel to be rebel and a patriot, separate but still dutiful and respectful of the “hallowed obligation of filial submission.”

Shortly after his July Fourth performance when his standing with the Bunker-Hill Association was high, Daniel proposed that the association reorganize into a more politically active group. “It is not enough for us to commemorate the achievements of the heroes... This institution will tend to combine the strength of friends of government to give to individual exertions the weight of general measure to produce uniformity of systems in their plans to inspire mutual trust and confidence.”⁵⁵ Daniel believed that the Association could be a “guardian & preserver of public rights... a security against the insidious machinations of domestic enemies, whom the restless spirit of aristocratic pride incites to treason.”⁵⁶ It would be a protector of the nation from “priests of sedition” and “will be permanent as principle & durable as political virtue.”⁵⁷ The refashioned Bunker-Hill Association could be Daniel’s political and fraternal home where he and other like-minded men could discuss, organize, and protest all manner of Federalist iniquities and take an active part in righting their wrongs. But the Association went a different way. It sponsored two more July Fourth celebration in 1811 and 1812 (Daniel was on the committee of Sentiment and Song for the events), after which the group merged with the Young Republicans of Boston, who had renamed themselves the Washington Society.⁵⁸ The Washington Society drafted a constitution portended a broader political purpose beyond the July Fourth observation, just as

⁵⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 13, 1810, DWL Papers.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators*, 362.

Daniel had advocated.⁵⁹ But other than adding a commemoration of Washington's Birthday to its roster and raising funds for a Washington monument to be built in the capitol, the group's political activities never evolved into the activist group Daniel envisioned. Daniel must have felt either disappointed or rebuked because he never joined the society.⁶⁰

The similarly named but very different Federalist Washington Benevolent Society was exactly the kind of political group Daniel had envisioned for Republicans. Less benevolent than political, the Washington Benevolent Society effectively organized its members into committees that canvassed the wards of the city, soliciting new members and promoting Federalist candidates for public office. Like their Republican nemesis, the Washington Benevolent Society celebrated Washington's Birthday and claimed the Farewell Address as its guiding manifesto. But unlike the Republican Washington Society, the Washington Benevolent Society proliferated throughout the state. Their superior organization was instrumental in organizing voters essential to reestablishing Federalist control of Massachusetts in 1812 when Federalist Caleb Strong beat Gerry for the Governor's office.⁶¹ In Worcester, Daniel's uncle Daniel Waldo headed the local chapter.⁶²

Daniel did not dwell on the successes or the shortcomings of the oration after the day had passed. The next year he attended the Bunker-Hill Association oration and service held again at the Third Street Meeting but skipped the Charlestown dinner, claiming that the heat

⁵⁹ *An Historical View of the Public Celebrations of the Washington Society and Those of the Young Republicans from 1805 to 1822 Compiled by order of the Washington Society* (Boston: True and Greene, 1823), 46-7.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* The Washington Society survived until 1833. Daniel Lincoln's name appears nowhere on the group's membership roster.

⁶¹ See Fischer, *Revolution of American Conservatism*, 110-28; Crocker, *Magic of the Many*, 14-23.

⁶² John Brooke, *The Heart of the Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 281.

would undo him.⁶³ To his father he offered a mean critique of the oration given that year by his former best friend Henry A. S. Dearborn. "...a piece of clear fustian, without a thread of classic elegance in the composition....He appeared to have labored in the selection of high toned words to 'split the ears of groundlings with.' Dearborn is an amiable man, but he is not a scholar," a biting appraisal of someone who had only a few months earlier been an especially valued friend.⁶⁴ Perhaps there were other reasons for their disaffection besides Dearborn's marriage and subsequent moving away from Portland, but by 1811 their falling-out seemed complete. Daniel rarely, if ever, mentioned Dearborn in his letters.

During Daniel's first autumn in Boston, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court William Cushing died, an event that had carried great implications for the Lincoln family.⁶⁵ For Cushing's replacement, Thomas Jefferson wasted no time advising James Madison to appoint Levi Lincoln. To Jefferson, Levi Lincoln was the ideal choice because Madison needed not only a staunch Republican but a Republican from New England to swing the court toward a Republican majority while also preserving the geographical balance between Northern and Southern justices.⁶⁶ "The death of Cushing gives an opportunity of closing the reformation by a successor of unquestionable republican principles," Jefferson wrote Madison. "Our friend Lincoln has of course presented himself to your recollection...Lincoln's firm

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, July 4, 1811, DWL Papers.

⁶⁵ Cushing had been urged to hang on to his office in order to prevent a Republican replacement, but it was not to be. Ironically it was Cushing who cited Levi Lincoln's argument in the Quock Walker case that famously ended slavery in Massachusetts some thirty years earlier. Charles Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History Volume One* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1922), 400.

⁶⁶ Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, October 15, 1810. Letter. From Library of Congress, *The James Madison Papers*. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mjm&fileName=26/mjm26.db&recNum=114&itemLink=r?ammem/mjm:@FIELD%28DOCID+@BAND%28@lit%28mjm022060%29%29%29>.

republicanism and known integrity will give compleat confidence to the public in their long desired reformation of their judiciary...”⁶⁷ On October 20, 1810, Madison extended a formal offer to Levi Lincoln to serve on the United State Supreme Court.

In spite of their enthusiasm over the appointment, Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin knew it was unlikely that Lincoln would accept the position. Lincoln had made no secret that the cataracts that had troubled him for years were worsening. He had cited his poor vision as a reason not to seek re-election to the State House in 1810.⁶⁸ At age sixty-one he felt past his prime as a jurist. Nevertheless, Madison and Jefferson knew Lincoln’s loyalty to be incontrovertible and they needed a man whose principles mirrored their own. They did their best to persuade him to accept in spite of his misgivings. Massachusetts Congressman Ebenezer Seaver appealed to Lincoln’s sense of duty and republicanism. “I have long known your attachment to the sweets of retired life but, Sir, do we live only for ourselves are we not bound by the duties we owe society to sacrifice a part of our domestic enjoyments to satisfy their reasonable demands, especially when our talents are all important to their happiness.”⁶⁹ Madison also tried to convince Lincoln to take the job. “I am not unaware of the infirmity which is said to afflict your eyes; but these are not the organs most employed in the functions of a Judge; and I would willingly trust that the malady, which did not unfit you for your late

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Lincoln underwent at least one operation with uneven results. His vision improved, but only marginally and temporarily. Toward the end of his life he was almost completely blind. “In the twilight of a distinguished lifetime, the eyesight of Levi Lincoln, Sr., of Worcester began to dim. Riding along Lincoln Street in his carriage toward his farm, he met a man shooshing a large flock of geese. Their white heads bobbed every which way. Mr. Lincoln mistook them for children. Flinging out a handful of small coin, he said, “Bless you, my children.” Ivan Sandrof, *Your Worcester Street* (Worcester, Mass: Franklin Publishing, 1948), 95.

⁶⁹ Ebenezer Seaver to Levi Lincoln, November, 1810. Letter. Library of Congress, *James Madison Papers*. http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?mjm:1:/temp/~ammem_WBpG::

high and important station, may not be such as to induce a refusal of services which your patriotism will, I am sure, be disposed to yield.”⁷⁰

Even though Lincoln declined, Madison forwarded his nomination to the Senate on January 2, 1811 anyway. The Senate confirmed him the following day and immediately sent Lincoln his commission, perhaps thinking that having the commission in hand would persuade him to take the job. It was not. Lincoln wrote Madison another, more definite letter. “The difficulty of my sight although it has latterly so encreased as to compel me to abandon the use of pen & the examination of books & papers, which is indispensable to the office of a Judge...”⁷¹ The second final letter ended Madison’s efforts to convince, cajole, or harass Lincoln into accepting the position.⁷²

In spite of his age and physical limitations, Lincoln was still not quite ready to relinquish his political life, however. Preferring a role in government closer to home, he served on Gerry’s Executive Council in 1810 and did so again in 1811. During the second term, however, Lincoln spent more and more time in Worcester, finding it progressively difficult to manage his work on the Executive Council as his eyesight worsened. In 1810 Lincoln attended virtually every Executive Council meeting but in 1811 his name rarely

⁷⁰ James Madison to Levi Lincoln quoted in Charles Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History Volume One*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1922), 407.

⁷¹ Levi Lincoln to James Madison, January 20, 1811. Letter. Library of Congress, *James Madison Papers*, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=mjm&fileName=13/mjm13.db&recNum=20&itemLink=D?mjm:4:./temp/~ammem_GJeJ::

⁷² Left without a justice, Madison had difficulty filling the seat. After Lincoln’s refusal, he nominated Alexander Wolcott from Connecticut. Wolcott’s reputation was as an average lawyer but even more partisan than Lincoln. His lack of legal brilliance lost him Republican support. The Senate rejected his nomination by the largest vote for a Supreme Court Justice before or since: 24-9. Madison then nominated John Quincy Adams, but Adams declined too. Finally he nominated Joseph Story, who at thirty-two became the youngest justice on the court. Warren, *The Supreme Court in United States History*, 402-7.

appears in the minutes.⁷³ His signature, unwieldy and sprawling in 1811, had become something quite unlike the tightly controlled hand of even a year earlier.

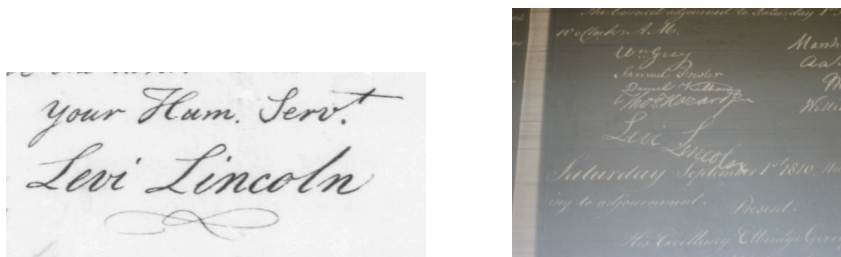


Fig. 10. *Left to Right:* Levi Lincoln's Signature in 1810 and Levi Lincoln's signature in 1811, Photographs by author.

After Levi retired to his Worcester, Daniel's involvement in the family farms grew commensurately. With his father spending more time there, Daniel added the role of agricultural advisor to his roster of expertise. His letters brimmed with suggestions of what kind of seeds and shrubs the family should experiment with. "If no spot has been provided, will it not be expedient to plant pears, cherries, plums & peaches on the onion square by the grapes in rows?"⁷⁴ He sent slips from honeysuckle, cherry, pear and crab apple trees for planting. He sent tomato, eggplant, cauliflower, and cabbage plants. He proposed to drain and restock the fish pond. He wondered about the progress of the grapes, the melons, and squashes. He directed how and when tulip bulbs should be planted for the greatest return of spring colors. "Have you sown the peach stones & pear seeds? Will you have a load of the sand mixed with the soil for a bed of radishes? Plaster of Paris strown on the peas will accelerate their growth. You will find the use of that manure very beneficial in the garden.

⁷³ State Archives Series GC3/327 Executive Records of the Governor's Council 1650-1977, 36:26. Massachusetts Archives Collection, Massachusetts State Archives.

⁷⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 19, 1811, DWL Papers.

Beans & potatoes should be planted in the hog lane,” typified the directives he dispatched to Worcester.⁷⁵ From Boston he also acted as a livestock broker to “gentlemen of estate” interested in purchasing saddle horses and bulls raised on the Lincoln farms. More than an effort to please his father, Daniel’s “passion for agriculture” surpassed his interest in law and was much more in keeping with his identity as a man of sensitivity, keenly attuned to the natural functions of the world.⁷⁶ But in early nineteenth century Massachusetts, even bucolic pursuits had their political side.

Levi Lincoln chose “The Farmer” as his nom de plume because to be a republican producer of food and sustenance carried shades of the virtuous early Roman hero and farmer Cincinnatus. Thomas Jefferson aspired to protect and expand farming as an essential part of the republican ideal.⁷⁷ For the elite Federalist merchants who lived in grand mansions, wore expensive clothing, and enjoyed the finer comforts of life, farming was often more pastime than vocation. Many came to it in retirement, looking to enhance their public image by offering stewardship to the practical farmer by the way of agricultural societies. They solicited non-elite farmers to become members, but when rebuffed as patronizing and out of touch with the realities of daily farm life, the gentleman farmers closed ranks. The agricultural societies became not unlike their political and literary societies except as agriculturalists they discoursed on seeds rather senators or sonnets.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 11, 1811, April 8, 1811, DWL Papers.

⁷⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 14, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁷⁷ Tamara Platkins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 2-4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55-6. The following generation of gentleman farmers shifted their emphasis to commerce rather than cultivation as the innovation to agriculture. They viewed farmers without the romance of classic republicanism but rather as middling providers of exportable goods.

Levi Lincoln may have appeared to be another elite landowner looking to bolster his private identity as a civically responsible man and agricultural reformer, but in fact, Levi had always been a farmer as had his father before him.⁷⁹ His drive to expand the farms and experiment with crops from the beginning was designed more for profit than appearances. Besides breeding livestock (horses, cattle, and hogs) and growing fruit trees and vegetables mostly for personal consumption, Levi was among the first in Worcester County to breed Merino sheep for domestic textile manufacturing. By 1811, Lincoln had invested heavily in sheep, keeping a flock of nearly 500 head, chiefly for fleece.⁸⁰

Merino sheep had been imported from Spain as early as 1793, but not until cut off from British textiles during the Embargo did agriculturalists pay much attention to its potential pecuniary benefits. After 1809 when the Embargo ended, Merino imports to New England soared. Agricultural societies spread the “Merino contagion” by offering high prices for Merino sheep. Although Republicans had concentrated on developing cotton mills during the embargo, after trade restrictions were lifted anyone who could afford to get in on the wooly excitement of a Merino boom, did.⁸¹

From Boston Daniel negotiated the price of imported sheep for the farms and blamed the competitive Bostonian gentlemen farmers for driving up the cost. “I have been in treaty for 44 Merino sheep to be taken on shares,” he reported. “The price of Merino sheep lately

⁷⁹ Ibid., 108. The Worcester Agricultural Society was formed in 1819 by the elder Levi Lincoln and Levi Lincoln, Jr., in combination with his uncle, Daniel Waldo, Jr. and friend, Edward Bangs. Moynihan, *History of Worcester*, 122.

⁸⁰ Richard B. Lyman, “‘What Is Done in My Absence?’ Levi Lincoln’s Oakham, Massachusetts, Farm Workers, 1807-20,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 999 (1989), 162-166.

⁸¹ Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen*, 92-3. The shared interest in textile manufacturing worked to smooth over partisan hostility, especially after 1812. Brooke, *Heart of the Commonwealth*, 283-91.

imported is indeed exorbitant. The vanity of some wealthy idiots to be considered agriculturalists has induced them to give prices so excessive as to be remarkable.”⁸² A year later, in 1811 with the sheep contentedly ensconced in Worcester and interbreeding with the existing flock, Levi was hoping to cash in on his investment. Daniel agreed it looked like a good bet. “I rejoice with you in the hope that the hills of the Oakham farm shall appear like the billows of ocean furnished with the curly whiteness of the storm.”⁸³

Daniel’s heart may have been on the farms in Worcester but his livelihood was still in Boston. It was as a lawyer, not as a farmer, that he needed to establish himself. Accordingly, he moved his office from 79 State Street to a better address: the second floor of the Old State House. Once there he opened his doors to anyone who needed legal counsel including ordinary, unremarkable people who found themselves in trouble. Among his surviving legal papers are the arguments written on sundry scraps of paper, replete with doodles and omissions, cross-outs and meanderings that break off without conclusions. Many are untitled and undated. Many contain initials instead of names. Many are works in progress. But in all of them, Daniel put his poetic talents to use so to evoke the sympathy and understanding of his juries.

Daniel presented his clients not as hapless lawbreakers, but essentially good people who stumbled on their fallibilities and weaknesses. In them he could also see himself. A young vagrant who fenced stolen goods was too young and impressionable at “scare manhood, the period of credulity...when judgment is in its state of pupilage, when the affections are glowing & the heart is so fraught with benevolence & confidence, that there is no room for another sentiment...” He was far too young to know better and was “like a bird that first

⁸² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 25, 1810, DWL Papers.

⁸³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 8, 1811, DWL Papers.

fluttered from its nest...he was the easy dupe of the deceiver. This has been his misfortune rather than his crime.”⁸⁴ A baker (Mr. G), accused of purloining a patented bread recipe from a Mr. Pettibone must be found not guilty because “it is a question whether the defendant shall be deprived of the fruits of his laborious industry...Mr. G has through life exercised the trade of baker & labors in his vocation in season & out of season ignorant of Mr. P, his patent & his bread...It is proved on trial that he did in fact make bread...& miserably perishes in prison for a biscuit.”⁸⁵ A thieving girl was led astray by her older sister and should be regarded as more victim than villain. “A child like this that could not be so mature in villainy as to have invented a systematic falsehood & sworn to it under the awful solemnity of an oath against the feelings of her nature.”⁸⁶ A ship’s captain, a “man of feeling,” had been provoked into violence in a “mere ebullition of momentary passion” by an inflammatory provocation. “No man who retained the breath of life in his frame, no one who possessed the least degree of sensibility could have refrained...”⁸⁷ A dull Irishman by the name of Mars was accused of attempted burglary but actually only sought a warm place to sleep. “The emerald of the ocean has reflected no beam of heaven on his mind for it is questionable if he possesses sufficient intelligence to qualify him for a criminal....When the bustle of the day had ceased he laid down beneath the window of Mr. _____’s house and slept pillowed by the pavement and blanketed with the night dew...though a Lazaretto might as well be mistaken for a dean of thieves as this paralytic for a burglar.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ *Commonwealth v. George Robinson*, DWL Papers.

⁸⁵ Untitled legal argument, DWL Papers.

⁸⁶ *Commonwealth v. Ellen Janson*, DWL Papers.

⁸⁷ *Commonwealth v. Libby*, DWL Papers

⁸⁸ *Commonwealth v. Mars*, DWL Papers.

Daniel's shaped his defense to appeal to the better, more forgiving nature of the juries to overcome their prejudices and to view these flawed people not as evil, but unfortunate, weak, and misguided. Keenly sympathetic to his client's human foibles, he identified with their missteps and failures. Just as he had asked his family and friends to judge him with compassion and understanding, he asked his juries to find generosity and understanding in their hearts as well. But it was a tangled business for Daniel to identify with his client's sufferings. On the one hand he availed them to his education and experience but on the other, their circumstances wore him down. "Attendance at Courts in guarding a meager & starving list of penniless clients has murdered imagination in me," he confessed to Enoch.⁸⁹

In addition to the demands of his practice in Boston, several cases pending before the Supreme Judicial Court in Maine required Daniel to travel back to Cumberland County, a perilous undertaking due to poor roads and crude accommodations along the way. On one such excursion, Daniel was forced to forge his way through "girth deep" mud until finally reaching Wells Beach to spend the night at "a dirty, cold & comfortless hovel." In an unusually humorous, if not caustic letter, he told Enoch of coming upon his slovenly innkeeper perched on a chair as a "spoonful of applesauce would lie on the floor." His pillow felt like "a bundle of knotted switches, bound up in sackcloth." Barking dogs kept him awake all night sounding like "jackals howling around over their prey.... Thank Heaven I have escaped & lived to tell of it."⁹⁰

One of Daniel's more high profile cases in Cumberland County concerned the Postmaster of Portland, James Wingate, whose brother, Joshua Wingate, Jr., married Henry A. S. Dearborn's sister, Julia. Daniel would have been well acquainted with James Wingate

⁸⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 15, 1811, DWL Papers.

⁹⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 4, 1810, DWL Papers.

through his friendship and partnership with his brother-in-law. Wingate had been chief clerk in the War Department to the elder General Dearborn, Levi Lincoln's compatriot in the Jefferson Administration. Patronage benefited the Wingate family enormously when family members received key appointments through their connection to Jefferson via Dearborn.

Wingate's legal troubles started when a man named Ward accused Wingate of embezzling money from a letter destined for Boston he had mailed from Gardiner. The letter had passed through Wingate's Portland post office where, Ward believed, the money had been lifted. Daniel argued that Ward sought only to slander Wingate because it was impossible to prove that it was he, and not another postmaster had handled the letter. Wingate's spotless reputation won him the confidence of the government and his community, argued Daniel, and he would not betray "his name to disgrace, his person to punishment and his soul to damnation by a violation of his oath of office, by transgression of laws of society and of God..."⁹¹ Wingate continued in the postmaster's office until 1815.

The Wingate Case paled in comparison to Daniel's largest, most complicated, and most contentious legal undertaking: the Brown Claim and Massachusetts's Eastern Land Claim Commission. In 1810, Judge George Thatcher of the Supreme Judicial Court and good friend to the proprietors ordered a survey of the Brown Claim, a vast area in Lincoln County Maine that included Bristol, Nobleborough, Jefferson, and part of Newcastle.⁹² The claim dated from 1625 when John Brown paid Captain John Somerset (thought also to be the famous Indian Samoset) fifty beaver skins for a tract of land stretching from the coast to some

⁹¹ Ward versus Wingate, DWL Papers.

⁹² Francis Greene, *History of Boothbay, Southport, Boothbay Harbor, Maine 1623-1905* (Portland, Me: Loring, Short & Harmon, 1906), 164; *Resolves of the General Court of Massachusetts Passed and Begun at the Session Holden in Boston, On the Twenty-Ninth Day of May in the Year of Our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eleven*, (Boston: Adams Rhoades, 1811), 232.

twenty-five miles inland approximating 100,000 acres.⁹³ Brown, however, was not the only one to benefit from Somerset's largess. Somerset deeded the same land over and over to several other claimants as well. Brown sold parcels of his claim to other great proprietors, including Samuel Waldo and Charles Vaughn. Adding to the confusion, many of these later claimants waited almost 100 years before officially recording the deed with the Commonwealth. To make matters even worse, in 1748 the Boston courthouse and all the ancient Indian deeds inside it burned to the ground.⁹⁴ Indian deed or no Indian deed, in the seventy year interim, proprietors casually wrote new deeds to one another without benefit of surveys and boundaries. As time went on, the accuracy of the claims became vaguer and vaguer. Non-resident descendents sold tracts of land they had never seen.⁹⁵

The success of the settlers who came into the area following the revolution revived the claimant's interest in their property if only to force the settlers to purchase their tracts before another competing proprietor showed up and demanded the same thing.⁹⁶ Settlers, never sure when the next proprietor would appear with an outstretched hand, grew alarmed when a suit by a Brown claimant opened the way for Judge George Thatcher to order a survey; the first volley in the new battle between proprietors and settlers. This time, however, local farmers would not passively watch surveyors carve up their property. About sixty men confronted the surveyors and offered to relieve them of their surveying instruments and more unless they vacated immediately.⁹⁷ The surveyors, wisely valuing their lives as well as their instruments, retreated. Ready for a fight, Judge Thatcher called out 500 of the state militia to shut down the

⁹³ John Johnston, *A History of the Towns of Bristol and Bremen in the State of Maine Including the Pemaquid Settlement*, (Albany, N.Y.: John Munsell, 1873), 464.

⁹⁴ Greene, *History of Boothbay*, 165.

⁹⁵ Johnston, *A History of the Towns of Bristol*, 473.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 478.

⁹⁷ Greene, *History of Boothbay*, 170.

farmer rebellion. His strong-armed response fizzled when the militia, many of them local men, came face to face with their neighbors and their loyalty to distant civic authorities quickly evaporated. However sweet the victory, the settlers understood that this was but one small triumph in what could be for them a disastrous war. They needed heftier allies. Accordingly, they dispatched a delegation to the General Court for relief from future proprietary suits.⁹⁸

Luckily for the settlers, Federalist George Thatcher was a judge and not governor of the Commonwealth; Republican Elbridge Gerry held that honor. Almost immediately upon receiving the settler's resolution, Gerry ordered a commission to investigate the situation in Lincoln County, partly motivated by Gerry's wish to undermine Thatcher's influence there. The commissioners arrived in Bristol, Maine in late April 1811. They spent three weeks gathering information and depositions from all involved parties. In their final recommendation to Gerry, they urged the Commonwealth to establish yet another commission to untangle the knot of claims once and for all rather than revert to the expensive and time-consuming practice of innumerable separate trials between proprietor and settler. Under the terms of the new commission, all claimants would release their titles and abide by the decision of the commissioners.⁹⁹ Upon receiving the recommendation, Gerry acted quickly and established the Eastern Land Claims Commission with three disinterested non-Massachusetts residents as commissioners.¹⁰⁰

Fifty-five of the more than one hundred proprietors involved in the dispute traced their claim through the great proprietor Samuel Waldo who had bought his parcel from a Brown

⁹⁸ Taylor, *Liberty Men*, 227.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 236.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 228.

descendant in 1733. (Waldo was the original holder of the Waldo patent another deed totaling thirty-six squares over 576,000 acres on Maine's northeastern frontier.) These Waldo descendants enlisted Daniel W. Lincoln to represent them to the commission. They chose wisely. For one thing, Daniel had had experience with land claim disputes when he represented the settlers in the Pejeboscot claim while Cumberland County Attorney. He understood the knotty issues of the competing claims. But more importantly, Daniel was one of them. Through his mother he too was a distant cousin of Samuel Waldo.¹⁰¹ If it was difficult for Daniel as a Republican who once represented the settlers and curried favor with them to promote Republican candidates in Maine to now represent the landholders, he made no mention of it. It had been the tide of Republican support that had prompted the small farmers to make their claims against the proprietors to begin with, a position Daniel had championed. But as the son of a large property holding Republican and Waldo descendant himself, he showed no pain or moral qualms on taking on the cause of the settler's nemeses.

Besides, the Brown claim was a boon to Daniel's pocketbook. These were no "penniless clients" but a group of people who could pay him well. Daniel, with Enoch assisting him, spent the next year and a half (from April 1811 to January 1813) taking affidavits and depositions, copying land deeds, gathering birth certificates, death certificates, and marriage certificates from courthouses, parishes, lawyer's offices, and private homes to prove his client's legitimate connection to the lost Indian deed. He attended all the

¹⁰¹ Samuel Waldo was Daniel Waldo Lincoln's fourth cousin, twice removed. In other words, Samuel Waldo was Daniel Waldo's great grandfather's (Cornelius Waldo's) first cousin. See Daniel Waldo Lincoln, *Genealogy of the Waldo Family* (Worcester, Mass: Charles Hamilton, 1901).

Commission's hearings in Maine and Massachusetts.¹⁰² In January 1813, after months of meetings, the Commission issued its ruling. None of the Brown claimants were entitled to compensation of any kind, nor would they be in the future. "We have received and considered the evidence adduced, and have no hesitation in saying that the claimants, against whom we have awarded, have (with a single exception) no claim, even on this broad ground.... neither they nor any of them... have had either in law or equity, any title to any lands under their respective claims, and within the boundaries thereof, and situate within the towns aforesaid, or any of them."¹⁰³ With that, the commissioners extinguished forever all claims in Maine based on ancient non-existent Indian deeds.

Daniel may have proven his clients' connection to old John Brown as best he could, but there was nothing he could do to prove the authenticity of an ancient lost deed upon which everything depended. Only deeds drafted in England that were traceable and recorded received land compensation and those belonged only to the Kennebec proprietors. For those who settled within the boundaries of the Brown claim, however fluid that may have been, the Commonwealth granted settlers deeds to their property at fire sale prices of thirty cents an acre. The proprietors received nothing. The Commission's decision nullified the stipulation that the proprietors be indemnified through a granting of other territory in Maine to compensate for losses. If the Commission's decision disappointed or embarrassed Daniel, he

¹⁰² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 21, 1811, November 15, 1811, March 19, 1812, March 21, 1812, March 29, 1812, March 30, 1812, May 6, 1812, May 7, 1812, January 8, 1813, DWL Papers; Eastern Land Papers, Series 89X, 90 X, 92X, Massachusetts Archives Collection, Massachusetts State Archives.

¹⁰³ "Award of the Commissioners for determining the rights of Claimants to Lands in the County of Lincoln, Boston, 26th January 1813," *Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Passed at the Several Sessions of the General Court Holden in Boston Beginning 26 May 1812, and Ending on 2nd March 1815* (Boston: Russell Cutler, 1815), 182-7. The exception was William Vaughn whose repeated efforts to improve the land for the benefit of the settler's community were duly noted by the commissioners.

hid it well. The only mention he made of the Brown claim after the decision was in reference to getting his fair payment for his labor which eventually was paid in full.

With his father on Gerry's Executive Council, his reputation in Boston auspiciously begun with the July Fourth oration, and his practice thriving, Daniel's interest in the political machinations of his adopted city remained great in the winter and spring of 1811. That winter politics fomented around ratable polls, or who would be counted to determine representation in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Gerry's incorporation of ninety new towns in western Massachusetts and Maine threatened to overpower the Federalist representation from the maritime districts.¹⁰⁴ In an attempt to redress the issue, overzealous Federalist assessors counted aliens or non-citizens and children. The veracity of the polls had been doubted from the start but did not come to a head until one Edward Proctor officially protested the election. In support of Proctor, Daniel drafted a petition to the General Court arguing against the legitimacy of the election. "With extreme diffidence I appear to question grey hairs & to charge honorable age with swearing an undeserved dignity. We respect the personal worth, talents & character of the gentlemen who claim seats as members in this house, but we do not acknowledge them to be duly representatives & constitutionally elected; we cannot & we will not submit in silence to the usurpation of the metropolis by which the civil rights of the citizens throughout the commonwealth have been infringed," he wrote.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Republican officers were prepared to resign their commissions if the General Court did not rectify the issue.

The Republican committee hearing the remonstrance ruled the polls invalid, but the Federalist justices on the Supreme Judicial Court reversed their decision. "Ratable polls of

¹⁰⁴ Banner, *To the Hartford Convention*, 286-8.

¹⁰⁵ "Ratable Polls Controversy," DWL Papers.

aliens may constitutionally be included in estimating the number of ratable polls to determine the number of representatives any town may be entitled to elect,” Federalist Supreme Judicial Court justices Theophilus Parsons, Samuel Sewall, and Isaac Parker wrote ¹⁰⁶ The Federalists may have lost the General Court and the State House, but they continued to dominate the judiciary as they always had. Federalist interpretation of the law remained in trusted hands no matter what laws the Republican General Courts passed.

Gerry, who had publicly offered himself as a conciliator wishing to bridge the political crevasse in Boston, moved slowly to fill patronage positions during his first term so as not to unnecessarily rile his tenuous relationship with Federalists. Daniel thought Gerry’s concessions to non-partisanship revealed timidity, not statesmanship. Gerry socialized with Federalists, attended the inauguration of the new Harvard President John Kirkland, and accepted from that bastion of Federalist tradition an honorary degree. Gerry’s fraternization with the enemy augured heresy to Daniel. “It appears to be the destiny of Republicans to toil in vain & spend their strength for naught...Why do Republican candidates prevailing, lay aside the character of patriot as well as of private citizen when they assume the governor? Instead of the emphatic tone of undoubted confidences, you hear from him the senseless, whining cant of conciliation, moderation, forbearance, impartiality & policy...disgusting his electors by the demonstration of pusillanimity The Republican Party will sink in listlessness and apathy and die in lethargy,” he dourly predicted.¹⁰⁷ Daniel’s search for likeminded Republicans who shared his political ideology had been disappointing. He had hoped the Bunker-Hill Association would coalesce into an activist organization. It did not.

¹⁰⁶ Luther S. Cushing, *Reports of Controverted Elections in the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from 1780 to 1852* (Boston: White & Potter, 1853) 90-6, 117-24.

¹⁰⁷ Daniel Lincoln to John W. Lincoln, August 8, 1810, DWL Papers.

He had hoped Gerry would be an intrepid Republican leader. He was not. Moreover, he had expected another high profile political appointment. It had not appeared.

In February 1811, a business trip to Washington granted Daniel a reprieve from his daily Boston travails. It would be his most ambitious journey and the farthest he would travel from Massachusetts. (Unfortunately, Daniel never specified the nature of the business that brought him there.) His journey took him through New York and Philadelphia by a rickety mail coach and across the frozen Delaware River by sleigh to Baltimore. With the exception of some of the public buildings in New York and the Academy of Fine Arts and the Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia, the great Eastern cities failed to impress him. Washington, then under construction and little more than an oasis in a swamp, was deplorable. He found the nation's capital an appalling "corporation of bushes & brambles."¹⁰⁸ Supplied with a letter of introduction from his father to James Madison, the Washington elite opened their doors to Daniel. "My son, Daniel Waldo Lincoln, journeying from Boston to the seat of government on business & desirous of paying his respects to the President of the United States will avail himself of the delivery of this letter as an introduction for that purpose," wrote Levi to the president.¹⁰⁹

Washington offered Daniel all the social perquisites that Boston denied him. Madison invited him to the White House for a levee and a dinner party that Daniel found most agreeable. The president impressed Daniel as "dignified" and Mrs. Madison as "easy & playful and in appearance voluptuous."¹¹⁰ Not incidentally, Daniel particularly enjoyed the attentions of some beautiful Southern women whose "beauty glows at a glance & melts upon

¹⁰⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, February 24, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Levi Lincoln to James Madison, February 15, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, February 26, 1811, DWL Papers.

a smile” unlike their Northern sisters who were as cold “as the icicles that hang from Dian’s temple.”¹¹¹ (“Dian” was his favorite mare.) All was brilliant in Washington, as long as he remained indoors in the company of handsome, engaging people. “You forget yourself & the desert around you in the dazzling splendor of the drawing room & enjoy a pleasing delirium of fancy in the contemplation of the Graces & Loves who throng it. Step out of the door & you are in the reclaimed wilds, rude & uncultivated as when the hand of nature threw the shreds of creation from her lap & left them on this spot unregarded & abandoned.”¹¹² To satisfy his interest in the workings of government, Daniel attended a session of Congress when John Randolph and John Eppes spent eighteen hours debating the non-intercourse bill. Randolph, a conservative Republican from Virginia violently opposed the measure. Thwarted and offended by Randolph’s tirades, Eppes who had introduced the bill, resorted to challenging Randolph to a duel. The exhausted Randolph (whom many thought was drunk) still managed to deliver an oratorical performance Daniel admired as “impetuous as low lightning of heaven & almost as awful too.”¹¹³

Daniel stayed in Washington only three days. On his return trip, circumstances forced him to endure the indignity of arriving in Hartford, Connecticut on a Saturday evening. The state’s blue laws forbade any travel on the Sabbath thereby marooning Daniel in a sea of rock-ribbed Federalist clergy, the same group whom Levi had so caustically eviscerated in his *Farmer’s Letters* and whom Daniel had frequently reproached as hypocrites. For a full day Daniel was forced to bide his time reading sermons such as “Warning to Sinners” and “The

¹¹¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, February 28, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹¹² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 1, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹¹³ Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America during the Administrations of James Madison*, 5th edition, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1986), 244; Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, February 28, 1811, DWL Papers.

Saint's Everlasting Rest." He covered his ears to mute the tolling of the church bells with its "sanctimonious cant." "I am as impatient to return home as a bridegroom on honeymoon," he grumbled to Enoch. "I will not obey the summons of superstition or hypocrisy to participate in their fooleries, mockeries, or blasphemous ceremonies of observances. Bending the knee, whining through the nose, are not acceptable service to the Most High; but the great devotion of the heart, the profound sentiment of the soul, are the worship he deigns to approve."¹¹⁴ Monday arrived right on time, releasing him from his Connecticut perdition. At first light Daniel resumed his trip.

Back in Boston, Elbridge Gerry and Christopher Gore were gearing up for a rematch in the April 1811 election. Federalists had endured all they could stand from Jacobin Republicans, even those as conciliatory as Gerry had initially tried to be. Madison had instituted another Non-intercourse Act in February that forbade British ships from entering American ports but permitted American ships to go to Britain until Britain repealed the Orders-in-Council. (This was the bill Daniel had heard debated between Eppes and Randolph a few weeks earlier.) American merchants would have to wait years longer to receive British goods, if they ever received them at all. But because the law affected fewer people, it remained in place with fewer protests.¹¹⁵ Boston merchants, however, choked on the law.

On the eve of the election at a rally at Faneuil Hall, Federalist electors adopted a series of resolutions comparing Gerry to the tyrannical colonial England and themselves to the valiant patriots of 1776. Jefferson and Madison had trampled on their rights with the Embargo and Non-Intercourse acts, confirming their suspicions that Republicans were more interested

¹¹⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 10, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁵ Herbert Heaton, "Non Importation, 1806-1812," *Journal of Economic History*, 2 (1941): 194.

in punishing Massachusetts merchants than saving the nation from British depredations. They stamped the Virginians as incompetent, corrupt, and anti-commerce. The only salvation for the nation lay in electing Federalists who would join with Great Britain to defeat Bonaparte once and for all.¹¹⁶

With the exception of delivering partisan speeches to groups of Republicans or “declaiming the caucuses,” Daniel sat out the 1811 election while partisan electioneering rose to new heights. He had been disgusted with what he viewed as Gerry’s incompetence and had decided to punish Gerry by withholding his imprimatur. He would not campaign actively against Gerry, but he would not publicly support him either. In spite of his non-involvement in the election, Daniel railed against zealous, lying Federalists who would go to any length to win the contest. Once again, Daniel looked to his principles to guide him through the thicket of political muckraking.

Federalists marshal again for the contest the stale slanders which have been refuted, the falsehoods that have been expressed, the implications that have been detected, the arguments that have been controverted....The old fable of French influence may not be pretermitted by those wiseacres in politics, those shrewd and sagacious statesmen who can discern French influence in a ragout & discover the finger of Napoleon in a Christmas pye....I will not vote for Gerry, but will vote against Federalists & according to my own principles....Men are often capricious & always transient, they may change & must perish; but principles founded in truth & justice are immutable & eternal as the throne of God.¹¹⁷

The Federalist resolutions failed to elect Gore partly because the call for nullifying the Non-Intercourse Act suggested sedition to many voters. Gerry won re-election by a little more

¹¹⁶ *Boston Gazette*, March 24, 1811.

¹¹⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 29, 1811.

than 3,000 votes, a slightly wider margin than the previous year.¹¹⁸ In his second inaugural address he forcefully denounced the Federalist leadership as criminal and possibly treasonous.¹¹⁹ With his fighting words echoing through Boston, Gerry no longer looked for invitations to Federalist soirees nor could he expect more honors from Harvard. With the gloves off, the conciliatory demeanor shed and backed by a majority in both houses, Gerry the partisan Republican replaced Gerry the Conciliator. He started his second term with a powerful, if not vindictive, agenda meant to pry away the Federalist grip on power. No better place to leave his Republican mark than by settling the question of whether or not dissenting church associations operating outside the established church should receive corporate privileges.¹²⁰

In the Religious Freedom Act of 1811 Congregational Calvinism remained the established church but the new law provided protection for dissenters, even those whose church was unincorporated.¹²¹ Those who filed certificates of membership in a different sect exempted them from supporting the established church. In one bill, Gerry expanded religious freedom to all citizens while simultaneously delivering a devastating blow to established Federalist clergy.¹²² Gerry next extended manhood suffrage in town elections to everyone but paupers.¹²³ He chartered the State Bank to be managed by Republican shareholders since Federalists controlled all the existing banks. He dissolved the Court of Common Pleas and revived the Court of Sessions that had been abolished by Christopher Gore in 1809 and filled

¹¹⁸ Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 74.

¹¹⁹ Austin, *Life of Elbridge Gerry*, 331.

¹²⁰ Johann N. Neem, "The Elusive Common Good Religion and Civil Society in Massachusetts, 1780-1833," *Journal of the Early Republic* 24 (2004), 396-8.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts*, 165. The Congregational Church in Massachusetts was not officially disestablished until 1833.

¹²³ A poll tax was required to vote in other town affairs. Billias, *Elbridge Gerry*, 317.

it with Republican appointments. As much as he may have wanted to, Gerry could not dismantle the Supreme Judicial Court which had always been the bastion of Federalist power.

After the courts and the church, Gerry pursued Federalist newspaper editors for libeling him for innumerable specious if not scathing articles that appeared in the weeks preceding the election. Ninety new towns were incorporated increasing the number of representatives to the General Court. When Gerry oversaw a clumsy redistricting meant to ensure a lasting Republican majority in the state legislature, the Federalist press grabbed the opportunity to publicly skewer him in a political cartoon likening the redistricting to a monstrous salamander. The term “gerrymander” stuck and won for the opposition the last word on the controversy.¹²⁴ Perhaps Gerry overly compensated for losing the ratable poll controversy that saddled him with a crop of Federalists from Boston who fought him at every turn.



Fig. 11. “The Gerry-Mander” by Gilbert Stuart. Reprinted from the *Boston Centinel*, March 26, 1812.

During the summer of 1811 as political cacophony roiled Boston, Daniel’s resolve to be forever temperate dissolved once more. He admitted to his family he had had a bout of “bilious fever” that left him feeling “languid and feeble” for several days sometime in late

¹²⁴ Ibid, 339-42.

June and early July.¹²⁵ But Daniel's bilious condition was not the result of a fever, but a binge. Word of his slip soon made its way back to Worcester. His parents responded with relief that the episode was over but were deeply troubled that it had occurred at all. "I received your congratulations on my resurrection with pleasure," Daniel wrote his mother. "I shall never go back into the same grave again. I shall be proud in deserving your commendations 12 months hence & very happy in promoting the felicity of my parents."¹²⁶ In a flurry of outlandish if not inspired grandiosity, he offered his unconvinced mother the opportunity to cheer his deliverance rather than grieve his profligacy. He was her prodigal son and should be celebrated. "As to my resolutions, I require no additional motive to confirm, no further inducement to affect them...The return to Nature & to virtue is easy & like the return of the prodigal to his paternal home, may be attended with compunction & regret for past errors, but it will be greeted with delight & crowned with rejoicing."¹²⁷

In a pre-emptive move designed to head off the parental admonitions he anticipated, Daniel enumerated the ways "nervous stimulation" undermined his ambitions. He knew better than anyone the deleterious outcome of too much drinking. "It paralyzes the energies of the mind, petrifies the pulses of the heart & murders the charities of social intercourse, the sympathies of friendship & the sensibilities of love." Daniel understood that he was not unlike his feckless clients whose greatest failings were their human weakness. He begged for understanding to escape their bruising reprimands. Believing his addiction lay in his stomach rather than his psyche, Daniel wrote to his father, "O that nature might quit us of this

¹²⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 25, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹²⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Waldo Lincoln, July 12, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹²⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Waldo Lincoln, July 15, 1811, DWL Papers.

overbearing burden/this tyrant-God the belly! Take that from us/with all its bestial appetites & man/Exonerated man shall be all soul.”¹²⁸

On his now well-trod route to reestablishing his standing with his parents, Daniel reported to them that he pointedly eschewed social events such as the “feast of shells” at Squantum, an annual celebration honoring Boston’s Indian past. It was not enough for Daniel to recognize that such an occasion presented temptations hard to ignore (copious imbibing) in a “confusion of mixed companies.” He needed to denigrate the event as “a puppet show” that offered “no improvement.” He preferred the company of dead philosophers who could offer “sympathy of feeling” found only “among the religious of learning.”¹²⁹ When Boston merchants closed their shops for the annual commencement ceremonies at Harvard, Daniel spurned the event by contemptuously and haughtily disparaging the participants.

Is devotion to letters or reverence for learning to be inferred from the eagerness with which dealers, factors, apprentices, clerks, lumpers & stable boys, matrons, misses, laundresses & chambermaids have hurried to hear & criticize academic exercises? Do they seek for pleasure in the jostling elbowing & pressure of a crowd, or in observance of the tyros of the day who ‘strut their hour upon the stage’ & vent the undigested crudities of science to a mob? The University derives no advantage from these exhibitions, nor do they profit individuals. It would be well that they should be discontinued, if to save interruption to labor & inducement to dissipation.¹³⁰

By now Daniel’s promises rang hollow to everyone, but Martha Lincoln, helpless to keep her son from the bottle, may have found some small measure of reassurance in his tired promises. But for Daniel, who had found no friendship in the Bunker-Hill Association, no camaraderie among his old Harvard classmates, if he had lost Henry Dearborn’s confidence,

¹²⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, July 18, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹²⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, July 24, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹³⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 28, 1811, DWL Papers.

separating himself from public celebrations because they were too base and common increased his isolation and his loneliness. It was a bitter tonic. He had looked to the philosophers to restrain and control him in a battle of mind over feelings. “Yet is philosophy at war with love.”¹³¹ Once again, the philosophers failed him.

To Enoch whose good estimation Daniel also wanted to preserve, he emphasized victory over his “ruinous infatuation” rather than his weakness in succumbing to it. The problem, he proposed, lay with youthful passions that needed maturity to cool so to be “purified and corrected for usefulness and honor.” It was the fault of human composition, especially acute in those inclined toward sensitivity, excitement, and passion that induced this special group to react to alcohol with a greater “commotion.” In other words, those possessed of a passionate spirit were more vulnerable to the vagaries of drink than those who were “examples of flatness & insipidity.” While admitting to his tribulations he strained to elevate and reframe his natural passionate disposition as a positive attribute. Still, he could not deny the social and familial repercussions his indiscretion had brought him. Putting aside the failed attempts at making the episode less sordid and damaging he admitted, “When I can say to you that many months have elapsed since I have put an enemy into my mouth to steal away my brains, when I shall be confirmed by continual observance of the strictest regularity, in habits of temperance & industrious application to Books & Business, when I shall cease to blush from the recollection of recent folly, I will come & see you & enjoy that happiness in your domestic circle which I am resolved to merit.”¹³²

Daniel’s fall shadowed him for several weeks but after the first flurry of apologies, he stopped commenting upon it altogether. Perhaps there was nothing unusual about the incident

¹³¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, July 31, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹³² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, July 26, 1811, DWL Papers.

except he had been caught. Perhaps admitting his indiscretion forced him to make promises that he knew could be broken which would add to a future humiliation. Perhaps everyone was tired of the charade. As his drinking had always been an ongoing concern of his family and friends, the absence of any further direct mention of what had filled his earlier letters is remarkable but predictable. Everyone knew their parts and replaying the lines had become depressing and tiresome.

Daniel did, however, make reflections on his misadventure but his Romantic sensibilities led him to veil the episode in natural metaphors. A solar eclipse in September 1811 prompted him to expound on its meaning in self-referential terms. Likening himself to the sun that people take for granted, only when suddenly in shadow do they attract notice and invite invidious comment. It is not the fault of the one who errs, rather the pettiness of small minds always ready to find fault. “In such manner mankind regards illustrious characters. The benevolence of their motives, the elevation of their thoughts, the inspiration of their minds, the dignity of their manners & the nobleness of their actions are, like solar influences, witnessed daily without emotion, consideration, or observance, but should accident or error eclipse the splendid disk of their fame, curiosity & envy would speculate on the shadow & malice & calumny proclaim the twilight of an hour as the extinction of worth & the loss of virtue & triumph in the knowledge that the sun may be darkened.”¹³³

Daniel never alluded to what triggered the June binge but loneliness and discouragement in love may have contributed. Sometime in early May, around the time his binge commenced, he returned to Maine to attend the Land Claims Commission hearings in Bristol. His proximity to Portland brought him closer to his former fiancée Mary Hodges,

¹³³ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, September 17, 1811, DWL Papers.

who still lived there. He had not found a replacement for her in his affections although a number of women had been interested in him and he in them. He enjoyed numerous flirtations that invited “philosophical investigations of the causes” of attraction (“unconscious mysterious impulses and subtle influences”) but other than the long-dead Charlotte whom he continued to regard as his greatest love, no other woman approximated his regard for Mary.¹³⁴ Yet, his pride prevented him from contacting her. Even when her younger brother Thomas Hodges died, a boy with whom he had been quite close, he admitted to Joseph Pope that he could not bring himself to write her family for fear of appearing too eager to ingratiate himself. “I am proud & that prevents me,” he confessed.¹³⁵

Daniel put aside his reticence about approaching Mary following an emotional epiphany later that month. His sister Martha had been ill and was convalescing with Lincoln relatives in nearby Hingham. When she asked Daniel to visit her, he decided he also needed to pay his respects at Charlotte’s grave. He had not been there since her burial in 1806. Standing in the cemetery, Daniel realized that even though his “first & best affections slumber in her grave, to be awakened, only, at the resurrection of the dead,” any chance for happiness lay with Mary. He resolved he would do whatever he could to win her back and marry her. Determined to have her Daniel promised, “As my soul liveth, I will deserve her. Though she put the seal of perpetuity on our disunion, yet I will enjoy the delicious triumph of virtue and the consciousness that her own heart is compelled to the acknowledgement that I deserve her!”¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Rebecca Lincoln, July 20, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹³⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, October 1, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹³⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, July 27, 1811, DWL Papers.

Before he renewed pursuing Mary, Daniel had to free himself from his grief over Charlotte. A few weeks after his pilgrimage to the Hingham cemetery, he sent his mother a packet of Charlotte's letters that he had always kept with him. He asked her to keep them and read for herself how much Charlotte had loved him. At one time the letters comforted Daniel, but now they had become a font of "melancholy, almost for madness." By giving his mother the letters and instructing her to read them he also hoped to show his mother how the lovely Charlotte had seen him worthy of loving. He was still that good man worthy of a good woman's love. In a tribute to his lost and dearest love, he included an affectionate soliloquy as a final sweet farewell to Charlotte.

O bright was the morning that smiles on my youth
 And gay were my visions of bliss
 When the maid of my soul fondly plighted her truth
 And sealed the dear pledge with a kiss.

...

When the angel of peace on his last message flies
 From earth this tired spirit to sever
 I'll seize the sweet flower, that enriches the skies
 To bloom in my bosom forever.¹³⁷

If Daniel was going to woo and win Mary, he also needed to summon his best romantic talents to persuade her of his honorable intent. Other friends had encouraged him to try to resume the relationship, hinting that she might still be interested in him. To test the waters, Daniel sent Pope a poem for Mary with the understanding that if she seemed receptive he would pass it on to her. Remarkable for its candor and lingering traces of bitterness, Daniel wrote:

Oh, had my fate been joined with thine
 As once thy smiles appear to token
 Such follies had not then been mine

¹³⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, July 30, 1811, DWL Papers.

For then my peace had not been broken.

Once was my soul, like thine own pure
And all its wild desires could smother
But not thy vows no more endure;
I am my own. Seek thou another!

Then fare thee well, deceitful maid
'Twere vain & fruitless to regret thee,
Nor hope nor memory yield their aid
But Pride may teach me to forget thee!

But now I seek for other joys
To love would drive my soul to madness
In thoughtless throngs & empty noise
I conquer half my bosom's sadness

Yet 'een in these a thought will steal
In spite of every vain endeavor;
And friends might pity what I feel
To know that thou art lost forever!¹³⁸

There is no record as to whether or not Mary received the poem or what she might have thought about being called a "deceitful maid." Daniel may have been referring to promises made and not kept in 1809, maybe even marriage. "Deceitful" in that context would have meant "misleading" more than "cheating." Still, the main message of the poem was he had been unsuccessful in forgetting her. No one had replaced her in his affections.

His overture to Mary notwithstanding, Daniel was appropriately cautious about his future prospects. Only reluctantly did he admit to his brother that he might like to have a wife and family as did his older brother, Levi. "I sometimes envy him his family," he admitted to John. But even this qualified acknowledgement deserved amendment. He stoically but unconvincingly claimed that he preferred the bachelor's life. "The bachelor is the commoner of society, the married man is the prisoner of the nursery....I shall prefer a bachelor's life 'til I

¹³⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, July 27, 1811, DWL Papers.

next meet a fine girl & then peradventure I may believe that it is not good for man to be alone.”¹³⁹ False bravado aside, he believed it already. He was twenty-seven and still unmarried. While single men’s status had improved since the Revolution, aging bachelors were still viewed by many as selfish, indulgent, and suspicious.¹⁴⁰

While Daniel sorted out his love interests and dealt with the family repercussions from his drinking escapades, he also impatiently waited for Gerry to deliver the patronage position that would boost his professional standing in Boston and save him from the drudgery of his “penniless clients.” The General Court had granted the governor the authority to make patronage appointments in the court system and in local governments but Gerry continued to delay for months. Gerry’s reticence may have been due to his unfamiliarity with the many Republicans who vied for positions coupled with pangs of conscience over wholesale disposing of competent Federalist office holders remaining from his first term. His procrastination gave ample time for Republican hopefuls to grow restive.¹⁴¹ Daniel viewed the riff-raff who streamed into Boston hoping for a job with disdain and superiority. “Each has his little faction, each his petty cabal, his meager file of friends, his scanty train of advocates & supporters....Every voter who gave his suffrage for Gerry’s election imagines that he has claims on executive patronage & makes boast & parade of his patriotic desert.”¹⁴²

By September, five months after his re-election, Gerry had still not made any nominations. Whatever Daniel may have thought of Gerry’s radical partisan legislation, his

¹³⁹ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 22, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁰ See John Gilbert McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009). McCurdy traces the shift in attitude toward bachelors from the colonial period to the post-revolutionary war period that finally saw states repealing bachelor taxes and laws that disenfranchised single men.

¹⁴¹ Austin, *Life of Elbridge Gerry*, 342.

¹⁴² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 13, 1811, DWL Papers.

inept handling of patronage reduced him in Daniel's eyes to little more than an incompetent child. In frustrated anticipation for himself and his friends (Joseph Pope had solicited Daniel to submit his name for consideration to a post), Daniel grouched about Gerry to his brother John. "The governor has made no nominations – pursues no system – forces no measures. His administration is a series of doubt, irresolution, timidity & imbecility & its end will be a humiliation & disappointment to Republicans. It is unfortunate that his daughters are not all married to Democrats, that his Excellency might be induced to make appointments."¹⁴³

Daniel's derision for Gerry grew as time went on. "I wait on the old woman & tell him he is as great as Julius & as wise as Cato. The truth is, he is jealous of our father & General Dearborn as a child fearing that his playmates will pocket his toys....If it were not a rascally thing to trifle with a girl, I would go & court his daughters & be the executive pet, but I am too honorable to be insidious & too proud to be sycophantic."¹⁴⁴

In 1811 when Daniel was excoriating Gerry, Levi Lincoln was still a member of the governor's Executive Council, part of the administration Daniel heaped with scorn. The year before Levi had been an active member, but when his eyes worsened his involvement diminished. And if Daniel's assessment was correct, Levi may have found working with Gerry difficult. If Levi had been healthy enough to continue to serve, Daniel might have been more respectful of the chief executive. With Levi now mostly gone, he felt freer to express his disgust. So although Gerry had introduced a number of thoroughly Republican-spirited measures in the courts, church, and press, what really mattered to Daniel was not what Gerry had done for the state, but what he could do to improve Daniel's position.

¹⁴³ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, September 17, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 6, 1811, DWL Papers.

At the end of October, Gerry finally made his appointments. Daniel received a Judge Advocate commission. “The unsolicited appointment had been made in my absence & was an unexpected compliment,” he disingenuously told Enoch. “I cannot now decline the distinction of being called ‘Major.’”¹⁴⁵ Perhaps he had hoped for something more promising because excitement over the appointment soon wilted and did nothing to temper his feelings about the “old fool” Gerry. Nevertheless, Daniel accepted the commission and was determined to use it to his best advantage. He combed through old military trials in preparation for being called to a case. But the more he read the more obvious it became to him that contemporary trials lacked the “chivalry, honor and sublime sentiment” of the past. Disillusioned, he realized that military trials were the same tedium of law he already knew. The romance of vindication and personal honor he had hoped to find in courts-martial had vanished long ago, perhaps into a romanticized if not fictitious, past.¹⁴⁶ For better or worse, combined with his existing practice, Daniel was resigned that the commission anchored him in Boston, possibly for life, an unhappy notion indeed. Boston had disappointed him. It had not been what he hoped for when he left Portland to brandish his image as a principled Republican whom everyone would admire. Other than professional acquaintances and his brothers, he had few friends and little interest in seeking new ones in such a chilly, unwelcoming climate. “The intercourse of mankind is a moral sterility, desolation of sentiment, barrenness of soul.” In Boston ambition displaced compassion among men. He did

¹⁴⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 29, 1811, DWL Papers. Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, November 2, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 15, 1811, DWL Papers.

have one true friend: his brother Enoch. But Enoch lived in Worcester. Still, he was grateful that such a friendship was as “lovely as the bowers of Elysium.”¹⁴⁷

In fact everything in Daniels’ life was transient and disappointing. As he reflected upon his life he saw that friendships faded, professional pursuits ended in failure, leaders turned out to be spineless, political organizations were lackluster. Beauty dimmed and lives ended. How could he believe in a heavenly eternity when everything beautiful and meaningful in life was so fleeting? “The maiden’s glance that triumphed in the conscious pride of its luster is extinguished, the heart that fluttered in the joy of its weakness is cold...But is the soul’s intelligence evanescent as the fragrance of a blossom? The speculations of theorists, the visions of enthusiasts, the creed of bigots say nay, but what proves to me that I am eternal & the plant ephemeral?”¹⁴⁸ And what about honor, that elusive perquisite of all esteemed men? Was not honor the most deceptive conceit of all? Honor, Daniel concluded, was not virtue but led to ignominy and war. “What is your boasted honor which thou talk’st of/This prince’s, soldier’s, ruffian’s, robber’s honor!/Is it not linked with deeds religion weeps at?/Shines it not bright though smeared with brother’s blood?”¹⁴⁹

Daniel’s evolving sense of religion, honor, friendship, and love marked a clear divide from the values of his father’s generation. What guided Levi, Daniel found difficult to reconcile with the changing times. Meanwhile, he continued to seek answers to the questions that would give his life direction and meaning but his alcoholism and loneliness shaded the answers and he came up empty. Happiness, purpose, and identity that came with

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 23, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, December 23, 1811, DWL Papers.

¹⁴⁹ “Honor,” DWL Papers.

accomplishment, belonging, and mature love continued to elude him. His journey would not get easier.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Yours Fraternally,” Return to Portland and Worcester 1812-1815



Fig. 12. Boxer and Enterprize by James Osborne. Reprinted, by permission, from Maine Historical Society, *Maine Memory Network*
<http://www.maine-memory.net/bin/Detail?ln=131>.

Boston August 13, 1812

My Dear Brother,

*The autumnal storm will afford ample opportunity to put the garden in repair & will be improved for that purpose, I trust. I arrived at Concord at half past nine on the morning, when I departed from you. The ride was extremely pleasant. Your hospitality to Dian sent her on her way rejoicing. She traveled on tiptoe. The meeting was more numerous, more respectable & more spirited than any one of like kind, than I ever attended & was entirely unanimous. One sentiment prevailed in every bosom, one thought possessed every mind. My resolutions were passed – an address by Mr. Gerry, was submitted, accepted & ordered to be published with the two resolutions. The resolutions are thus honorably noticed in the *Boston Gazette* of this morning. – “The Resolutions of the War party, penned by Mr. Dana, are the most indecent ever known. The Clergy are distinctly denounced as rebels to their government & their God & the friends of Peace are threatened with exile if they continue to oppose the war. The malignity of these Resolutions would be alarming, but that the party, avowing these sentiments, is too contemptible to be feared.” I will now defend these resolutions by chapter & verse & will trouble you to send me Dr. Austin’s sermon, on a fast day, to be animadverted on among others.*

Yours fraternally,

*D.W. Lincoln*¹

In the early months of 1812 while politicians ferociously debated the consequences of another war with Britain, Daniel Lincoln divided his interests between his law practice and consulting with his brother John about how best to manage the Worcester farms. Having received his judge advocate commission and rank of major from Elbridge Gerry, Daniel's complaints about the governor's ineptitude diminished at least temporarily. For the first six months of 1812, Daniel filled his letters with domestic and business matters save, an occasional poem or philosophical speculation usually of some natural phenomenon. But in June 1812, when another war became reality, Daniel reengaged in Boston politics, lending his voice to other young Republicans as a vociferous War Hawk.

Young, nationalistic, and mostly from the South and West, the War Hawks and their leaders Henry Clay (age thirty-four) and John C. Calhoun (not quite thirty), were President James Madison's voice for the pro-war cause.² Clay and company had been demonizing Britain for months, outraged by British intransigence on the seas. Equally menacing to American well-being were pernicious Canadians who were fomenting anti-American unrest among the Northwest Indians. A favorable outcome in a war with Britain, they argued, would not only establish American sovereignty on the seas but, by extending the war into Canada, the Indian threat would be neutralized and British commerce would suffer from lack of

¹ Daniel Waldo Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 13, 1812, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers, Private Collection.

² Ronald L Hatzenbuehler and Robert L. Ivie, *Congress Declares War: Rhetoric, Leadership and Partisanship in the Early Republic* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983), 16-7. Although they were the point men for the pro-war movement, historians believe that the War Hawks acted on the instructions of the president and other influential Republicans at the apex of the Madison administration.

Canadian timber, fish, and wheat.³ Real independence in the strong hands of this younger generation would finally be complete. Although older, more conservative Republicans were reluctant to begin another war with Britain, eventually the War Hawks succeeded in persuading their reluctant colleagues that the only possible American rejoinder to British depredations had to be war.⁴

Fortified by the War Hawk rhetoric streaming out of Washington, Gerry and his supporters, including Daniel Lincoln, were not only convinced that another war meant ultimate deliverance from British oppression but that Federalists in Massachusetts were on the run. In his address to the General Court in January 1812, Gerry called out the enemies of the Commonwealth and equated Federalists with Royalists. He suggested that Federalist subversives hoped to establish a monarchical government, that they polluted a free press by promoting license instead of liberty, and were the architects of deeply divisive politics.⁵ Federalists listened and then they organized. Gerry may have thought Federalism was finished in Massachusetts. Gerry was wrong.

To Boston Federalists, everything about the war spelled disaster. They would defend their homes and their families and support a navy (they had long championed a maritime defense to protect merchant shipping) but would not participate in anything they believed

³Garry Wills, *Henry Adams and the Making of America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 280-3.

⁴ Hatzenbuehler and Ivie, *Congress Declares War*, 126; Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005), 156. Donald Hickey notes that the congressional vote for war was very close. In the House the vote was 79-49. In the Senate it was 19-13. 61% voted in favor of the war. Donald Hickey, *Don't Give Up the Ship!: Myths of the War of 1812* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 39-42

⁵ Elbridge Gerry, *Speech of His Excellency the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to both Houses of the Legislature at the Session Commencing in the Second Wednesday in January, 1812* (Boston: Printed at the State Press, 1812).

would encourage or protract the conflict.⁶ Being neutral was not a choice. Only by actively opposing the war could steps be taken to end it. Calling themselves the “Peace Party,” Federalists believed that taking up arms against Britain and forcing her to fight a two front war only helped Napoleon expand his empire and threaten liberty everywhere else. Acquiring Canada would make the United States too large and unwieldy to function as a republic, besides Canada had shown no hostility to the United States. Invading it would prompt Britain to strike back across the border, most likely in Massachusetts’s own backyard; the District of Maine.⁷

Determined to stop the war, anti-Gerry and anti-Republican Federalist ink spilled onto broadsides, pamphlets, and newspaper editorials by the dozens. Federalists promised that a vote for Gerry was a vote for “Taxes, Embargo, and War.”⁸ But Gerry’s own legislation, especially the Religious Freedom Act, also contributed to the opposition’s arsenal. Otherwise complacent Congregationalists who felt their position under attack by zealous Baptists and others roused themselves to get to the polls. For other voters Gerry’s clumsy prestidigitation in the gerrymander convinced them Gerry was too partisan to be trusted.⁹

Over 100,000 voters went to the polls in April 1812 to put the Federalist stalwart Caleb Strong back in the governor’s seat in the heaviest election turnout Massachusetts had

⁶ Donald R. Hickey, “Federalist Party Unity and the War of 1812,” *Journal of American Studies*, 12 (April 1978): 25; Samuel Eliot Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis 1765-1848 The Urbane Federalist*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 327.

⁷ Hickey, “Federalist Party Unity,” 25-7.

⁸ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 273-4. See also J.C.A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison’s War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 253.

⁹ Stagg, *Mr. Madison’s War*, 256.

ever seen.¹⁰ It was of no help to Gerry that just days before the election Madison imposed a ninety-day trade embargo as a signal American ships to return home before the cannons started firing. One of the few Republicans elected that year was Worcester County's freshman state senator, Levi Lincoln, Jr., Daniel's older brother.

Two months after the election, Congress declared war on Great Britain. Emboldened by his gubernatorial victory and with his party commanding a majority presence in the state house of representatives, Strong refused to provide James Madison with forty-one companies of militia for the national defense, as Congress had mandated him to do. The governor contended that because the government had not gone through proper channels when making its request the quota demand was, in fact, illegal.¹¹ Three Federalist judges in the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court lined up behind Strong and agreed that the state constitution guaranteed it was the governor's right to decide where and how to use the militia of his commonwealth. The lower house also supported Strong's position, but the Senate, with its slim Republican majority, dissented.¹² Levi Lincoln, Jr. assisted in writing the opposition speech but the lower house struck the speech from the House Record.¹³

The Republican delegation in Massachusetts may have been out of power but they were not about to permit Federalist anti-war sentiment to prevail in the Commonwealth.

¹⁰ Ibid., 253-6. The outcome, however, was hardly a landslide but it was enough. Out of the over 104,000 votes cast, 52,978 went to Strong while 51,598 went to Gerry, a mere 1,380 vote difference. Federalists also reclaimed state House of Representatives although Republicans held on to a one seat majority in the senate. Massachusetts would not elect another Republican governor for eleven years. Formisano, 116.

¹¹ Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 259.

¹² Carl Edward Skeen, *Citizen Soldiers in the War of 1812* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 68.

¹³ Charles C. Hasewell, "Death of Ex-Governor Lincoln," in *A Memorial of Levi Lincoln the Governor of Massachusetts from 1825 to 1834* (J.E. Farwell, 1868), 55-6. "Mr. Lincoln was a firm supporter of the war, and opposed the course of the majority here with indomitable courage, but always maintained the courtesies of political warfare."

Gerry, who interpreted Strong's refusal to summon the militia as an invitation to a British invasion, encouraged Republicans to form informal home guard to curtail and monitor Strong and other Federalist "Tories."¹⁴ Back in Worcester, Levi Lincoln dusted off his *Farmer's Letters* which assailed Federalist clergy for their political activism and pro-British sympathies and republished them.¹⁵ After Strong called for a day of public fasting to mourn the "needless" war, Federalist clerics enjoined their congregations to resist war measures while several counties drafted protests and sent them to the president. The fevered Federalist opposition made for tempestuous times for Boston Republicans. Republican leader Benjamin Austin's house was stoned and other Republicans were fired from their jobs or assaulted on the street.¹⁶ Daniel blamed Strong for the unrest. He had "abused the occasion of fasting in the bitterest reviling of the General Administration," in order to stir up "exhortations to sedition."¹⁷

On August 10, 1812, Daniel and other Middlesex County Republicans gathered for a public rally in Concord. Their purpose was to draft and pass a series of resolutions protesting Strong's response to the war declaration and present it to the assembled faithful, thereby aligning themselves with the Washington War Hawks as the next generation of authority. In the resolutions to which Daniel had contributed, the Middlesex Republicans vowed to "repel and defeat the seditious attempts of the opposers of constitutional authorities" whose "avarice has wasted like the pestilence and whose ambition has devoured like the grave." In a stirring

¹⁴ Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 261.

¹⁵ Kenneth J Moynihan, *A History of Worcester 1674-1848* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2007), 115.

¹⁶ James M. Banner, *To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815* (New York: Knopf, 1970), 306-7.

¹⁷ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, July 24, 1812, Daniel Waldo Lincoln Papers (DWL Papers).

declaration of Republican principles, they resolved a war against Great Britain was “just, expedient and necessary; that it was the only remaining means left unattempted by the government of the United States for the vindication of their natural rights and natural honor.” They promised to “endure all the hardships, privations and perils and hazard our lives and estates for the preservation of the liberty and independence purchased by heroes arms, sealed with our father’s blood and transmitted in invaluable and perpetual inheritance to their posterity.”¹⁸

Next they commended the senators and congressmen who supported the war and damned the Federalists for their “heinous outrages of order and decency...and contempt of the sovereignty of the people” that their “specious names and hollow professions...has excited opposition to the government.” Furthermore, “professed teachers of religion who have perverted their vocation to party purposes” are “rebels against heaven and traitors to their country” and should resign their pulpits. Caleb Strong’s refusal to call up the Massachusetts militias forced the citizens of Middlesex to take up arms independently for the protection of their families from “the tomahawk and bayonet.” “Traitorous conspirators” will be carefully watched until they find a new government “more congenial to their wishes” elsewhere. Republicans resolved to promote domestic manufactures as essential to achieving independence from England, while guarding against the avarice and ambition that corrupted Britain. Finally, the Middlesex Republicans promised that a County Committee and a Committee of Correspondence and Public Safety would be formed as protection against their enemies.¹⁹

¹⁸“Voice of Middlesex!” *Boston Patriot*, August 12, 1812.

¹⁹ Ibid.

As defiant as the Middlesex Resolutions appeared to be, they were not unlike the generational call to arms going on in Republican circles elsewhere. As grown men and heirs of the Revolution they pledged to protect the independence their fathers had won for them. Severing the lingering bonds with Britain not only secured independence but proved their manhood on a field of battle.²⁰ “The meeting was more numerous, more respectable & more spirited than any one of like kind than I ever attended & was entirely unanimous,” reported a charged Daniel to Enoch the following day. “My resolutions were passed – an address prepared by Mr. Gerry, was submitted, accepted & ordered to be published with the resolutions. The resolutions are thus honorably noticed in the *Boston Gazette* of this morning....I will now defend these resolutions by chapter & verse.”²¹ Exactly how he would defend them, as a soldier, an activist lawyer, or a writer, he did not say.²²

Although Daniel pledged great things, his actual involvement in the war outside of the military courts-martial he attended as judge advocate went no farther than procuring canteens and tents for the Worcester Light Infantry headed by his brother John. Although the regular army was starved for recruits, Daniel never appeared to have entertained any desire to join them as a commissioned officer.²³ If he had wanted to soldier, it would have been in a local

²⁰ See Steven Watts, *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 208-16.

²¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 13, 1812, DWL Papers.

²² As Daniel noted to Enoch, the *Gazette* dismissed the Middlesex Resolutions as something akin to a temper tantrum. “The Resolutions of the War party...are the most indecent ever known....The malignity of these Resolutions would be alarming, but that the party, avowing these sentiments, is too contemptible to be feared.” Downplaying the attacks on their patriotism and morality, Federalists pointed out that the Republican meeting attracted fewer attendees than did the simultaneous meeting of the Peace Party Federalists, whose message of opposition and resistance produced a more animated civic response, at least according to the Federalist reporter. “Middlesex County Meeting,” *Boston Gazette*, August 13, 1812.

²³ On the eve of the war the regular army totaled a miniscule 4,000 men. The American navy was equally small and under equipped. During 1811 and early 1812, congress increased the

militia, such as the Worcester Light Infantry but since Caleb Strong vowed never to use them, volunteering would have been a rather hollow act. Indeed, John Lincoln waited over two years to be called into service.²⁴

During the war Daniel's field of battle was the court room. 1812 Major Daniel Lincoln served as defense counsel for General Ebenezer Goodale, Major General of the Second Division of the Militia of Massachusetts, charged with six offenses "against the laws for regulating, governing, and disciplining the militia of this Commonwealth." The chief judge advocate was John Varnum who later represented Massachusetts in the United State Congress as a Federalist. Daniel's role as a junior judge advocate was to question witnesses and produce motions which were communicated to the court through Varnum.²⁵

One of the charges against Goodale stemmed from his leniency with a Captain Bowditch who had illegally excused a private from July Fourth training. When Goodale

size of the army mostly through incorporating state militias. Very few, however, enlisted in the regular army in spite of inducement for bounty land or extra pay. Many preferred to stay at home, either because they opposed the war politically or because they were not inclined to head off to the Canadian wilderness to fight Indians. Plus, the integration of local militia with the regular army was loaded with problems. Regular soldiers looked on militias with scorn, as poorly trained, poorly equipped and feckless. See Water R. Borneman, *1812 The War that Forged a Nation* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 46; Reginald Horsman, *The Causes of the War of 1812* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975), 237; James H. Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War: New England and the War of 1812* (New York: Algora Publishing), 240; and Skeen, *Citizen Soldier*, 39-61.

²⁴ In addition to the Worcester Light Infantry, Worcester County raised one other company of fifty-eight men raising the combined total to about a hundred men in a total population of over 3,000 people. William Lincoln and Charles Hersey, *A History of Worcester Massachusetts From Its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836* (Worcester, Mass: Charles Hersey, 1862), 135.

²⁵ *Record of the Proceedings of a General Court Martial Holden in the Court House in Salem, in the County of Essex, Monday, September 28, 1812 By Order of his Excellency Caleb Strong, Esq. Governor and Commander in Chief of the Militia of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on the Complaint of Lieut. Col. Samuel Brimblecom and others against Ebenezer Goodale, Major General of the Second Division of the Militia* (Cambridge, Mass: Hilliard and Metcalf, 1812), 38.

refused to take action against Bowditch, he was accused of delegating authority to incompetent subordinate officers.²⁶ It was by all accounts a rather frivolous charge but put together with the other charges constituted part of a larger effort to discredit Goodale and ultimately his commander, Elbridge Gerry. The rest of the suit charged that in his last few days as governor, Gerry directed Goodale to use his influence in the election of a Brigadier General by attempting to bribe the voting officers with a quid pro quo. (If they would vote for Goodale's choice for Brigadier General, he would appoint their choice to be colonel.) The tactic backfired; the eight voting officers split their votes and word of Goodale's bribe made its way to Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Brimblecom who was eager to testify against Goodale and his patron, Gerry. "There must have been some particular and powerful reasons to have impelled the General to the Council Chamber," said Brimblecom. "For it surely cannot be usual for commanders of divisions, when resignations are offered to them; to wait on the Governor, and inquire whether he shall make such discharges."²⁷ Goodale claimed that he had visited the officers as a private man and a citizen, not as a commanding officer which was his prerogative as a citizen soldier.²⁸ Goodale's defense as presented by Varnum and Daniel Lincoln, relied on thin arguments that if the officers voted as Goodale recommended it was only because they were impressed with his demeanor, not intimidated by his rank. Furthermore, if he did conspire with Gerry, it was Gerry's offense for pressuring Goodale. It all depended upon which role he played either as citizen or as soldier. As a soldier and Gerry's Brigadier General, he followed orders from his governor. As a citizen talking to his men, however, he had done nothing more than express his own opinion.

²⁶ Ibid., 42-6.

²⁷ Ibid., 64-75.

²⁸ Ibid., 44-6.

While waiting for the verdict, Daniel told Enoch that he had no complaint as to how the trial was conducted and felt that the witnesses reported well of Goodale. But he felt the opposing side had “perverted” Goodale’s case. He doubted the outcome would be favorable.²⁹ He was right. Of the six charges, Goodale was guilty of the four most serious ones, including election tampering. He was relieved of his office and barred from holding any military office for five years.³⁰ The defeat did not appear to discourage Daniel. And given his hostility to Gerry, the indirect indictment of the governor’s handling of the situation may have even secretly satisfied him. After the case was decided, Daniel resumed his busy regular practice and made no further mention of the case.

During the first year of the war, Daniel’s involvement with the Brown claimants, required periodic travel to Maine, usually on the back of his favorite mare Dian. In one very unusual episode near Waldoboro, Daniel stopped at a small log cabin looking for a drink of water. A black woman “half clad and half in native sable” or half naked, opened the door. She had no water in the house but she offered to go down the road and fill a bowl for Daniel. As she went inside the cabin for a bowl, Daniel followed her. The desperate living conditions he encountered there startled him. The hut’s floor was earthen; there were no windows, only holes cut in the timbers. In one corner a pig lay in its pen, in another corner stood a “ragged bedstead crossed with ropes” on which the woman’s crippled husband slept. What little they had she had earned by spinning, only she had no spinning wheel of her own. She borrowed the neighbor’s wheel whenever it was not in use, which was seldom. “It was the darkest picture of misery – it was the most absolute reality of wretchedness I have ever witnessed,” Daniel told Enoch. Before he left he gave the woman what money he had. “Then go poor

²⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 4, 1812, DWL Papers.

³⁰ *Record of the Proceedings of a General Court-Martial*, 2.

devil & buy a wheel & spin on it all the time, after you have put straw under your crippled husband. God bless you.” The grateful woman ran ahead for the water and with a trembling hand, offered it to Daniel. Witnessing such degradation dried up his thirst but he took the bowl from her anyway. “I knew she wished it nectar for my sake & I drank it to the bottom, as eagerly as if it had been the beverage of the Gods.” The “poor negress,” he told Enoch, “haunted my dreams.”³¹

The encounter was highly unusual. In 1810 there were very few people of African descent in the District of Maine: 929 out of a total population of 227,736 or 0.4%.³² Out of the 1,516 people who made their home in Waldoboro in 1810, four of them were black. Most everyone else was of German descent and had fled war and burdens of taxation with an added inducement of 125 acres courtesy of patent holder Samuel Waldo.³³ Most people of African descent who landed in Maine tended to work on the docks in the cities where they had arrived via the Caribbean trade route. Waldoboro, famous for its ship building coastal trade located on Broad Bay with an open access to the ocean, was one such town.³⁴

The woman’s dire circumstances were not unusual, however. Perhaps the family Daniel came upon, like so many others, had dared to dream of owning their own farm and had squatted there hoping for the best. After the man of the family became incapacitated, the task

³¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 22, 1812, DWL Papers.

³² Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals By Race, 1790 to 1990, and By Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, For The United States, Regions, Divisions, and States Population Division,” *Working Paper Series Number 56 United States Census Bureau Washington, D.C. 2003 September 2002*.
<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html>

³³ Samuel Llewellyn Miller, *History of the Town of Waldoboro, Maine* (Wiscasset, Me.: Emerson, 1910), 137; *US Federal Census 1810*, Series M252, Roll 12, 93.

³⁴ Martha Ballard who lived just down the road in Hallowell, records in her diary having several black women as assistants. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 224-5.

of survival fell to his wife. Her work opportunities were few. She might have hired herself out as an indentured servant, but that would have forced her to leave her husband for extended periods. As a woman, she would have been unemployable as a laborer. To make matters worse, Waldoboro had experienced huge losses during the Embargo leaving poor relief particularly strained. It would be thirty years later that a benevolent association was established for the aid of “deserving widows.”³⁵

Whether or not their desperation was attributable to their color or their bad luck, the couple’s situation moved and distressed Daniel so that he recorded it in detail to his brother and he gave them what money he had and never mentioned the incident again. Slavery had been abolished in Massachusetts years before but the black population remained small (only 4 percent of Boston was black in 1810). Daniel viewed the incident as an oddity, calling it “Shandyism” or absurd and not one to rouse him to political action or poetic and philosophical speculations.³⁶ Only in his orations, written well before he met the couple, did he mention African slavery as a deplorable condition of a sad, misguided world. Once away from Waldoboro, Daniel turned his attention back to the war and his business at hand.

Back in his room in Bowdoin Square, Daniel reflected on the war through a lively correspondence with a new pen pal, his twelve-year-old brother, William. William was fascinated by all things war-related and eager to find a like-minded compatriot with whom he could discuss the war’s progress. For several months the two brothers exchanged opinions about battles, generals, and strategies. In 1813, however, progress on the American front had been negligible. The Niagara Campaign which was supposed to drive out the British and end in the occupation of Lower Canada had been foiled by squabbles between Republican

³⁵ Miller, *History of Waldoboro*, 138.

³⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 22, 1812, DWL Papers.

Brigadier General Alexander Smyth and Federalist Major General Stephen van Rensselaer. Their mutual hatred frustrated any chance of coordinating their troops and won both officers the distrust and contempt of men and officers alike. After two abortive attempts to cross into Canada, Smyth dismissed the militia.³⁷ “Smyth deserves crucifixion,” a scornful Daniel wrote to William. “A gallows is the only elevation to which he has pretensions. Rashness & ignorance have undertaken & cowardice & treason have counteracted the military enterprises of this country in the late campaign.”³⁸ Smyth’s actions were not what the pro-war Republicans had anticipated. He had betrayed their confidence and disappointed their expectations. Daniel blamed an incompetent military for failing to assemble a robust republican army. “Talent & martial spirit are as rare in the Army as system & science have been in the War Department.”³⁹

Grim war reports notwithstanding, Daniel delighted in his correspondence with William. Besides discussing botched military campaigns and Smyth’s shortcomings, Daniel instructed his brother in matters of the heart. More revealing than patronizing from one who had suffered from social exclusion, he cautioned William to hold on to his innocence against the “corruptions of society” that “pride and hypocrisy have kept in fashion, like lotions & pastes they take from ‘those who have nothing even that which they have.’” But holding oneself apart from society risked alienation and vulnerability to the artifice of affection he called “the masquerade of life.” Speaking from his loneliness, he told William that true love is guileless. It “utters no lie, plays no tricks on credulity & practices no impositions...”⁴⁰ What twelve-year-old William made of Daniel’s insights on love and the corruptions of society is

³⁷ Stagg, *Mr. Madison’s War*, 245-51.

³⁸ Daniel Lincoln to William Lincoln, January 8, 1813, DWL Papers.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Daniel Lincoln to William Lincoln, January 16, 1813, DWL Papers.

open to speculation, but the letters quickly resumed a more playful tone. Daniel pronounced William's marches with his frog and mice soldiers superior to the real thing. He praised William's courage in taking on the geese & turkeys but he also admonished him to be disciplined in all matters and offered him an aphorism. "Cowards bluster from fear while heroes are quiet in the confidence of their strength."⁴¹

The spring of 1813 brought more optimism in the war's progress. Daniel had tempered his feelings about how it was prosecuted. "The best of men for soldiers enlist very freely now & promise a harvest of martial glory to the United States. The war will be urged very earnestly, as soon as this season will permit."⁴² Daniel may have been too optimistic. The national government looked to recruitment efforts into the regular army as a show of Republican commitment rather than the continuation of their fight with Strong over who commanded the Massachusetts militia. Their poor results cloaked Massachusetts Republicans in a veil of disillusionment and depression. Reasons to celebrate were few with the exception of the battle at York. Victory there boosted the American advantage on Lake Ontario, essential to the American plan to control the St. Lawrence River and Canada.⁴³ "The intelligence of a victory over the Allied Armies at Little York gilds this morning & dissipates the chill & gloom of an Easterly storm. No patriot will be haunted with blue devils today," exulted Daniel.⁴⁴

Daniel spent 1813 working his way through the Brown Claim (now in its second year) and arguing causes in the Supreme Judicial Court and the Court of Common Pleas. Although

⁴¹ Daniel Lincoln to William Lincoln, nd.

⁴² Daniel Lincoln to William Lincoln, April 2, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁴³ Hickey, *Don't Give Up the Ship!*, 37; Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 267; Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture*, 117-8.

⁴⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, May 9, 1813, DWL Papers.

his professional life continued to be busy, in early spring an intriguing business opportunity presented itself. Daniel does not specify what it was; only that he needed a loan to close the deal. He assured his family that it would not interfere with his other professional pursuits and if it came to fruition, the arrangement would anchor him in Boston for life. His family advised him against it, fearful that failure would set off a downward spiral from which there would be no return. Upon their recommendation, Daniel dropped the plan.⁴⁵

Several weeks later in the company of his brother John, Daniel encountered an acquaintance who questioned John about their father's recovery from an accident weeks earlier. In the course of their several days together, John had never mentioned it to Daniel. It immediately became apparent that the family had deliberately left Daniel in the dark about the mishap, perhaps in a misguided attempt to shield him from upset, as one would a small child. He immediately dispatched an indignant letter to Enoch.

Would to God my heart was casehardened! But I am learning philosophy, rather, I am taught misanthropy & must have been an egregious blockhead having been so long under tuition to have profited so little by my instruction....I have just relinquished hopes of great promise & prospects of high expectations because certain persons were terrified by the apprehension that I might meet a scar, that those persons should suppose me indifferent concerning their wounds. I believe I shall cease to be the shuttlecock of whim bye & bye.⁴⁶

Daniel did not blame Enoch for the slight. He trusted him to be a steadfast companion whose "friendship recollected will thread my path & be a clew to comfort."⁴⁷ It was the gravest of insults to be infantilized by his family and to know that their estimation of him as a capable man was so dismal.

⁴⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 8, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁴⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 3, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Relationships with the Hingham cousins foundered as well. Martha Lincoln, the third wife of Levi's brother, Amos Lincoln, summoned Daniel to the family home to bid goodbye to her dying daughter by her first husband. The young woman, Martha Robb, had been in love with Daniel but he had not reciprocated the feeling. The girl was heart-broken. Now on her death bed, some blamed him for her decline. "My ingratitude for the regard with which she honored me is an imputed cause of this dreadful alteration. Every eye but hers complained of me....Every sympathetic fiber of my soul is jangled into a tumultuous dissonance by this unhappy affair. I believe fortune has selected me for the butt of her archery. She will exhaust her quiver bye & bye or my heart will become so scarified, that she will be unable to distinguish her marks & unrecorded success will be no support for her."⁴⁸ He dutifully visited Martha day after day but the family's criticism was unrelenting. Worse, the young failed to improve. Infantilized by his Worcester family, considered cruel by his extended family in Hingham, it seemed to Daniel that those closest to him, with the exception of Enoch, had lost all faith in him. He could hardly wait to escape the recriminations and "fly to the wilderness" on a business sojourn to Maine.⁴⁹

In Portland the following month, a despondent Daniel experienced what to him was nothing less than a miracle. Just when he was feeling most dejected and unwanted, Mary Hodges agreed to renew her relationship with him. He did not describe what passed between them only that to his great relief and joy, she agreed to resume their relationship. "She has promised to repeat the miracle of restoring a man, who had been bowed down for years, which ended for me & will not love the penitent less for being her moral patient. She has exorcised me & cast out an evil spirit. You will expect to find me a regular, discreet man

⁴⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 15, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁴⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 18, 1813, DWL Papers.

hereafter for I have firmly resolved to go & sin no more. I am on probation,” he declared to Enoch.⁵⁰ Leaving nothing to chance, Daniel decided to return to Portland as soon as possible. Two months later he reopened his office in the town’s commercial center, Haymarket Row.⁵¹

The recandescence of his relationship with Mary sparked ruminations on life and death and religion, thoughts he candidly shared with his mother while he was settling his affairs in Boston. Strengthened by a woman who made him believe that finally, in spite of everything, he could be loved as a man, Daniel stepped back to evaluate what mattered most to him. Many times he had shunned society protesting that it held no interest for him, that it was a distraction, not worth his while. His disdain had been a proud and transparent cover for the dejection and pain of social exclusion and gossip. Now comforted and confident in his restoration, he admitted to his mother that he craved friendship, that in fact he had been desperately lonely. To him pandemonium, or hell, was a collection of selfish strangers in dissension and confusion. This was what his life had been -- but now it was over and behind him.

Confidence in his future contentment emboldened him to speculate to his mother on the source of happiness. Without abandoning the republican reverence for virtue, Daniel concluded that happiness lay in a balance between responsibility to others and the pursuit of private interests. Virtue was essential for the public man but it was friendship, regard, and

⁵⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, May 26, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁵¹ “Notice,” *Eastern Argus*, August 19, 1813. Haymarket Row was later renamed Monument Square. “The hay scales stood in the middle of the square, surrounded by farmers with wagonloads of hay, meat, eggs, and other produce they had brought to Portland to sell. Buildings were clustered more closely together as the land sloped to the waterfront, where ships arrived laden with molasses and other imported goods, or departed with cargoes of wood and other New England products. On the horizon, the islands of Casco Bay were visible across the harbor.” “The House and Grounds,” *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow A Maine Historical Society Website*, http://www.hwlongfellow.org/house_exterior.shtml.

love that brought joy to the private man. Here, at last, was the bridge he had sought between old school republicanism and new school self-interest. Private happiness made public virtue possible.

What is virtue? Conformity of our actions to the interests of mankind....Justice, temperance, benevolence & piety are essential equally to private prosperity & general welfare...Heaven would be no paradise but for the society of angels & saints....The sweet attraction of social magnetism has been the cause of all my enjoyments. It has tied me to friends, bound me to parents, yoked me in fraternal relations & linked me to Charlotte & Mary & tho it has drawn me to the grave of one I most loved, my temper has been chastened & the wildness of my spirits retrained by the holy bondage & I hope in some degree, prepared me for a world of love....In truth I have been in a chrysalis condition for some wasted years, but will now emerge in intellectual expansion & the brightness of virtue.⁵²

During this period of happy introspection, a question from Mary prompted Daniel to examine his personal religious theology as well. A sporadic and cynical Unitarian church-goer at best, Daniel's position was anti-clerical, not anti-church.⁵³ When Mary asked him if there was such a thing as an atheist, he pondered her question and hazarded an answer. No, he concluded, there could not be such a "moral monster." God was undeniable because as the creator he was everywhere in nature. God existed, he declared, even though humans might fail to fully comprehend Him. "The mind is restrained by a chain, howsoever extensive, yet limited & cannot approach God." God should not be anthropomorphized in humans' feeble efforts to understand Him. "Let ignorance clothe the Creator with Justice, Truth, mercy & every variety color & tint of virtue....It is decorating an idol with ideal robes & worshipping a rainbow garment, not Deity." To illustrate, Daniel equated man with a horse and God with

⁵² Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, July 10, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁵³ Daniel mentions going to church only in the context of selling his pew in Portland and in another instance, getting into trouble with his sister when he laughed at a struggling violinist during services.

the rider. The horse cannot know what the rider has in mind for him. He must go with his commands even when he cannot understand the purpose of the journey but he cannot doubt that “naught exists without a cause.”

Whether it be called Fortune, chance, accident or otherwise, whether one or another class of attributes be ascribed may not be essential. It is the first cause, the creator of all things by whom we live & move & have our being, this is the unknown & incomprehensible God, whom it is our duty to worship in ‘spirit & in truth.’ Reverence to Deity & benevolence to mankind is the sum of our Savior’s precepts. The law is written in the hearts of all men & all have acknowledged the authority of the original Legislator whose son has proclaimed it to the nations. The arrogance of pride or the fatuity of ignorance in Jew or Gentile, Christian or pagan, civilized or savage have always recognized & revered a first cause.⁵⁴

Concluding his discourse on his religion, Daniel reiterated that he would remain well outside the church walls as long as preachers continued to preach inside them. “The presumption & folly of preachers, their almost blasphemous arrogance disgusts & offends me.” He ended his letter in a comment concerning Mary’s piety. “I would not marry a woman that was not religious...I believe she trusts implicitly in the uprightness of my principles.”⁵⁵ Clearly, Daniel’s expectations for Mary were closeted and traditional. Although men might speculate on the contradictory messages of the world, women ought to be subordinate, religious, and deferential.

Tutored by Unitarian Aaron Bancroft prior to entering Harvard, Daniel received his theological instruction in college from David Tappan, a moderate Calvinist. His personal theology, therefore, reflected an amalgam of many influences. It did not stray far from the Unitarianism that Bancroft preached, free inquiry and private judgment unhindered by

⁵⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, July 1813, DWL Papers.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Calvinist dogma, but he added a dose of evidential philosophy that rested on observable empirical phenomena, inductive reasoning, and sensory experience.⁵⁶ He struggled with the notion of eternity for humans when all other living things perished forever at death. As a Unitarian he believed in a supreme deity as evidenced by the power of the natural world. He believed Jesus was the son of God. But he resisted ascribing human qualities to God and this echoed a more deist philosophy. He referred to Jesus' instructions to John to worship in "spirit and in truth." To Daniel this meant, "Reverence to deity and benevolence to mankind." Love your neighbor as you would God.

In the era of Unitarian argument and controversy in Boston and Cambridge, and the Second Great Awakening surging through the countryside, Daniel had ample occasions to reassess his personal creed. The Unitarians were still fairly new to Boston's religious scene and owed much of their theology to Lockean social theory and rationalistic Anglicanism, creating views that were threatening if not disgusting to the orthodox Calvinists. Unitarianism's rationalism held a strong appeal to Boston's enlightened intellectuals who had opposed the revivalism of the First Great Awakening some sixty years earlier. They preferred a reasoned approach to understanding Christianity.⁵⁷ The uproar over Unitarian Henry Ware's appointment to be the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard in 1805 had been an impetus to the schism between the orthodox Trinitarians and the liberal Unitarians.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 174-5. There are four doctrines in Unitarianism theology as it evolved in the early nineteenth century: unity of God, unity of Christ, human potential for good and evil, and atonement to alter the heart rather than satisfy divine law. Holifield, 199.

⁵⁷ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 390-401.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 396-397.

Attending a church pastured by a Federalist (such as Aaron Bancroft in Worcester) who used his moral authority to cudgel Republicans was not part of Daniel's religious life. As his father did, Daniel saw religion as a private affair. He preferred to live his principles as he chose rather than be dictated to by someone else. Daniel's religious philosophy mirrored his father's. In the *Farmer's Letter's*, Levi Lincoln had written that piety was a personal matter. The Farmer was a Christian whose religion "was a stranger to violence of action or outrage of language. It was that religion which acts upon the heart by the mind and gentle influence of precept and example...Real piety enters into her closet and shuts the door, the world knows nothing of her, government has nothing to do with her."⁵⁹

Feeling sanguine in his private life, by August 1813 Daniel felt equally hopeful about his professional life. His former law partner, Joseph Pope, had kept the practice going for the three years Daniel was in Boston. The two men were confident that with Daniel's return they could substantially increase their business and profits. Daniel quickly found comfortable housing with Dr. Samuel Ayer, whom he described as "a genteel, accomplished, scientific man" in other words, a man of repute who would be nothing but a good and healthy influence. The future looked brighter than ever. "I can anticipate a happier life than I have passed in Boston & a more useful one, one more prudent & respectable; indeed I will command success gainsay it, whosoever may....I am in high health, spirits & hopes...." he reported to his father.⁶⁰

Still, returning to Maine in the middle of a war that bordered a hostile country was not without its dangers. American progress along the St. Lawrence had stalled that summer and

⁵⁹ Levi Lincoln, *A Farmer's Letters*, 48.

⁶⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 12, 1813, DWL Papers.

Canada had yet to be conquered.⁶¹ Rumors had circulated that Maine suffered from severe food shortages, a situation that Caleb Strong had used to illustrate the Almighty's displeasure with the war. Daniel's found the shortages to be non-existent and Strong's edict ridiculous. "The reported scarcity in Maine is fabulous. The price of grain is nearly the same as in Boston. Meats are plenty as usual."⁶² Strong's view of war as punishment from God was also open to ridicule. "Unknown fertility covers the fields of Maine....Plenty smiles everywhere....Pray is this abundance 'a judgment on the nation, on account of their unnatural, unjust & wicked war'?"⁶³

Strong's exaggeration of Maine's scarcities may have amused Daniel, but the governor's continuing refusal to call out the militia left the District vulnerable to hostilities from its Canadian neighbors to the north. Its proximity to the ocean left it susceptible to the British navy to the east. On September 5, 1813 less than a month after Daniel's return, the *USS Enterprise* (with sixteen guns) saw action against the *HMS Boxer* (with fourteen guns) off Penguin Point, a few miles outside of Portland Harbor. The *Enterprise* had been patrolling the eastern seaboard since the previous May but had not encountered any hostilities until that day.

The first blast came from the British brig but the *Enterprise* quickly steered across the *Boxer's* bow and peppered the vessel with cannon fire. Thirty minutes later, the captain of the *Enterprise*, William Burrows, age twenty-eight, lay fatally injured. Burrows somehow managed to maintain his command and ordered his crew not to strike the flag. He remained on deck for the remaining forty-five minutes of the conflagration until the *Boxer* surrendered,

⁶¹ Borneman, *The War that Forged a Nation*, 173.

⁶² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln May 26, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁶³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, August 22, 1813, DWL Papers.

its mast severed.⁶⁴ He died, the victor, eight hours later. The captain of the *Boxer*, Samuel Blythe, also died, killed by chain-shot (two half cannon balls chained together) launched by the *Enterprize* early in the battle. In all, four Americans and four British sailors died and seventeen others were also wounded.⁶⁵ The coffins of the two young captains were carried together with great pomp and ceremony through the streets of Portland and laid side-by-side in the town's Eastern Cemetery.⁶⁶



Fig. 13. Graves of commanders of the *Enterprize* and *Boxer*, Eastern Cemetery, Portland, Maine. Reprinted from Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection <http://memory.loc.gov/>

The loss of Burrows moved Daniel to write a poem to his memory. "...Contented martyr to the country's cause/The stern avenger of insulted laws/Thy dauntless arm thy martial spirit proved/By heroes honored & by patriots loved/Of soul unsullied of unquestioned truth/Though fallen, untimely, in the pride of youth...."⁶⁷ Daniel trusted the merits of the poem sufficiently to forward it to his closest friends: his former law partner in Boston, Leonard Parker, Enoch, and his father. He rather disingenuously introduced the verse as "hastily penned" and as a "mere job workman." Parker for one believed it worthy for

⁶⁴ Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-book of the War of 1812*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1896), 718; "Seventh Naval Victory," *National Aegis*, September 15, 1813.

⁶⁵ Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 138.

⁶⁶ Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-book*, 718; Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 140-1.

⁶⁷ "Sacred to the Memory of what was Burroughs (sic)," Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, October 19, 1813, DWL Papers.

national acclaim and proposed that Daniel submit it for consideration for a Burrows monument in Washington.⁶⁸

Writing a poem to a fallen hero and sending it to his brother and father also gave Daniel a grandiloquent bridge back to his family. They had been disturbingly uncommunicative ever since he returned to Portland. Even the news of the naval victory which had boosted the sagging spirits of pessimistic patriots throughout New England was did not rouse them to write him. His brother John's silence appeared "almost obstinate" but perhaps, Daniel admitted, he was overly sensitive. "I shall learn better bye & bye, shall have my affectionate regards weaned from Worcester & the things which were home. If nothing else, the naval victory obtained in our bay must have reminded you that such a place as Portland existed & I should hope your heart would have whispered that a brother was there."

⁶⁹ In letter after letter Daniel inquired as to the meaning of their silence. In December he complained to his mother "more in sorrow than in anger" that except for Enoch, no one from home had written to him for several months. In a poor joke, he said the lack of correspondence had allowed him to economize on stationary and quills. "If my brothers & sisters find no response to my cordial feelings of friendship in their hearts, if the sentiments of my soul awaken no echo in their minds, then nature is a step-dame & I am her spoilt child for she has fondly indulged me in wild fancies ...of fraternal unity & love."⁷⁰ He followed with a poem by Lord Byron entitled *Solitude*. "None that, with kindred consciousness endued, /If we were not, would seem to smile the less/Of all the flattered, followed, sought and sued/This

⁶⁸ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 17, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁶⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 18, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁷⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Martha Lincoln, December 9, 1813, DWL Papers.

is to be alone; this, this is solitude!” Solitude came not from being alone, but from being friendless. Daniel wondered where his friends had gone.

The Worcester Lincolns disapproved of Daniel’s decision to move back to Portland. His family had tired of promises soon broken and had grown skeptical about giddy prophecies of perpetual contentment and sobriety. Now he had abruptly abandoned a thriving law practice in Boston that he spent three years building for a woman who had refused him once before. As a kind of punishment for his willfulness and what they may have perceived as foolishness, they appear to have deliberately distanced themselves from him. Still, Daniel continued to reassure his parents that Portland would bring him prosperity and happiness, code for work and sobriety. “I am ranked more highly in my own estimation than aforetime, am occupied in law, literature & love & am very content, save the lack of letters from home,” he promised his father.⁷¹

Daniel’s repeated assertions of finding happiness and professional contentment in Portland were his anxious efforts to reclaim his family’s good regard. Professionally, his best estimates bore out fairly quickly. “In the course of the last week, I made 11 justice writs, 3 court writs, 2 deeds & received 2 retainers...”⁷² Plus, the clients he represented in the Brown claim had remitted their payment. But everyone who knew Daniel also knew that the potential for calamity in his private life, which depended upon a woman whom some could have viewed as feckless, seemed risky at best. They knew he was sensitive to rejection, dependent on others in spite of his many claims to the contrary, and often blamed others for his isolation when they failed him or distanced themselves. If disappointed in love once again,

⁷¹ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, October 10, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁷² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 10, 1813, DWL Papers.

how easy would it be for Daniel to reach for a drink, and another and another, to dull the pain and retreat into a solitary existence?⁷³

As the estrangement with the family wore on, Daniel grew more apprehensive. He wrote Enoch and pleaded with him to move to Portland to practice law with him there. “I am sensible of all the comforts & joys, social attractions & endearments that encircle, with magic influence, the paternal hearth, but we have a great deal of work to perform during our lives, Enoch & must be up and doing.”⁷⁴ Enoch did move to Maine, but to Fryeburg, not Portland, and he did not stop to visit his brother on his way to his new home. Disappointed in Enoch’s decision, Daniel did not stop trying to convince him to set up his practice near him, enlisting fellow attorney Simon Greenleaf to offer a parcel of land to Enoch on which he could build his office.⁷⁵ Enoch was not persuaded and remained in Fryeburg. Still feeling ill-tempered and estranged, when Daniel received word of his sister Martha’s engagement to his former law partner Leonard Parker, he sullenly proffered that the two were not a very good match. “There is too much of Sterne’s subacid humor in their dispositions & this is no ingredient in the cup of connubial felicity....” Prompted by the disaffiliation he was feeling from his family, Daniel could not resist the opportunity to insert a considerable dose of some “subacid humor” of his own by pronouncing the two a bad match. His relationship, he added, was free of such mismatched qualities.⁷⁶ He may have spoken too soon.

Sometime during the fall or winter of 1813-1814, Mary, his answer to loneliness, separation, and despair, his “miracle,” whom he expected to wed, abruptly disappeared from

⁷³ S.D. Ramos, “What can we learn from psychoanalysis and prospective studies about Chemically Dependent Patients?” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 85 (2004): 467.

⁷⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 10, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁷⁵ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, November 19, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁷⁶ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, September 26, 1813, DWL Papers.

his letters. He left no hint of what might have provoked the separation, so the reason is open to speculation. But Daniel's drinking patterns were well established and had estranged so many family and friends that it is likely Mary was once again among them as she had been before. This time, however, there were no recriminating poems blaming Mary for her faithlessness or taking himself to task for his habits. There was only silence. Henceforth, love and marriage to Charlotte or Mary, or as he once so gracefully put it, "in memory or hopefulness," was never spoken of again. Daniel had given up on love. Soon he began to give up entirely.

Losing Mary coincided with a sudden decline in his health, likely the product of self-neglect and the onset of cirrhosis. The gloomy winter of 1813 marked the first mention of an ominous "church yard cough." At first Daniel experimented with a number of herbal remedies such as roasted onions, extract of garlic, syrups of licorice & flaxseed which gave him some temporary relief but before long the same complaints returned. The zeal and righteous anger that lit up his earlier letters dimmed. He grew lethargic. He rarely mentioned the war which had ground to a stalemate that year, or the politics that pitted Strong against Madison in an ever more bitter political fight, nor did he remark upon his favorite nemesis, the clergy (with the exception of naming his new colt "Prior" in a sarcastic "compliment to my Catholicism.") The incendiary topics that had been the spark for political excoriation and indignant diatribes were no longer fodder for his epistolary arsenal.⁷⁷ Fatigue replaced fervor.

There were, however, rare occasions when the old tetchy Daniel reappeared. In 1813, the Governor of Upper Canada, George Prevost, ordered that captured naturalized American citizens be sent to Great Britain to be tried for treason as the British citizens they once were.

⁷⁷ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, October 10, 1813, DWL Papers.

The United States responded by imprisoning British soldiers who would receive the same punishment as the Americans did, including death. In a military tit-for-tat the British upped the ante by imprisoning two American officers for every one British soldier taken. In response, ten British officers who had been permitted to reside in Worcester while on parole were suddenly removed to jail. Local Federalists were incensed.⁷⁸ But, as a determined Republican committed to the war, Daniel offered no sympathy for the enemy officers. “I do most devoutly wish that those who lose sight of their own country in their commiseration for enemies might be reduced to the situation of their fellow citizens in English prisons, or in savage bondage.”⁷⁹ Six weeks later, nine of the confined officers managed to escape by tying up the guard and running off through Worcester County. The guard freed himself and set off an alarm of cannon fire and church bells ringing throughout the town. Without benefit of a search warrant, officials entered private residences looking for the fugitives. Five were caught the following day, but four got away to Quebec. The five captured officers were taken elsewhere for the duration of their confinement.

Getting word of the Worcester fracas in Portland, Daniel patronizingly assessed the town’s response to the imprisonments, especially from those who urged leniency to the officers, as misguided, immature, and brainless. To emphasize their foolishness, he cloaked it in feminine terms, inadvertently venting his scorn toward the women who had hurt him in a sardonic, sarcastic tone. “Every petty & every petticoat politician stood forth, prepared for controversy...The terms expatriation & retaliation to matrons ‘were familiar as household words’ & fitted the rosy lips of flippant maidens as if kisses were in them.” Adopting a condescending air of impatient instruction, he scolded Worcester. “Let the brawlers who

⁷⁸ Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 135-6.

⁷⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 16, 1813, DWL Papers.

claim against the severity of the measure as an outrage on humanity & civilization, look to the cause & they will find it to be a measure of self-defense, an accustomed expedient to prevent the destruction of the subjects of one government by another, by a minatory denunciation of its own, who are restrained for that purpose.”⁸⁰

The indignant flare-up temporarily masked his weakened condition. Coughing, tired, and frail, Daniel still had professional responsibilities. He was still a judge advocate with military courts-martial to attend in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The naval trials were held onboard the 38-gun sailing frigate *USS Congress* berthed in the Portsmouth Navy Yard.⁸¹ Daniel arrived in Portsmouth on December 24, 1813 to find the town still smoldering from a fire that had raged for two days before destroying over 270 homes and businesses. The blaze could be seen from as far away as Boston.⁸² Daniel was moved by the devastation. “It is a dreadful scene. My heart sickens in the contemplation of it.”⁸³ Six days later smoke still rose from what had been the town. “The town is emboweled by the flames....My eyes & heart ache at the contemplation of the spot & of the miseries occasioned by this conflagration to many poor & destitute people who will hardly find shelter from the inclemencies of the

⁸⁰ Daniel Lincoln to William Lincoln, February 12, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁸¹ “Arrival of the Congress Frigate,” *Portsmouth Oracle*, December 18, 1813. The *Congress* was one of the original six frigates commissioned by the U.S. Congress in 1794.

⁸² Charles Brewster, *Rambles about Portsmouth* (Portsmouth, NH: L.H. Brewster, 1873), 201-7. Allegedly the fire was set by a girl named Colbath who worked at a domestic for a Mrs. Woodward. In trouble with her mistress for pilfering some wine, Colbath vowed revenge and set fire to the Woodward barn. The fire quickly consumed everything surrounding it and left much of Portsmouth in ashes.

⁸³ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 24, 1813, DWL Papers.

season.”⁸⁴ The town’s losses from the fire approached \$300,000 and over 130 families were left homeless.⁸⁵

As disturbing as the fire was to Daniel, the judge advocate business required him to shift his attention away from the plight of Portsmouth to the trial of William Harper which convened on December 28, 1813. Lieutenant Edward McCall, who had assumed command of the *Enterprise* after William Burrows had been mortally wounded, accused Sailing Master Harper of cowardice during the conflagration between the *Boxer* and the *Enterprise*. Harper allegedly ordered the flag of the *Enterprise* struck during the fighting and frightened the crew by seeking cover behind the foremast screaming, “By God, we shall all be killed!” Apparently the sailing master had never been a popular man; many thought him “cross and crabbed.”⁸⁶ One sailor told him directly that he hoped he would die during the battle. Harper believed the defiant sailors meant to take advantage of the battle confusion and come after him with evil intent. He denied all the accusations against him claiming that the inexperienced crew misunderstood his actions. The case against him was weakened further when it emerged that Harper had been promoted to Prize Master of the *Boxer* immediately after the battle and it took another day before any charges were filed against him.⁸⁷

Daniel believed his client had been unfairly indicted and he worried about the trial’s outcome which would have meant death for Harper. “As a question of honorable life or ignominious death may be involved in the result of this trial, I assure you I feel great responsibility as the advocate of the defense & associate the ideas of a convict & the yardarm

⁸⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 28, 1813, DWL Papers.

⁸⁵ Over four million dollars in 2009 terms. “Portsmouth Fire,” *Fire Department City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire*, <http://www.cityofportsmouth.com/fires/history.htm>

⁸⁶ Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 142.

⁸⁷ James Valle, *Rocks & Shoals: Order and Discipline in the Old Navy, 1800-1861* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1980), 155-6.

of a ship of war “with fear and trembling.”⁸⁸ The trial lasted a full month. When Harper delivered his defense to the court, many thought it unusually sophisticated for an unschooled sailing master. Spectators believed that the words were not Harper’s but his lawyer’s, Daniel Lincoln.⁸⁹ The confusing circumstances that preceded Harper’s arrest coupled with Daniel’s eloquent appeal, saved Harper from hanging.

During the trial Daniel’s health took a turn for the worse. His cough and fatigue weakened him. Descending a flight of stairs made him feel faint. He lost weight. He tried to pacify his mother’s anxieties by downplaying his symptoms and passing them off to “the bleak winds on the Piscataquis,” the river he had to pass daily when going to trial in Portsmouth. He assured her he was taking better care of himself now and that the approaching spring air would repair him.

The spring air did not bring good health but it did bring Enoch to take Daniel home. In Worcester he could get the care and attention he needed to convalesce and repair. At first Daniel resisted but thanks to Enoch’s “obstinate perseverance,” he submitted and together they went back to their parent’s home.⁹⁰ Daniel too believed he would get better, and he asked Enoch to watch over his business while he was indisposed. On March 10, 1814, the same day the naval court in Portsmouth delivered a “not guilty” verdict on William Harper, Daniel reported to Enoch that his health was improving, but slowly. “I am in durance doleful. My cough leaves me, but no strength returns.” He knew that by insisting he leave Portland,

⁸⁸ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, 6 January 1814, DWL Papers.

⁸⁹ Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 142.

⁹⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 9, 1814, DWL Papers.

Enoch had probably saved his life. "I should have been out of hearing long before this time I am convinced, had not your affectionate importunity removed me from the business."⁹¹

Daniel remained languid and frail for weeks. After spending a month in bed, being ministered to by his doctor and his mother, he believed he was on the mend and could soon resume his life. "I have almost conquered my cough & have acquired an appetite....from food gain strength to exercise & from exercise ability to attend to business again."⁹² Another month later, however, he returned to his sickbed, blaming inclement weather for the setback. Doctors prescribed a new regime of medicines but to no positive effect.⁹³ For the remainder of the spring he struggled to regain his strength but even modest exercise depleted his reserves. "I am incapable of the thought of business, a walk of one quarter of a mile is beyond my reach & a ride of a half-dozen miles length should exhaust me to faintness." He started to doubt that he would ever recover. "I consider it quite an equal chance that I never leave this town, that I find my settlement among those who have been." Although it pained him to think of separating from his family, he claimed he had no regrets about leaving a world that was nothing but a stage for weak-willed people overly concerned with social conventions. "As for this big, bustling world, it is too little, too vain & vacant to deserve or receive a moment's notice or consideration. It appears to me like a showman's exhibition. Is it in reality anything more serious? Those who are in it, must join in its confusion & participate in its giddy motion, must not only dance but must dance in figures to tunes of the fashion, changing as it varies. I am but hors de combat at present."⁹⁴

⁹¹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 10, 1814, DWL Papers.

⁹² Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, April 9, 1814, DWL Papers.

⁹³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, June 1, 1814, DWL Papers.

⁹⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, May 9, 1814, DWL Papers.

While Daniel ailed during the summer of 1814, the war came home to Massachusetts. Napoleon's defeat earlier that spring liberated Britain from fighting a two front war and freed it to concentrate on the war in North America. That summer the British blockaded Boston, Gloucester, and Salem, attacked Plymouth, captured Nantucket, and burned ships in Wareham and Scituate. In July, British ships sailed into Boston Harbor, seven miles from the coast.⁹⁵ By September they had captured everything between Eastport and Castine in Maine, about 100 miles of coastline. More than ever, Boston was dangerously vulnerable to British attack. Fearing a British invasion was imminent, Caleb Strong finally called out the militia although he still would not allow them to be placed under federal control.⁹⁶ Since Strong refused federal command, Madison curtly refused to fund the militia. Frozen out by the government and unwilling to bend, Strong suggested that other New England states join with Massachusetts for the purpose of mutual protection. Strong meant to defend the Commonwealth not against the British but against the internal enemy, the Republicans. To many ears, Strong's solution sounded like a call for secession.⁹⁷

Strong finally called up the Worcester Light Infantry, under the leadership of Captain John Lincoln. The troops left Worcester on September 11, 1814 to assist in the defense of Boston. The forty-four men encamped near Boston, spending their days in a monotonous routine of "passing from dinner to drill" readying for a possible attack by land or by sea.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Charles Warren, *Jacobin and Junto or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames 1758-1822* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1931), 270-1.

⁹⁶ Stagg, *Mr. Madison's War*, 469.

⁹⁷ Warren, *Jacobin and Junto*, 276.

⁹⁸ Fredrick Green Stiles, "A Sketch of the Worcester Light Infantry 1803-1902," *Proceedings of the Worcester Society of Antiquity*, 17 (1900): 621. Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 226.

After six weeks no attack had materialized, and Strong discharged the infantry.⁹⁹ Enoch, back in Maine, served as an aide-de-camp to the Second Brigade in Portland, called up when British warships sailed menacingly around the town.¹⁰⁰ Two weeks later, this militia company disbanded having never fired their guns.¹⁰¹ With Levi Lincoln, Jr., serving in the state senate, opposing Caleb Strong and supporting war measures, John as Captain of the Worcester Light Infantry, Enoch in the Second Brigade in Maine, and William too young to serve at age thirteen, all able-bodied Lincoln men were involved in the war effort in 1814. The ailing Daniel found another way to aid the cause: as a commentator and writer.

Edward Bangs, the editor of Worcester's *National Aegis*, was among the forty-four men dispatched to Boston with the Worcester Light Infantry. Prior to his departure, Bangs put out an appeal for a temporary replacement "...willing to wield the pen while he (*Bangs*) shoulders his musket."¹⁰² Daniel answered the call. A turn at the *Aegis* would give him a venue to put his fine literary talent to good use. At the Republican paper he could freely comment upon the war's progress and editorialize on the machinations of the Federalists in the General Court. It was a perfect job for Daniel whose heart had always laid more in belles-lettres than bellicosity, more in literature than law.

While Daniel occupied the editor's chair at the *Aegis*, the Federalist delegation in the General Court called for the legislature to appoint delegates to a convention at Hartford. The myriad grievances over how the federal government prosecuted the war, who controlled the

⁹⁹ "State Troops Discharged!" *National Aegis*, November 2, 1814. Many Republicans thought the discharge came prematurely and invited an invasion by the Anglophile Caleb Strong. But the anticipated invasion never occurred.

¹⁰⁰ Ellis, *A Ruinous and Unhappy War*, 210.

¹⁰¹ John Stuart Barrows, *Fryeburg, Maine: An Historical Sketch* (Fryeburg, Me.: Pequawket Press, 1938), 160.

¹⁰² *National Aegis*, September 14, 1814.

militia, and the war's disastrous effects on Massachusetts, formed the rallying cry for disaffected Federalists throughout New England. Led by Levi Lincoln, Jr., incensed Republicans drafted a protest signed by seventy-five Republican members of the legislature. "The Constitution, hitherto respected as the charter of national liberty and consecrated as the ark of our political safety, will be violated and destroyed; and in civil dissensions and convulsions our independence will be annihilated."¹⁰³ The *Aegis* echoed the legislative minority's sentiments that the Federalists convention was "fatal to the tranquility and repose of our country."¹⁰⁴ But in a prescient statement the paper's editor went on to affirm that the convention would not only fail to bring about secession but it would be the beginning of the end of the Federalist Party. The people, he declared, would not stand for such mendacity. "Even in Massachusetts it will, we trust, be found, that there is a redeeming spirit in the people, that will quell the ragings of faction and prove that she is still the zealous defender of liberty....Let them go a little further, and their career is completed. The crisis is at hand that will terminate their wickedness. The people will shake off their slumbering indifference and wake to save themselves and the republic."¹⁰⁵ To Daniel, no matter how much he disparaged the judgment of the populace, he still clung to a romantic notion, at least publicly, that the people would provide the moral balance to Federalist extremists.

In spite of all the excitement surrounding the convention, the ultimate outcome was a disappointing dénouement for radical Federalists. The convention proposed seven amendments to the Constitution which were pointedly anti-Jefferson, anti-South, and anti-

¹⁰³ Emory Washburn, "Memorial of Hon. Levi Lincoln," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 1869-1870* 11 (1871), 54-5.

¹⁰⁴ "Federal Delegation," *National Aegis*, October 26, 1814.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Embargo, but steered well clear of endorsing secession.¹⁰⁶ The Massachusetts Federalists who delivered the petition to Madison in February 1815 were upstaged by news of Andrew Jackson's victory in New Orleans against the British and the Treaty of Ghent and that ended the war. Madison was now in a position to disregard the protestations of the Federalists whose anti-war position was roundly discredited and ridiculed, especially outside of New England.¹⁰⁷

Daniel's experience at the *Aegis* had a surprisingly salubrious effect that Edward Bangs enthusiastically noted to Enoch upon his return to the paper. If Daniel could be healthy, if he could stop drinking, Bangs predicted he could live a satisfying and productive life.

During my absence I committed the whole care of the *Aegis* to Mr. Rogers, who, with the assistance of Danl W. Lincoln and other choice friends, managed it to my satisfaction....Our friend Danl W. Lincoln, has, to the astonishment of everyone, not only survived to this time but is regaining his health and strength so as to take exercise and employ the powers of his well-storied mind in the editorial department of the *Aegis*. Should God spare his life, I trust that a thorough reformation from his imprudencies, will prepare him for high usefulness in life and for the publick honours which he is qualified to obtain.¹⁰⁸

Although to some Daniel appeared to be rebounding, thoughts of death preoccupied him. To him, death was not a loving reunion with those who had predeceased him or transcendence into heaven, but a sad and final separation from those he loved but whom he feared would not remember him long. "Sepulture is the fatal separation. Love may loiter for awhile at the barrier of the tomb, but it is soon delivered to other objects & affection, respect

¹⁰⁶ Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 166.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹⁰⁸ Edward Bangs to Enoch Lincoln, November 3, 1814, DWL Papers.

& sympathy have ceased.”¹⁰⁹ Yet he was not ready to resign himself to the end. He still hoped that he might recover and resume his life, halting his downward trajectory to live that better, sober, and productive life Bangs had predicted. Looking forward to resuming a productive life, Daniel wrote Parker, now his brother-in-law, to pursue and recover debts owed him because two weeks hence he would begin reviewing law for “preparation for resumption of practice.”¹¹⁰

The timing for opening a new law practice looked propitious when two months later the war officially ended. The United States had not conquered Canada, nor had Britain agreed to stop impressments. The borders between Canada and the United States went back to what they had been before the war. Restrictions on trade from either the French or the British had been eliminated with the defeat of Napoleon. The Indian threat had been diminished significantly. Most important, however, the United States had not lost the war, and not losing the war was to many people synonymous with winning.¹¹¹ America ended the war with a revitalized standing army and navy, an energetic international trade, a vigorous development of domestic manufactures, and the commitment from government to plunge headlong into internal improvements such as roads and canals backed by federal dollars.¹¹²

Worcester celebrated the war’s end with a grand Peace Ball that according to John Lincoln was anything but dignified. “No one thing since my recollection has created more commotion,” he told Parker. As Captain of the Worcester Light Infantry, John Lincoln chaired the planning board for the event and decided to include only Worcester’s well-heeled denizens in the celebration. Apparently, like his brother, John’s Republican ideals did not

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, December 7, 1814, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Leonard Moody Parker, December 22, 1814, DWL Papers.

¹¹¹ Watts, *The Republic Reborn*, 284.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 275-321.

extend themselves to democratic gestures. But holding on to the privileges of the elite had met with a public outcry. “I did not think it expedient to go out into the highway & bid the lame & the blind to the hall, many who had not the wedding garment were dissatisfied that they were excluded,” John commented.¹¹³

While John planned the celebration for Worcester’s elite, Daniel took steps toward starting over once again. He instructed Enoch to shutter his business in Portland, settle his debts, and to make a list of all the “actions with which I have had any concern.” He also asked him to send his “military equipage, civil dress, white hat & military boots, spurs, bridle, & what little things you may find...” to Worcester. Finally he wanted Enoch to find a buyer for Dian, his horse. “She is worth much money to any person who is fond of a horse & wishes to keep one.” His brother Levi Jr., had shown interest in her but Levi had wanted to pay over time and Daniel preferred to be paid up front. As he had indicated to Parker, he needed money to set up his new practice and selling Dian was one way to get some. Furthermore, Daniel wanted Enoch “...to take minutes from the clerk’s office of the state of all the actions with which I have had any concern and copy it in your letter to me.”¹¹⁴ Tying up loose ends in Portland, retrieving the formal attire that he might need for future events, and reacquainting himself with his business papers, all suggested Daniel planned to start over as he had before, perhaps even in Worcester.

The surge of energy that prompted the letter to Enoch had dissipated by the time John Lincoln wrote Parker only five days later. “Daniel is not able to leave his bed even for a short time & appears to be gradually failing,” he reported.¹¹⁵ John’s assessment of Daniel’s

¹¹³ John Lincoln to Leonard Parker, March 20, 1815, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁴ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March, 25 1815, DWL Papers.

¹¹⁵ John Lincoln to Leonard Parker, March 30, 1815, DWL Papers.

condition was accurate. On April 17, three weeks after Daniel had written Enoch requesting his books, his white hat and military boots, he died. Based on his symptoms of fatigue, weakness, and loss of appetite, the cause was most likely cirrhosis.¹¹⁶

Brother John managed the funeral arrangements with efficient alacrity. The same day his brother died he ordered a cambric shroud for Daniel's body and commissioned carpenter Jedidiah Healy to construct a coffin. He also bought black crepe in quantities useable for the women's mourning clothes and black ribbon for men's armbands.¹¹⁷ Although it was traditional for a loved one to repose in state in the family home for a few days so friends might gather to pay their respects, Daniel was buried the following day in Worcester's Second Burial Ground.¹¹⁸ John commissioned the type of simple unadorned headstone that an

¹¹⁶ Efforts to uncover a death certificate have been unproductive to date. But Daniel's complaints all correspond to cirrhosis. Other alcohol related deaths include alcoholic cardiomyopathy, alcohol poisoning and pancreatic, and upper gastrointestinal and laryngeal cancer. Among alcohol related diseases, however, younger people are more likely to develop cirrhosis than cancer. George E. Vaillant, *The Natural History of Alcoholism Revisited* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995), 205. By 1815, medical doctors were well acquainted with liver disease as a consequence of excessive drinking. The English doctor Matthew Billie was among the first to make the connection and labeled it "liver tubercles" in his book *The Morbid Anatomy of Some of the Most Important Parts of the Human Body* published in 1812. French physician Rene Laennec renamed the condition "Laennec cirrhosis" around 1832. See Jacalyn M. Duffin, "Why Does Cirrhosis Belong to Laennec?" *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 137, (September 1987): 393-6.

¹¹⁷ John Lincoln Papers, Lincoln Family Papers Box 3 folder 3, AAS. After 1838 the family moved Daniel and the other deceased Lincolns from the Second Burial Ground to Rural Cemetery, a forty acre wooded plot donated by his Daniel's uncle, Daniel Waldo. At the consecration, Levi mentioned his own kindred buried at the old cemetery "Grandfather, Father, and Brother, in near proximity to each other." Levi Lincoln, *An Address Delivered on the Consecration of the Worcester Rural Cemetery, September 8, 1838* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1838), 9.

¹¹⁸ Perhaps Daniel had been disfigured by severe jaundice from end-stage cirrhosis which would have prevented an open casket and hastened his burial.

enlightened Unitarian would have approved of -- free of religious motifs of any kind and engraved with only his name.¹¹⁹



Fig. 14. Daniel Lincoln's Grave, Rural Cemetery, Worcester, Massachusetts. Photograph by author.

Daniel's old friend, Edward Dillingham Bangs, printed a respectful tribute in *The Aegis*.

The loss of this gentleman is a calamity which reaches beyond the circle of his connections and acquaintances. Society is deprived of the most distinguished talents and virtues. In the attainments of the scholar, in the accomplishments of the gentleman, in the noble enthusiasm of the patriot, in all the best qualities and affections of the human heart, few in our country have equaled, scarce any exceed him. All who knew him were his friends, all who remember him are his mourners. *Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat inebeare longam.*¹²⁰

Bangs did not need to mention the cause of death, because his closing in Latin ("In the brief sum of life drunkenness forbids us enduring long") testified that Daniel's alcoholism was no secret. Those who knew him noted in their records and diaries that he was a sufferer of addiction. On his Harvard transcript someone scribbled Daniel's birth date, his Cumberland County Attorney position, his death date, and the words "a victim of intemperance."¹²¹

¹¹⁹ John Lincoln Papers, AAS. The Puritan headstones replete with skulls, fingers pointing heavenward, and other symbolic motifs had become less last popular in 1815 and considered less enlightened. See David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

¹²⁰ "Mortuary Notice," *National Aegis*, April 19, 1815.

¹²¹ Records of the Harvard College Class of 1803 [Lincoln, Daniel Waldo] Biographical Folder, Harvard University Archives.

Samuel Deane the Unitarian minister in Portland recorded in his diary that “Mr. Lincoln died in the prime of life, a victim of intemperance...and a man of brilliant talents.”¹²² These recorders for posterity shifted the blame from Daniel’s failure to remain abstinent to the insidious evils of the fiend liquor that had victimized him. Their accolades of scholar, gentleman and patriot could stand unblemished. This perspective on drinking mirrors Benjamin Rush’s thesis that once addicted, there was little a drinker could do to free himself of his problem.¹²³ The early temperance societies that formed in this period aimed to assault the intemperance problem prophylactically and sway people away from drinking rather than attempt to reform those already lost to “the fatal cup.”¹²⁴

Perhaps James Spear Loring, the author of the *Hundred Boston Orators* came closest to identifying what lay behind Daniel’s early death. In his introduction to the 1810 orators, Loring wrote of Daniel, “The early decease of the beautiful Charlotte Caldwell, of Worcester, to whom he was engaged, shortened his days.”¹²⁵ This allusion to Charlotte’s death as a reason for Daniel’s intemperance suggests Loring, at least, believed that Daniel was not so much a victim of drink as he was of his emotions. Certainly Daniel’s fragile makeup, his melancholy and depression, all support Loring’s conclusions. But the emotional blow losing Charlotte was not the only one reason Daniel became an alcoholic. There is evidence that the Lincoln family harbored a predisposition to alcoholism. Daniel’s youngest brother, William,

¹²² Samuel Deane, *Journals of the Reverend Thomas Smith and Samuel Deane, Pastors of the First Church in Portland* (Portland, Me.: Joseph Bailey, 1849), 389.

¹²³ Lender and Martin, *Drinking in America*, 37.

¹²⁴ *Constitution of the Massachusetts Society for the Suppression of Intemperance and First Annual Report of the Board of Counsel Prepared for the Anniversary of the Society, May 28, 1813* (Boston: Samuel T. Armstrong, 1813), 9.

¹²⁵ James Spear Loring, *The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852 Comprising Historical Gleanings, Illustrating the Principles and Progress of Our Republican Institutions* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1854), 351.

also suffered from addiction as an adult. Susceptible to alcoholism in a hard-drinking culture, Daniel was also caught between a powerful need to please his father and an equally powerful need to find his own identity. These conflicting drives were made more difficult by the transitional, unsettled times in which he lived.

In his last years Daniel's father all but disappeared from public life living in the relative rural seclusion of his farms. His poor eyesight limited his ability to conduct legal business so he moved to the relative seclusion of his farms, devoting much of his time to breeding merino sheep and participating in civic organizations. The last office he held was as first president of the Worcester Agricultural Society in 1819. His sons recalled watching the aging patriarch of the family, sitting erect "in his old-fashioned, straight-back chair, by the library fire."¹²⁶ When he died at the age of seventy-one, he was eulogized for his legal talents, his love of religious freedom, his contribution to the abolition of slavery in Massachusetts, and the political stir created by his divisive *Farmer's Letters*.¹²⁷ The *Aegis* summed up his legacy: "He has left to his family and friends a legacy which they will prize more than the inheritance of his wealth—the lasting treasure of a good name."¹²⁸

Lincoln's public influence may have faded as he aged, but his influence over his children never waned. Becoming a Republican had been a very good thing for Levi Lincoln, Sr. and he clearly hoped his sons would be his torchbearers into the next century. Although two sons, Levi Jr. and Enoch, shouldered the burden well, it was not an easy task for Levi's more vulnerable and sensitive second son. For Daniel, being an inheritor of the Revolution

¹²⁶ Conrad Edick Wright, *Revolutionary Generation: Harvard Men and the Consequences of Independence* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 211.

¹²⁷ Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 196-197; Marvin Junior Petroelje, "Levi Lincoln, Sr.," Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1969, 204-205.

¹²⁸ "Obituary Notice," *National Aegis*, April 26, 1820.

and a Lincoln proved more burden than advantage. As a Republican in Federalist territory, Daniel was tossed into a brutal political fray before he was emotionally ready. He learned too early to be always on the defensive. Consequently his politics were more about the fight than principles. And once he picked up his rhetorical sword to defend Republicans and became known as a pugnacious partisan, the doors to polite Boston society and companionship closed. Drinking excessively and condemning the social gatekeepers for their hypocrisy and small-mindedness, ensured those doors would remain closed.

To complicate matters further, in the early nineteenth century traditional social roles shifted. The virtuous man who put public interest ahead of private interest was fading into the dusty recesses of the classical republican theory that had guided the founders. In their place, emerging out of a still nascent but growing liberal economy, was the ambitious self-starter and entrepreneur. Society had never been more openly competitive and challenging to the traditional social hierarchy.¹²⁹ As a member of the elite, Daniel could not identify with the challengers, but he knew he fell well short of the older virtuous republican ideal. For Daniel and others of his generation who were searching for purpose and cohesion, only one clear avenue opened during his lifetime: waging war against Britain. This was a course that Daniel championed. Through war Daniel's generation could prove to their founder fathers that they were worthy inheritors, that they, too, possessed the necessary manly qualities to be trustworthy leaders and guardians of the nation.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ In his later years even Levi Lincoln shifted his interests to increasing the commercial potential of his merino sheep and away from penning political polemics.

¹³⁰ Steven Watts argues that the inheriting generation's march toward war worked to bind together parts of the personality that had failed to find cohesion due to the changing economic and cultural circumstances of the early nineteenth century. The War of 1812, argues Watts, carried with it an oedipal component in that the youthful, virile son (America) wants to kill off the old decrepit father (Britain). See Watts, *The Republic Reborn*, 210-1.

Although Daniel supported the war, once it got underway he watched it unfold from the sidelines. The soldierly identity that may have lent itself toward developing a cohesive masculine identity belonged to his brothers and others who joined militia or took a more activist role. During the war as before the war, Daniel remained a lonely lawyer with little to guide him toward a positive, autonomous sense of self. He would rather have been a farmer or a poet than a lawyer, but to indulge in poetry as more than an avocation flirted with the luxurious and was of questionable virtue. Farming, though virtuous, meant leaving the law, the profession his father had chosen for him.¹³¹ In the end, try as he might to identify with his father and be a good Republican lawyer, Daniel never genuinely could. He had to submerge his real passions and shoehorn himself into a false identity that he never owned, or even liked. His was a “not me” existence; a world he could not help but live in but never felt part of. As he traveled through his life, Daniel relied on negative constructs to define himself, crippling the development of a healthy sense of belonging and splitting his world into good and bad, black and white.¹³² More fundamentally, as time went by he had difficulty identifying with being a Lincoln.

But in spite of all the contradictions he wrestled with, he never stopped trying to find a place for himself and a companion to share it with him. He found and lost love twice, once through no fault of his own, once entirely at his own hand. Until he was physically unable to keep going, even after his addiction stole his health and his hope, even when frustrated and

¹³¹ Ellis, *After the Revolution*, 36-7. Ellis argues that the attitudes of the founders concerning the arts delayed their development and rise in America.

¹³² Erikson writes of the perils of transitional periods when recognizable ideological or occupational precepts are absent resulting in identity diffusion. See Erik Erikson, “Identity Crisis in Autobiographic Perspective,” in *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: Norton, 1975).

cynical, he never stopped thinking he if he tried one more time, his inner demons would be put to rest and he could live a happier, respected life.

Instead of finding contentment, however, Daniel's journey was fraught with conflict, especially over the path Levi had set for him. Understanding all too well his father's expectations of him, Daniel obediently trudged on as he was supposed to even though his heart lay elsewhere. From time to time he questioned the purpose and tangled with the merits of practicing law, but he never seriously considered abandoning it. He was too dutiful to be so bold. Throughout his life he outwardly appeared more deferential than defiant, more respectful than rebellious, except when he drank. When he acted impulsively and drowned his future in alcohol, he not only rejected his father's ambitions for him but punished Levi by setting him up for public embarrassment. Daniel knew his failures would disturb and disappoint his father deeply. After all, Levi had twice sent Jefferson examples of Daniel's literary talents. He had reassured the third president that the Republican vision rested safely in the hands of the next generation he had produced. (He did not send examples of Levi Jr., John's, or Enoch's talents. Only Daniel's were received at Monticello.) Levi had fostered his son's career, seeing to it that Daniel was offered the Cumberland County Commissioner job. It is also likely that Levi had a hand in Daniel's selection to be the Bunker-Hill Association's 1810 orator. Both were high profile public assignments that testified to Levi's faith in his son's abilities to perform them well. Levi knew a good performance by the son would reflect positively on the parenting and political mentoring of the father. For his part, Daniel accepted everything his father offered him. And he resented it.

Whatever the motivation, for good or ill, Levi had invested a great deal in his errant son. No matter how humiliated he may have been by Daniel's public dissolution, to reject

him or disinherit him would have compounded Levi's failure as a father in the public eye. Even more, apart from the political implications, privately it may have pained him to see his brilliant, talented son squander his future and engage in self-damaging behavior that he was helpless to stop. So although Levi distanced himself, disapproved of Daniel's decisions and communicated with him only rarely in the last two years of his life, in the end he also opened his home to his ill and dying son. Daniel discovered too late that had he gone his own way and had made his own choices, Levi would not have abandoned him.

Along the way, while Daniel tried and failed and tried and failed to be what his father desired, he lost himself. In a particularly poignant letter to Enoch in which he once again deprecated society for its dishonesty and cruelty, his loneliness and isolation are unusually palpable. He complained of feeling adrift and separate from the rest of human intercourse. He was doing the right thing, reading and practicing law, writing and studying the classics, but he still felt himself to be an imposter. Why this gnawing discontented feeling? As a man in his times he could not see how quickly things were changing around him and how the rapidity of change reduced him to feeling like so much societal flotsam and jetsam. He could not step back and see that the life his father planned for him had estranged him from himself. All he knew was that nothing seemed to be turning out as it should have. With so much outside his control and so much beyond his understanding, Daniel laid the blame for his estrangement on nothing less than a divine miscalculation.

I believe our souls must have been strangely bewildered in their passage from heaven or they never could have strayed so far toward the North Pole & stopped amid a moral winter where selfishness locks up all social feeling & interest petrifies every pulse of the heart. This drift of hailstones called Society has no charm for me. I would not melt the paltry things but it chills me to walk among them. Neither you nor I were intended to be

Lincoln or Waldo. There have been some mistakes & it is too late to correct them. Providence slept perhaps.¹³³

¹³³ Daniel Lincoln to Enoch Lincoln, March 8, 1813, DWL Papers.

CONCLUSION

When Daniel Lincoln died in April 1815, the Treaty of Ghent that ended the War of 1812 was only a few months old. Levi Lincoln and other men of the Enlightenment who had founded the nation on principles of honor and virtue were fading from the national scene, replaced by the clatter of innovation and commercialization of an emerging liberal economy. Rumbblings over party politics, slavery and liberty, westward expansion, religion, and economic opportunity that had alternately troubled and intrigued Daniel became the defining issues of his generation in the decades that followed his death.¹ He would not have welcomed the surge of democratic participation from ordinary Americans that came with the rise of Andrew Jackson in the 1820s. He would have been nonplussed by the deepening sectional division over slavery in the 1830s. He would have been aghast at the idea of woman suffrage in the 1840s. And he would have either taken the oath or taken umbrage from the growing activism of the temperance reform movement throughout the antebellum period. His estrangement from the changing cultural values of his times would not have become easier to bear had he lived to see them.

Daniel was not the only Lincoln son who felt cruelly buffeted by the shifting cultural landscape and his uncertainty of his place in it. Three of Daniel's surviving brothers lived

¹ Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*, 177. For an expansive synthesis of the United States in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

lonely, and in the case of William, despairing, private lives. Only one of the five Lincoln sons, Levi Jr., married and had a family.²



Fig. 15. Levi Lincoln, Governor of Massachusetts, by J. E. McClees. Reprinted from Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b09013>.

As the family's greatest success, Levi Jr., began his political life as ferociously partisan as his father. But as Federalist power began to wane during his first decade of public life, he emerged as a moderate consensus candidate finding support from voters of both parties. He later became a Whig.³ Levi Jr.'s political acumen got him elected nine times governor of Massachusetts and five times representative to the United States House of Representatives. He was also the first mayor of incorporated Worcester. Friends described him as diligent, judicious, and dignified, but not a particularly eloquent orator.⁴ Others noted

² Levi Lincoln, Jr. had married Penelope Winslow Sever in 1807. Penelope Sever was the granddaughter of John Chandler, the leading Worcester Tory who fled the county during the Revolutionary War. Chandler's "abandoned" farms were bought by the patriot Levi Lincoln, Sr. Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 282. The Lincoln daughters, Martha and Rebecca, both married lawyers (Leonard Parker and Rejoice Newton respectively). Martha had three daughters, dying when giving birth to the third in 1822. All three girls were raised by her sister Rebecca who had three children of her own. Rebecca's first son, born in 1818, was named for her brother Daniel Lincoln. The boy died in childhood two years later. Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family An Account of the Descendants of Samuel Lincoln of Hingham Massachusetts 1637-1920* (Boston: Goodspeed Bookshop, 1920), 163-164.

³ Ronald P. Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 81-3. Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 278-83.

⁴ Emory Washburn, "Memoir of Hon. Levi Lincoln," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society 1869-1870* 11 (1871): 80.

that he always wore a full dress suit and that “his manners were meticulously correct, his speech precise.”⁵ His relationship with his brother Daniel, always seemed distant. Daniel seldom mentioned him in his letters, except on one occasion when he praised an address Levi delivered to the Worcester Light Infantry. Another time he wistfully commented that he envied Levi’s family life. But even then he immediately backed away from his admission by belittling the married Levi as “...like an Esquimaux Indian is confined in the smoke & dirt of his burrow...”⁶ Judging by the extant letters the two brothers lived quite separate lives.

The other three Lincoln brothers, John, William, and Enoch had much closer relationships with Daniel. All three were more successful in their public lives than their private ones. John, a frequent correspondent and occasional harsh critic of his brother Daniel, was Captain of the Worcester Light Infantry and owned a Worcester hardware and dry goods store that he inherited from his uncle, Daniel Waldo. He sold the store in 1822 when his father bequeathed him one of his farms. As much drawn to public service as his brothers were, John served in the General Court as a state representative for four years and as a state senator for another five. Later he became a sheriff of Worcester County, established regular Sunday services in the jail, and presided over the first private execution there. John Lincoln’s rise is particularly remarkable because unlike his brothers, he suffered from a childhood speech disorder that kept him from Harvard’s doors. Instead of providing him an elite education, his parents apprenticed him to Daniel Waldo. It was said John accepted the decision gracefully. But perhaps some bitterness lingered, contributing to the stern,

⁵ Mildred McClary Tymeson, *Rural Retrospect: A Parallel History of Worcester and Its Rural Cemetery* (Worcester, Mass: Albert W. Rice, 1956), 38.

⁶ Daniel Lincoln to John Lincoln, December 22, 1811, DWL Papers.

undemonstrative, and off-putting nature for which he was known. He died unmarried in his sister's house in 1852.⁷

Daniel's youngest brother, William was only fourteen when Daniel died. He went on to attend Harvard, study law with his older brother, and practice in Worcester with his brother-in-law, Rejoice Newton. An amateur historian, William wrote *History of Worcester, Massachusetts* published in 1837, a book still cited by historians. He was, like Daniel, a writer and editor at the *Aegis*. And also like his older brother, William battled addiction. For one period in his adult life, he managed to swear off alcohol so successfully that he became a speaker for the Washingtonian Temperance Society. But his resolve foundered and he succumbed to an opium addiction, dying bankrupt in 1843 at age forty-one.⁸

Among William's papers is a transcription of a letter Daniel had written his father in 1809. In it Daniel solicited his father's understanding of his situation by describing the torment of a former opium user named Ogilvie. "He has obtained a glorious victory over himself," Daniel wrote of Ogilvie. "That this man of most admirable qualities and astonishing abilities has risen like Lazarus from the sepulcher. I can proudly stand up with him & triumphantly say, I too am master of myself."⁹ Perhaps William copied the letter for inspiration and encouragement when he tried and failed to master himself. Perhaps in Daniel's letter he found comfort from a beloved kindred spirit.

⁷ *Reminiscences and Biographical Notices of the Worcester Fire Society*, (Worcester, 1887), 14-8.

⁸ Carolyn J. Lawes, *Women and Reform in a New England Community 1815-1860* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000): 110; Waldo Lincoln, *History of the Lincoln Family*, 289-91; Charles Chase, "William Lincoln" *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 7 (1891): 424-36.

⁹ Daniel Lincoln to Levi Lincoln, June 20, 1809, DWL Papers.

Daniel had no better friend throughout his life than his brother Enoch. Like Daniel, Enoch lived a solitary life.¹⁰ Unlike Daniel, by all accounts Enoch was highly regarded for his “rectitude of judgment.”¹¹ After Daniel’s death, Enoch returned to Maine and lived in Fryeburg, practicing law until 1819 when he was elected to the United States House of Representatives. In 1826 he became the third governor of Maine. He unexpectedly died in October 1829 after giving an oration at the founding of a girl’s academy in Augusta.¹²



Fig. 16. Daguerreotype of Enoch Lincoln in 1827. Reprinted, by permission, Maine Historical Society, *Maine Memory Network*, <http://www.mainememory.net/bin/Detail?ln=28920>

In a surge of inspiration shortly after Daniel’s death, Enoch produced a 2,000 line poem entitled *The Village*.¹³ In rhyming verse, Enoch held forth on the frailties of human

¹⁰ The family genealogy mentions that he was betrothed to Mary Chadbourne Page of Freyburg. Waldo Lincoln, *Lincoln Family History*, 287.

¹¹ Lincoln and Hersey, *History of Worcester*, 207.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Henry Ernest Dunnack, *The Maine Book* (Augusta, Me: [s.n.], 1920), 135-8. Dunnack comments, “We must bear in mind that when this poem appeared in 1816, very little poetry had been written in America. Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, the illustrious trio who have given American poetry a place in the world’s literature, were boys at school. No poem of so wide scope and sustained length as “The Village”, dealing with nature and with man in so many of their aspects, had then appeared in our land. As the production of a young man with no wide experience of the world, it must be considered remarkable, not only for its high standard of right, and its advanced moral sentiment, anticipating many of the reforms of our day, but also for its erudition and its evenly-sustained poetical merit.”

society. He wrote about slavery, Indians, the law, the church, medicine, party spirit, women, and the great evil, intemperance.

O! drive the fiend, Intemperance, away
 Ere vice attack, or ruin seize the prey
 See where the reeling monster stalks around
 How God's redoubled curses blast the ground
 He sits at home, and, life and sense to drown
 Brims the deep bowl and guzzles poison down.¹⁴

As much as Enoch despised liquor and may have blamed it for poisoning and killing his brother, his grief over Daniel appeared in his sympathetic tribute to the physician who tried but failed to save his brother.

He knows full well what hosts of ills destroy
 On life's wide field the proudest hopes of joy
 How health's attack'd and strength and beauty fly
 How genius is cut down and virtues die
 How the high energies of mind and soul
 Bow to the tyrant Death's supreme control
 I know it too and felt it in the blow
 Which laid at once a friend and brother low.¹⁵

Asterisked, at the bottom of the page, was a note from the writer, asking his audience's forgiveness for "a few lines indulged to private feeling."¹⁶

Enoch and Daniel had always shared a strong literary interest and the two brothers frequently discoursed on all kinds of books and poetry. A bibliophile, the four volume library Daniel left at his death offers a pastiche of his political and literary influences. Two are historical and political: *Bonaparte and the French People* by Gustav Schlabrendorf and *An Essay on the Natural Equality of Men* by William Lawrence Brown. Schlabrendorf's book on Napoleon had garnered controversy for the criticism he leveled at Napoleon as a despot and

¹⁴ Enoch Lincoln, *The Village A Poem With an Appendix* (Portland, Me.: Edward Little, 1816), 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60-1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

betrayed the ideals of the French Revolution.¹⁷ Brown's 1792 essay on natural equality posited that social inequalities descended from natural inequalities, an argument that ran counter to the natural rights theory of the founders.¹⁸ The third book, *The Eloquence of the British Senate*, compiled by William Hazlitt, was a two volume collection of famous orations given before Parliament dating back to Charles I. Daniel may have used them as models for his own political oratory.

The fourth book in Daniel's collection was actually three volumes of verse by the mid-eighteenth century poet, Thomas Chatterton. Regarded by scholars as the first Romantic, in early adolescence the brilliant Chatterton had written poetry that he passed off as the creation of a fictitious fifteenth century priest, Thomas Rowley. Once his ruse was exposed the ruckus over the forgery led many to question Chatterton's legitimacy as a poet, ignoring the genius required to render Rowley believable in the first place. Desperate and convinced he would never be well-regarded, just before his eighteenth birthday Chatterton committed suicide by drinking arsenic. Not long after his death in 1770, the great Romantic poets who followed him, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley, all acknowledged a literary debt to Chatterton for his recreation of the vernacular poetical style of the Rowley poems.¹⁹

Daniel would have sympathized with the pathos of Chatterton's short life, his romanticism, the posthumous fame of a poet maligned by those more concerned with reputation than talent. Daniel, too, had been saddled with a reputation as "secluded, unsocial

¹⁷ William McCall, "A Paris Diogenes," *The Argosy: A Magazine of Tales, Travels, Essays, and Poems* (London: Strahan and Company, 1867): 206-7.

¹⁸ Thomas Philip Schofield, "Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution," *The Historical Journal*, 29 (1986): 601-22. Brown's voice contributed to the conservative backlash in Britain to the revolution in France, igniting the Romantic Movement.

¹⁹ Grevel Lindop, "Introduction," *Thomas Chatterton Poems Selected Poems* ed. Grevel Lindop (Manchester, Great Britain Caranet Press, 1972), 7-24.

& misanthropic” that he thought unmerited. People did not see him as he really was.

Describing himself to his friend Joseph Pope, Daniel wrote, “Care may have curled the face of misanthropy into frowns, ill required confidence may have curdled the current of his affections but his heart may throb with agonizing fondness, while it swells with sullen pride & resentment.”²⁰ He may have seen himself as a closeted latter-day Chatterton, talented, lonely, and misunderstood. Daniel had always been prone to depression and for years flirted with notions of early death. Although he did not kill himself by drinking arsenic, his years of over-imbibing also ended in self-annihilation. He well understood the dire consequences of his habits but in a final angry gesture to the world, to his father, to his own self, he surrendered to his addiction.

Daniel Lincoln was a cultural misfit. He was a lawyer who hated the law, a poet without an audience, a politician who scorned the public, a scholar who disdained Harvard, and a man who craved company but isolated himself. But Daniel’s legacy is more than a story of one conflicted man’s failure to find success and happiness. Through his remarkable epistolary record Daniel Lincoln left an autobiography that has defied the family genealogist who minimized him in the family record. Through good luck and salutary neglect, his letters have survived to make an authentic contribution to the historical narrative as an elite conservative Republican woefully out step with his times. Two hundred years later his letters are as provocative and moving as when he first put quill pen to foolscap. Daniel Lincoln has left a legacy equally valuable for its temporal ephemerality as for its affecting human eternality.

²⁰ Daniel Lincoln to Joseph Pope, n.d., DWL Papers.

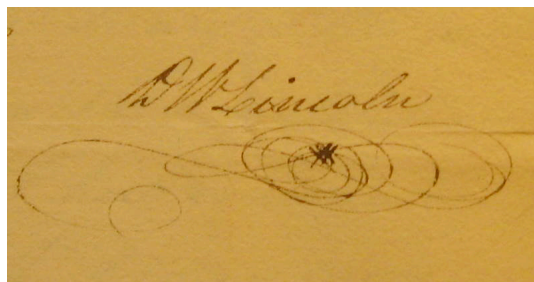
A photograph of a handwritten signature on aged, yellowish paper. The signature is written in a cursive script and reads "D. W. Lincoln". Below the text is a decorative flourish consisting of several overlapping loops and a central star-like mark.

Fig. 17. Signature of Daniel Waldo Lincoln, 1813. Photograph by author.

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