Before the Burr Conspiracy

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Aaron Burr and the Politicians of his Time (1790-1805)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: THE MYSTERIOUS AARON BURR AND THE RISE OF POLITICAL PARTIES*

One thing about Aaron Burr, third vice-president of the United States, opponent of Black slavery, likely traitor, and killer (in a duel) of Alexander Hamilton, the brilliant first secretary of the treasury of the United States (whose handsome, distinguished face graces the US ten-dollar Federal Reserve Note) is certain. No one who met him was indifferent. You either loved him or hated him. The person who hated Burr most was probably Hamilton, followed by Thomas Jefferson, under whom he served as vice-president after attempting, according to some, to steal the presidency from him, a close second.

It is hard to understand why Hamilton despised Burr so passionately. Perhaps it was because the two were so much alike in personality. Hamilton may have projected onto Burr his own most unsavory features—an eagerness to bend the rules for the sake of fame and power; an obsession with winning whatever the cost; the thirst for military command and glory to be attained by conquering French and Spanish possessions in the New World; and a tendency toward womanizing. Whatever the reason, as early as 1792, Hamilton presciently observed, "If we have an embryo Caesar in the United States, 'tis Burr." And this at a time when Burr had done little of an obnoxious nature apart from defeating Hamilton's father-in-law, Philip Schuyler, for a seat in the U.S. Senate.[1] Nonetheless, the

* I wish to thank the distinguished historians, Professor Edward J. Larson of Pepperdine University and Professor Jonathan den Hartog of Samford University, for reading an earlier version of portions of this book.

[1] Alexander Hamilton to [?], Sept. 26, 1792, in Harold C. Syrett, ed., *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (27 vols.; New York, 1961-1987), 12: 480. See also Thomas

most recent study of Jefferson and his colleagues, Jefferson expert Kevin Constantine Gutzman's *Jeffersonians* (2022), views Burr as a political Machiavelli. With some justification, he claims that Burr intended to run for president against Jefferson in 1804.[2]

In many ways, Aaron Burr was the first professional politician to arise in the infant United States. He was involved in politics during the period after the American Revolution, in which he had served with distinction under General Benedict Arnold during the abortive invasion of Canada in 1775. He fought in the Battle of Long Island in 1776 and the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, rising to the rank of colonel. He briefly served as General George Washington's aide de camp in New York City, but his conceited demeanor alienated the commander in chief. Burr became a skilled lawyer and entered politics, his charm and intelligence winning many followers, although by comparison with Founders like Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, and Adams his career was brief and undistinguished.

Hamilton made his negative remarks about Burr even before Burr definitely decided which political party to join, although in 1790 he displaced Hamilton's Federalist father-in-law Philip Schuyler from his U.S. Senate seat. Burr had also declared a preference for George Clinton over John Jay in the recently disputed gubernatorial election of 1792 when

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P. Govan, "Alexander Hamilton and Julius Caesar: A Note on the Use of Historical Evidence," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 32 (July 1975): 475-480, at 477.

[2] Kevin R. Gutzman, *The Jeffersonians* (New York, 2022), 135. In the process, however, Gutzman mistakes Massachusetts Democratic-Republican Benjamin Hichborn's observations in a letter to Jefferson in January 1801, when Burr apparently hoped to beat Jefferson for the presidency in the House of Representatives, for the latter year. See Benjamin Hichborn to Jefferson, January 5, 1801, Founders Online. Gutzman seems accurate in concluding that in 1801, Burr had decided to accept the presidency if the Federalists in the House finagled the election for him. Gutzman criticizes Burr in "A Founder of Nothing," a review of Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York, 2007), in *Modern Age* 50, no. 2 (March 2008): 173-176. See also Thomas N. Baker, "'An Attack Well Directed': Aaron Burr Intrigues for the Presidency," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31.4 (Winter 2011): 553-598, 561 n.9. For Burr's likely plans to run for president in 1804, see John J. Turner, "The Twelfth Amendment and the First American Party System," *The Historian: A Journal of History*, 35, no. 2 (Feb. 1973): 221-237.

the canvassers in the state legislature requested his opinion. During the latter episode, Burr further consolidated his power within the Clintonian Republican party, despite continuing to affect a nonpartisan stance. His attempt to convince New York Federalists of his impartiality briefly won him their attention as a possible candidate for governor. Nonetheless, when the canvassers contacted Burr, who as a US senator carried some weight in the matter, for his opinion on the validity of the ballots, unlike his Federalist colleague Rufus King he decided in favor of Clinton. His most recent (and sympathetic) biographer praises the wording of his decision as a model of "candor, republican ideals and the pursuit of justice."[3]

However, Burr was not as impartial as he purported to be. He was already nominally in Clinton's camp, and behind the scenes, he maneuvered to create his own personal party. He apparently permanently alienated Hamilton by defeating his father-in-law for the Senate in 1790 and preferring Clinton to Jay in the gubernatorial election of 1792. Nonetheless, Burr hoped to retain the support and friendship of other leading Federalists, such as Hamilton's political lieutenant, Congressman Theodore Sedgwick of Massachusetts, and Governor Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut. When he asked them to concur with his purportedly impartial decision on the election returns, they instead wrote pamphlets denouncing his Clintonian partisanship. Attempting to preserve his friendship with Sedgwick, Burr wrote him, "It is at all times difficult to differ in opinion with one we love." Nevertheless, Sedgwick, who had

[3] Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York, 2007), 113 (quotation). *Fallen Founder,* by Nancy Isenberg, Burr's most recent biographer, is valuable, but there is little effort to examine contemporary partisan opinion, Federalist or Republican, on Burr's reputation. On Burr's alleged character of nonpartisanship at this time, see ibid., 109. Isenberg's account of the election of 1792 extends from 103-115. In this paper, I use the terms "Republican" and "Democratic-Republican" interchangeably, although Jeffersonians more often used the former term. Federalists tended to call them "antifederalists" and "Democrats."

briefly favored Burr for governor, broke off ties with him for several years.[4]

Shortly after the election of 1792, Burr courted prominent Republican Party members. He wanted a powerful Virginia Republican leader, James Monroe, who served with him in the Senate, to understand that he was devoted to the "Republican Interest." Burr's actions in these instances were not fraudulent, dishonest, or dictatorial, as Hamilton seemingly depicted them; they were legitimate parts of the political game. He emphasized his support for Clinton in the election, differing with his fellow New York Senator Rufus King, a Federalist who concluded that Jay not Clinton, whose partisans allegedly stole ballot boxes in various pro-Jay locations, received the most votes and was the legitimate governor. Burr told Monroe that his support for Clinton had gained him the enmity of the Federalists, who denounced him in "resolutions and addresses" that threatened to disturb social tranquility. "These disorders received *direct countenance from Mr. Jay*," he warned, "and were openly promoted and inflamed by his advocates."[5]

The 1790s was a period when modern political parties, which for all practical purposes first originated on a national level in the United States during the debates over the U.S. Constitution and persisted after its ratification, were in process of development. Because of political parties' novelty and their need to appeal to various social, economic and religious groups for support and votes, at the outset the public, and the politicians (when it came to their political opponents, but not themselves), conceived of political parties and their leaders as tainted by corruption and dubiously legitimate vehicles of public opinion. The parties that developed during the 1790s, the Republicans and Federalists, held conflicting attitudes toward the idea of popular rule (sometimes called "democracy"), with the Federalists believing that the people themselves were not equipped to

[4] Ibid., 114 (quotation). Isenberg interprets this incident as revealing that Burr "maintained the belief that it was possible to rise above partisan bitterness and retain friendship with an opponent." Ibid.

[5] Burr to Monroe, Sept. 10, 1792, in Preston, ed., *Monroe Papers*, 2: 557. Burr's emphasis. Monroe, who along with Jefferson and other Republican leaders thought that Jay had actually won more votes than Clinton, did not reply.

decide on public issues but needed a wealthy elite of the "rich, the well-born, and the able," as John Jay put it, to guide them. They also favored a strong national government empowered to act in diverse social and economic conditions and override the component state governments in various matters, especially "constitutional" questions. The Republican Party had more confidence in the people's ability to rule, including the middle and lower classes. Although Republicans ostensibly favored the farm interests and the Federalists represented the urban merchants and manufacturers, both parties were comprised of members of diverse economic occupations and regions; and they *prima facie* needed to appeal foremost to the overwhelmingly rural majority.[6]

Attempting to attract members of both parties with his charm, vacillations on national issues, and lack of a distinct political philosophy (and, some might say, ethical values), Burr was a mid-level politician. He recruited young Matthew Livingston Davis, David Gelston, and other loyal followers to form the rudiments of the nation's first political machine, encompassing Tammany Hall and his own diffuse cliques. Burr was neither rich nor poor. Most of his income arose from his legal practice; he lost much of it by indulging in reckless land speculations and being excessively generous to friends. He gained a posthumous reputation as one who charged high fees. He never came close to possessing the power, intellectual and literary distinction, and reputation of his professional and/or political rivals, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, either with his contemporaries or with posterity.[7]

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[6] Standard studies of the origins of political parties in the 1790s and the antiparty rhetoric that obscured the partisan reality are listed in notes 9 and 272 below. See also Jasper M. Trautsch, *Genesis of America* (Cambridge, 2018); and Gerald F. Leonard and Saul B. Cornell, *The Partisan Republic* (Cambridge, 2019); Anthony King, *Founding Fathers v. the People* (Cambridge, Mass., 2012); Saul B. Cornell, *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalists and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788-1828* (Chapel Hill, 1999).

[7] See Jerome Mushkat, "Matthew Livingston Davis and the Political Legacy of Aaron Burr," *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (1975): 123-148.

According to Burr's most thorough biographer, "Burr's sins existed for the most part in the eyes of his beholders."[8] Was he a great deceiver? This work attempts to find out more about what people who observed Aaron Burr thought about him. Admittedly, we learn little about what Burr thought or what motivated him by learning what his contemporaries said about him. However, unlike us, those who saw and perhaps spoke to Burr in his lifetime gained a more direct impression of him than is possible now, when we don't have that opportunity. My *modus operandi* in this essay is to examine political leaders, big and small. I try to concentrate most on those of middle rank, who had less reason for jealousy or resentment toward Burr, and were more likely to form a relatively objective assessment of him than those at the highest rungs of the political ladder. These latter, who in some ways considered themselves an exclusive, aristocratic elite, generally regarded Burr as a dangerous, unqualified interloper on their rarefied sphere of high-level office holding, and thus had reason to automatically despise him and suspect his motives from the beginning.[9]

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[8] Milton Lomask, quoted in Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, *Age of Federalism, 1788-1800* (New York, 1993), 746.

[9] The best studies of the origins and development of political parties appeared in the 1950s and 1960s. They include Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans: the Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801* (Chapel Hill, 1957); Cunningham, *Jeffersonian Republicans in Power: Party Operations, 1801-1809* (Chapel Hill, 1963); Stephen G. Kurtz, *The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism, 1795-1800* (Philadelphia, 1958); Manning J. Dauer, *The Adams Federalists* (Baltimore, 1953); Alfred F. Young, *The Democratic-Republicans of New York: The Origins, 1763-1797* (Chapel Hill, 1967); Richard Hofstadter, *Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969); William N. Chambers, *Political Parties in a New Nation: The American Experience, 1776-1809* (New York, 1963); John C. Miller, *The Federalist Era, 1789-1801* (New York, 1960). More recent surveys include James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (New Haven, 1993); Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty* (New York, 2009); Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, *Age of Federalism, 1788-1800* (New York, 1993); Norman K. Risjord, *Chesapeake Politics, 1780-1800* (New York, 1980); Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy* (Lawrence, Kansas, 2016). George Washington, probably the most popular political leader of the times, was generally aligned with Hamilton, especially after 1793. Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The*

Most Americans know nothing about Burr, except perhaps that he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. Yet, in his time, he aroused intense emotions on the part of friend and foe alike. Aside from dwelling on Hamilton's antipathy toward Burr, which ultimately led to Hamilton's death, scholars have seldom asked themselves what other political figures thought about Burr. In fact, Burr was involved in politics intermittently from 1785 until 1805. He exerted influence over the national political scene as early as 1792, when he was a U.S. senator. At that time, a congeries of diverse New York leaders, led by the former Antifederalists Melancton Smith and Marinus Willett, advocated his vice-presidential candidacy.

In making a preliminary effort to ascertain how Burr's contemporaries in the political world perceived him as a politician and a person, I traverse relatively new territory. Major historians, including such distinguished scholars as Gordon S. Wood and Kevin R. Gutzman, assume that Burr was a self-interested, dangerous scoundrel. They argue that he cared solely about feathering his political and personal nest. A consummate demagogue, he would have preferred to sponsor unsavory, alleged secessionist plots in Louisiana and the West and rule the seceded Western states and Mexico as emperor, rather than continue in oblivion as a stymied presidential aspirant in 1800-01 and the defeated candidate for governor of New York and murderer of Alexander Hamilton three years later. Burr's biographers, as well as historian Joanne B. Freeman and several experts on the election of 1800, are generally more sympathetic to him.[10]

Tyranny of Printers': Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic (Charlottesville, 2001), (Charlottesville, 2001), emphasizes the snobbery of political leaders of both parties during the early republic, before "Jacksonian Democracy" took hold in the 1820s.

[10] For instance, John Sedgwick, *War of Two: Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, and the Duel that Stunned a* Nation (New York, 2015), insists that Burr cold-bloodedly murdered Hamilton; Gordon S. Wood, "The Real Treason of Aaron Burr," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 143 (June 1999), 280-295; David O. Stewart, *American Emperor: Aaron Burr's Challenge to Jefferson's America* (New York, 2011). Isenberg's biography is the first recent, major study of Burr to emphasize his essential political integrity and proto-feminism, and to compare him favorably with Hamilton. Despite her controversial interpretations,

My attempt to discover how the most important Federalist and Republican leaders, and also several middle-rank, relatively secondary figures, viewed Burr has garnered some surprising results. (Hamilton is relatively excluded, as his negative opinion of Burr is well known.) I assume that, after such events in 1804 as his duel with Hamilton and his unsuccessful bid for the governorship of New York on a dissenting Republican, pro-Federalist ticket, Burr had already made his share of irreconcilable enemies. I further infer that during and after his disgraceful, ostensible treason in 1806, no one could fairly evaluate his merits. Consequently, this work concentrates on the period from 1790 to 1805, ending with Burr's vice-presidency from 1801-1805. During these years, there existed at least a possibility that observers might be able to evaluate him objectively.

During his initial forays into national public life, Burr acquired some surprising friendships among political leaders of the Federalist Party, including his lifelong friend William Paterson, associate justice of the US Supreme Court, and famed lawyer Tapping Reeve, Burr's tutor during his childhood in Elizabethtown, New Jersey and briefly a Princeton faculty member. Reeve married Burr's sister Sarah in 1772, and founded the first formal law school in America at Litchfield, Connecticut. In 1798, he became a state superior court judge. A devout Presbyterian, friend of leading revivalist Rev. Lyman Beecher and member of the Connecticut Bible Society, Reeve was among Jefferson's most bitter Federalist critics during his presidency. Connecticut Republicans briefly prosecuted Reeve for seditious libel at common law in 1806-1807, but his relative by marriage, Burr's uncle, federal district court Judge Pierpont Edwards, discontinued the prosecution in Hartford's federal circuit court.[11]

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leading historians have praised her work and often found its arguments convincing. See the reviews by James E. Lewis in *Journal of the Early Republic*, 28, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 132-134; Michael Kammen, *Journal of Historical B*iography, 4 (Autumn 2008): 72-76; Stuart Leibiger, *The Historian*, 72, no. 4 (Winter 2010): 930-931; and Suzanne Geissler, *Journal of American History*, 95, no. 3 (Dec. 2008): 821-822.

[11] Mary-Jo Kline, ed., *Political Correspondence and Public Papers of Aaron Burr* (2 vols.; Princeton, 1983), 1: 1x-lxi. See biographies of Tapping Reeve in *American National Biography* and *Dictionary of American Biography*. For Reeve's prosecution by Republicans in Connecticut's federal court, see Arthur Scherr,

The 1790s, when Burr rose to political power, was the time that political parties and a partisan press were forming. Although many nonpartisan newspapers existed, these prints generally emphasized local news and eschewed political analysis. The newspapers best known to us were, especially after 1792 or 1793, vehemently partisan, either for Federalist or Republican candidates. They were usually drawn to Thomas Jefferson or Alexander Hamilton or their associates, or to individual candidates whose party labels were yet unclear but whose personal magnetism or political and economic influence and power caused contemporaries to love or hate them. The most important newspapers of the time were often *prima facie* biased in favor of one candidate, party, or faction or another. Newspaper editors' outlooks on individuals like Burr were seldom derived from personal contact with him or most other political participants, apart from those whose political views they favored and whose patronage and support they received. Thus, newspapers generally could not be relied upon to discuss political figures' personalities and demeanors objectively. The newspapers' "correspondents"—a phrase that in those days usually was a pseudonym for the editor or his acquaintances—seldom personally interacted with the political figures they praised or blamed.[12]

I have considered these factors in preferring to stick primarily to individual opinions rather than poring over the small print of dozens of

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Thomas Jefferson's Image of New England: Nationalism versus Sectionalism in the Young Republic (Jefferson, N.C., 2016), chapters 8 and 9.

[12] Major studies of the partisan press include Donald H. Stewart, *Opposition Press of the Federalist Period* (Albany, 1969); Jeffrey L. Pasley, *Tyranny of Printers*, and Marcus L. Daniel, *Scandal and Civility: Journalism and the Birth of American Democracy* (Princeton, 2009). See also Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York, 1986); Jeffery A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* (New York, 1988); Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* ((Cambridge, Mass., 1990); Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); Culver H. Smith, *The Press, Politics, and Patronage: The American Government's Use of Newspapers, 1789-1875* (Athens, Ga., 1977); Arthur Scherr, "To 'Alarm the Publick Mind': A Reexamination of Pamphlets and Newspapers in Philadelphia and the Early Republic," *Pennsylvania History* 83, no. 3 (Summer 2016): 297-336. Linda K. Kerber, *Federalists in Dissent* (New York, 1966) is the closest approximation to a study of the Federalist press.

newspapers, which becomes even more hazardous when one resorts to such unwieldy blessings of the Internet as "Early American Newspapers" or "America's Historical Newspapers" rather than the originals. Although these Internet sources are extremely useful and incomparably better than their predecessor, Micro-cards, their reproductions are sometimes blurred and difficult to access (among the vicissitudes of using online resources). I have decided to concentrate my research on political and personal attitudes toward Burr from the 1790s up to his final session of the Senate as vice-president in 1805 because this period was the time when assessments and commentaries on him were probably most objective. After the duel with Hamilton, and especially after his trial for treason, Burr gained a categorical reputation for dishonesty, individualistic opportunism, and antipathy to the self-sacrificing virtue allegedly exuded by political leaders in the new republic.[13]

Admittedly, it is a risky undertaking to employ the past to understand the present and predict the future. Yet, recognition that modern times were not the only period when intense political conflict existed reveals that even in the glorified, ostensibly august era of the "Founding Fathers," politics and personalities were unstable. Moreover, political differences between individuals often ended in physical violence, occasionally resulting in outcomes that leaders of today's major parties would not tolerate, such as fatal duels. In this unstable milieu, leading citizens feared and/or expected the republic's eventual disintegration. Aaron Burr, who did not fear violence in defense of his political and personal honor, became a center of anxiety for some of the republic's leaders, especially after he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel.[14]

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[13] On the public's association of Burr with conscienceless opportunism and the lawless western frontier during and after his trial for treason in 1807, see Joseph Fichtelberg, "The Devil Designs a Career: Aaron Burr and the Shaping of Enterprise," *Early American Literature* 41, no. 3 (November 2006): 495-513.

[14] Joanne B. Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April 1996): 289-318.

CHAPTER 2

BURR'S BIOGRAPHERS: AN OVERVIEW

An early biographer of Burr, the ubiquitous *litterateur* James Parton, purveyed an ambivalent view of him. In his first biography of Burr, written before the Civil War, Parton viewed the years from 1788-1800, the period of Burr's greatest political prominence, as the most important in U.S. history. He argued that nothing very significant took place afterwards, mainly because the Democratic Party's reign had gone virtually uninterrupted. "Nothing considerable has occurred in American politics since the election of Jefferson and Burr in 1800," he concluded.[15] Parton elevated Burr as "the preeminent gentleman and model man of the world, of that age." His favorable impression of Burr was likely nurtured by reliance on Matthew L. Davis's hagiographic *Memoirs of Aaron Burr* (1836-1837). Davis was Burr's closest political associate and protégé, and in his opinion, Burr could do no wrong, at least not in his politics, although Davis admitted that he was unfortunately libidinous in his personal life.[16]

In a later edition of the biography, Parton was more critical of Burr. He considered Burr a man of honor and virtue, except when adherence to

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[15] Parton, *Burr* (1858), xi.

[16] Ibid., 340. Despite several factual errors, including the statements that Matthew L. Davis's biography stridently denounced Burr and that Burr lost the presidential election of 1800 by one electoral vote, Thomas A. Foster, "Sex and Public Memory of Founder Aaron Burr," *Common-Place*, 15, no. 1 (Fall 2014), shows that most of Burr's biographers defended him against charges of public and private immorality. They denied earlier charges that as a Revolutionary War officer, he seduced minors, among them Margaret Moncrieffe and a "Miss Bullock." They emphasize his fidelity to his first wife, Theodosia Prevost, who was ten years his senior and not especially fetching; and ignore his later, short-lived marriage to Eliza Jumel, who divorced him for adultery shortly before he died.

these laudable traits interfered with his overreaching ambition. Parton starts out by saying that Burr's critics have treated him unfairly. "To suppress the good qualities and deeds of a Burr is only less immoral than to suppress the faults of a Washington," he cryptically observed.[17] Although he said there was a "great amount of good" in Burr, his goodness was seemingly run-of-the-mill, consisting of "amiability," not based on "fixed, intelligent principles." Burr's obedience to the laws was rooted in his respect for "public opinion, and by a natural inclination to the easy and popular virtues." Unfortunately, his "natural inclinations" to "virtue and honor" were overwhelmed by the temptations of "Opportunity" and ambition, leading him to condone and perform unethical actions. Although Burr was handsome, intelligent, diligent and enterprising, he lacked an indispensable quality for contributing to the public welfare: "a Conscience enlightened and controlling." Parton ends up negatively appraising Burr as someone who failed to "comply with society's fundamental values."[18]

In recent years, Burr's reputation has noticeably improved in the eyes of several prominent historians, particularly regarding the question whether he encouraged Federalist attempts to replace Jefferson with him in the House of Representatives' balloting when they each received 73 electoral votes, even though the voters intended Jefferson for president and Burr for vice-president. (Before the Twelfth Amendment in 1804, the US Constitution did not distinguish between electoral votes cast for president and those for vice-president, only stating that the individual with most electoral votes would be president and the second most vice-president. If they received an equal number of electoral votes, the House of Representatives would pick the winner, not by counting the number of congressional delegates voting for each person, but by counting the number of states in Congress favoring each candidate; the one with a majority of states would win.) For lack of a definite "smoking gun" inculpating Burr, several scholars exonerate him. Roger Kennedy, Nancy Isenberg, and Joanne Freeman go so far as to depict him as a man of honor whose loyalty to Jefferson forbade him to

[17] James Parton, *Life and Times of Aaron Burr* (New York, 1858), x.
[18] James Parton, *Life and Times of Aaron Burr* (2d edn., 2 vols.; Boston, 1867), 1: viii-x.

promote his candidacy and popularity with the opposition party, the Federalists.[19]

Written primarily for popular consumption despite being published by Oxford University Press, Roger G. Kennedy's *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (2000), based mainly on secondary sources, argued that Jefferson, not Burr, was the blatant deceiver and liar. According to Kennedy, Jefferson had been making a fool of Burr ever since 1796, when Burr received only one electoral vote from Virginia despite the promise of Jefferson's friends that he would get 20. Indeed, Kennedy insists, Burr was a virtuous and honest politician, better than most of the rest, beloved by such diverse notables as John Jay, John and Abigail Adams, John Marshall, Albert Gallatin, and John Randolph of Roanoke. According to Kennedy, these worthies thought that he would make a better president than Jefferson would.[20] Unsurprisingly, he offers

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[19] Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, 2001), esp. chapter 5; Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York, 2007); Roger G. Kennedy's *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (New York, 2000).

[20] Roger G. Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (New York, 2000), 165, 167, 185, 187, 258, 301, 329, 429. Lomask and Kennedy seem to agree that foremost political leaders Albert Gallatin and Edward Livingston, possibly because of their New York connections, favored Burr over Jefferson for the presidency. Lomask unconvincingly states that Gallatin urged Burr to visit Washington, D.C. in December 1800 to lobby for the presidential prize. Lomask, *Burr*, 288; Kennedy, *Hamilton, Jefferson*, 168. Convinced that Burr could have persuaded enough Republicans to support him in the House of Representatives for him to defeat Jefferson, Kennedy praises Burr as an honorable man for rejecting Nicholson's and Gallatin's advice that he further court the Federalists. He also argues that Jefferson sent Congressman Samuel Smith to negotiate with Delaware delegate James A. Bayard and others for Federalist votes because he distrusted Gallatin. Kennedy, *Hamilton, Jefferson*, 168. Bayard, who at the outset was a vigorous Burr supporter, was disappointed when Edward Livingston, whom he had urged to encourage Burr to fight for the presidency, denied having any influence over him. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor*, 250-251. In a recent article based on new evidence, historian Thomas N. Baker argues that Burr dispatched his partisans to Washington to manipulate Congressional representatives like Edward Livingston and James A. Bayard to vote for him. Thomas N. Baker, "'An Attack Well Directed': Aaron Burr Intrigues for the Presidency," *Journal of the Early Republic* 31.4 (Winter 2011): 553-598. Baker disparages Joanne Freeman's thesis that friendship and honor rather than partisanship and issues primarily motivated US

no proof that Jay and Adams had positive feelings about Burr (although Adams regretted that he did not recruit him as a political ally during his presidency by appointing him an officer); and Adams, especially during the elections of 1796 and 1800 and in his old age, often expressed contempt for him. (However, as examined further below, there is some basis for the claim that Abigail Adams favored Burr.)

There are other examples of the unreliability of Kennedy's scholarship. He claims that Burr worked in the New York assembly behind the scenes during the 1790s to agitate for "manumission laws" for slaves, although such laws (permitting slave owners to emancipate their slaves without

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political leaders' decision-making in the Early Republic. Baker denies that Burr was a man of honor who refused to connive with the Federalists to gain the presidency. He observes, "In *Affairs of Honor,* Aaron Burr figures more or less implausibly as the consummate gentleman whose pledge of honor to Jefferson and his fellow Republicans in 1800 will not allow him to gratify his ambitions." Baker, "Attack Well Directed," 557 (quotation). He also mocks Nancy Isenberg's unusually favorable view of Burr, observing, "As Jefferson's star has waned, some scholars… have sought to rehabilitate" Burr, "casting him in this story as a self-denying statesman." Ibid., 554. Edward J. Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800* (New York, 2007), 246-262, carefully investigates Burr's activities, and cautiously concludes that he remained undecided about how to act, in the process ruining his chances for the presidency. Although Larson does not think that Burr actively conspired with the Federalists to gain victory over Jefferson, he negatively comments that the Federalists revealed their partisan obsessions when they revealed that they would "choose to give the presidency to the wildly ambitious but unprincipled" Burr rather than to Jefferson, the acknowledged Republican leader who was entitled to win. Larson, *Magnificent Catastrophe*, 244. Larson concludes that Burr believed that he could get enough Republican votes in the House of Representatives to win the presidency in 1801, and counted on the Federalists to continue to support him unanimously without his intervention. Therefore, his conduct remained equivocal and enigmatic. Ibid., 246-247. An overlooked article, Jennifer Van Bergen, "Aaron Burr and the Electoral Tie of 1801: Strict Constitutional Construction," in *Cardozo Public Law, Policy and Ethics Journal*, 1 (2003): 91-130, uniquely, and without factual or logical support, claims that Jefferson immorally bargained with the Federalists, circumventing the Constitution to gain the presidency, while Burr virtuously refused to negotiate with them. Merely obeying the Constitution by refusing to resign in Jefferson's favor, allowing the House of Representatives to make an unbiased decision, he exhibited integrity, not inordinate ambition. She says that before the election debacle, Burr "enjoyed over twenty-five years of favor in the public eye" (91).

permission from government officials) had been in effect since before 1712. Moreover, after 1785 Burr attended the state assembly only in the years from 1797-1799, and although he probably voted for the 1799 gradual emancipation law, there is no evidence that he initiated or promoted it.[21]

Kennedy's efforts to prove that Jefferson hated and deceived Burr from early on in their acquaintance also rest on shaky ground. For example, Kennedy wrote that in 1792 Burr, a U.S. senator, requested to examine State Department archives in order to familiarize himself with U.S. foreign policies. Jefferson, who was secretary of state at the time, granted him access to these documents, but after a few months closed the files to him, claiming that the most recent correspondence of U.S. ministers was classified information, which Burr found offensive. Although Kennedy presents this as "proof" of Jefferson's antipathy to Burr, Lomask's biography, the only source he cites, claimed that Burr regarded this slight as evidence of President Washington's hostility, not Jefferson's. Indeed, the incident may not have occurred, since the only source that Lomask cited was Matthew L. Davis's *Memoirs of Aaron Burr*. There are no documents connected with this matter in the *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*.[22]

In addition, Kennedy untenably asserts that Jefferson disliked Burr because Burr staunchly opposed slavery, overlooking the fact that Burr's opposition to slavery, when he startlingly proposed abolition in the

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[21] Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton,* 164. For New York's manumission laws in the early eighteenth century, see Edgar J. McManus, *Black Bondage in the North* (Syracuse, 2001), 130, 172. In 1785, the New York assembly passed a manumission law that permitted manumission of young slaves in good health without requiring owners to post a two-hundred-pound bond. Ibid., 172. "Act granting a bounty on hemp… and for other purposes, therein mentioned," passed April 12, 1785, chapter 68, *Laws of the State of New York Passed at the Sessions of the Legislature* (5vols.; Albany, 1886-1887), 2: 121.

[22] Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton,* 164; Lomask, Burr, 1: 158. Kennedy also claimed, without evidence that Hamilton and Jefferson united to deprive Burr of appointment as U.S. minister to France in 1794, although in fact Burr was too shaken by the recent illness and death of his wife Theodosia, who died on May 18, 1794, to desire that post. Burr to Pierpont Edwards, May 30, 1794, *Burr Papers*, 1: 182n. He wrote James Monroe, who received the appointment, that he harbored no ill feelings about it. Burr to Monroe, May 30, 1794, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress. See below.

assembly in 1785, was spontaneous and short-lived. Jefferson took stronger action against slavery when he was in Congress than Burr did as a U.S. senator a decade later. Moreover, Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* was the only antislavery volume by a major public figure during the Revolutionary period. Neither Jefferson nor any of Burr's contemporaries associated Burr with an antislavery perspective.[23]

Perhaps because of current public antipathy toward Jefferson as a hypocritical, philandering slaveholder, and Burr's credentials as an ephemeral foe of slavery in the New York assembly during the 1780s, his reputation has grown among biographers in recent years as well as among historians who analyze his reputedly ambiguous role in confronting the electoral tie with Jefferson in 1801. Among those willing to view Burr with a less jaundiced outlook are Joanne B. Freeman; Edward J. Larson; Bruce Ackerman; Jennifer Van Bergen; Bernard A. Weisberger; Roger G. Kennedy; Stanley M. Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick; Milton Lomask; and Joseph G. Rayback.[24]

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[23] Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton*, 166.

[24] Recent studies relatively sympathetic to Burr's conduct during the election of 1800-1801 include Edward J. Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign* (New York, 2007), 246–49, 258–62; Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (New Haven, CT, 2001), 199–261; Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York, 2007), 177–220; Bernard A. Weisberger, *America Afire: Jefferson, Adams, and the First Contested Election* (New York, 2000), 258–77; Roger G. Kennedy, *Burr, Hamilton, and Jefferson: A Study in Character* (New York, 1999), 164–68; Bruce A. Ackerman, *The Failure of the Founding Fathers: Jefferson, Marshall, and the Rise of Presidential Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2005), 36–92; Susan Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism* (Boston, 2004), 190–217; Jennifer Van Bergen, "Aaron Burr and the Electoral Tie of 1801: Strict Constitutional Construction," *Cardoza Public Law Policy & Ethics Journal* 92 (May 2003), 91–130; Stanley M. Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788–1800* (New York, 1993), 743–50; Milton Lomask, *Aaron Burr: The Years from Princeton to Vice President, 1756–1805* (New York, 1979), 268–95; Joseph G. Rayback, "The Presidential Ambitions of Aaron Burr, 1800–1801," in *Toward a New View of America: Essays in Honor of Arthur C. Cole*, ed. Hans L. Trefousse (New York, 1977), 35–77. Among the most discerning studies, Larson's *Magnificent Catastrophe* points out that, although the Federalists expected Burr to appoint them to office if they elected him president in the House

Apparently, historian Nancy Isenberg, author of the most recent (and most highly publicized) biography of Burr, exaggerates when she claims that biographers and historians have been unkind to him and even slandered him. His main biographers preceding her, Nathan Schachner and especially Milton Lomask, who wrote a competent two-volume biography of Burr, admired Burr. Lomask goes to pains to depict Hamilton as a deceiver, and mocks Hamilton's promise in a letter to his wife before the duel that he intended to hold his fire on that occasion.[25] (Ron Chernow, Hamilton's foremost biographer, would of course differ). Isenberg seemingly reads Elkins' and McKitrick's assessment of Burr as more negative than it is. Although they call him a "deviant," this is more tongue-in-cheek on their part than meant seriously, as is their implication that Burr lied, although they do not claim that he lied more than Hamilton and Jefferson, as she asserts. Isenberg takes literally their metaphorical comment that "Burr's private life was far more interesting than that of any other man of his time of whom much is known, most of them having lived theirs out in settings devoid of décor or scenery." She objects that this statement is "absurd" because Washington and Jefferson resided in far more ornate plantation establishments; however, Elkins and McKitrick were talking metaphorically about the exciting and sensual ambience in which Burr lived his life. Isenberg also criticizes War of 1812 expert J.C.A. Stagg for being too harshly critical of Burr.[26]

Milton Lomask, author of what is probably the most detailed study of Burr, views him as more concerned with the public good and his political "independence" than with illegitimately acquiring wealth and office. (Apparently Lomask's term "independence" is a euphemism for Burr's

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of Representatives balloting in 1801, this was essentially wishful thinking on their part: "No solid evidence exists that he ever promised anything in exchange for their support" (249).

[25] Lomask, *Aaron Burr*, 352-353. Nancy Isenberg has written the most thorough bibliographical essays on Burr: '"I Come to Bury Caesar': Burr Biographers on Jefferson," in Robert M. S. McDonald, ed., *Thomas Jefferson's Lives* (Charlottesville, 2019), 121-148, and *Fallen Founder*, 405-414.

[26] Isenberg, "I Come to Bury Caesar." Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, *Age of Federalism, 1788-1800* (New York, 1993), 745 (quotation); John Charles Anderson Stagg, "The Enigma of Aaron Burr," *Reviews in American History* 12, no. 3 (Sept. 1984): 378-382.

reluctance to expound his political principles, although in dealing with Republican leaders like Jefferson and Monroe he insisted on his "republicanism"). Lomask conceives of Burr as a man of honor, and denies that he schemed to steal the presidential election from Jefferson in the House of Representatives in 1801. He charges Jefferson and Hamilton with political opportunism, not Burr.[27]

Lomask stresses that Burr idolized his first wife and his daughter, both of them named Theodosia. The day before the duel with Hamilton, he revealingly wrote his son-in-law, "I commit to you all that is most dear to me—my reputation and my daughter." He instructed him to guide Theodosia in learning "Latin, English, and all branches of natural philosophy." In a letter to his daughter, an informal last will and testament, also written the day before the duel (she and her husband were in South Carolina, not New York), he regretted that he had nothing to leave her. "My estate will just about pay my debts and no more," he admitted. However, he was so concerned about his slaves that if he should die, he requested her to convey a "small lot… worth about two hundred and fifty dollars" to one of them, apparently with his liberty. (Coincidentally, this was a sum large enough to enable the Black to vote for the governor and state senate under the 1777 state constitution.)[28]

Lomask's upbeat interpretation of Burr as a decent, honorable family man and ethical politician results in some eccentric conclusions. For example, he argues that Hamilton opposed Burr's candidacy for New York's governorship in 1804, not because he feared that Burr would join New England Federalists in separating New York from the Union, but because he feared that Burr's political adroitness would result in Burr's "Democratic" Party's hegemony over the Federalists in New York. Hamilton admired Burr's political acumen. Tired of Hamilton's "song of hate," the Federalists put their trust in Burr.[29] Seemingly sharing

[27] Milton Lomask, *Aaron Burr: The Years from Princeton to Vice President, 1756–1805* (New York, 1979).
[28] Aaron Burr to Joseph Alston, Burr to Theodosia Burr Alston, both July 10, 1804, quoted ibid., 351-352.
[29] Ibid., 338. Lomask defended Burr's conduct in the duel with Hamilton. Ibid., 354-355.

Hamilton's opinion that Burr was a skillful politician but arguing to the contrary that he would have used his talents for good purposes, Lomask argued that if Burr became governor of New York, he would have resisted the New England Federalists and adopted an independent course that tilted toward the Republicans.[30]

While admitting that William Coleman, editor of the *New-York Evening Post*, a newspaper Hamilton founded, went against his mentor and supported Burr, Lomask nonetheless decries the unwarranted persecution that Burr endured in the press. For example, James Cheetham, the Jeffersonian editor of the New York *American Citizen*, charged that Burr had sexual relations with a "nigger wench" at a party, precipitating Burr's libel suit against him. Apparently, Lomask concludes, Hamilton proved more influential with Federalists in securing Burr's defeat in 1804 than he did in convincing them to vote for Jefferson in the House of Representatives in 1801. Lomask argues that, influenced by Hamilton's opposition, as many Federalists voted for Republican candidate Morgan Lewis as voted for Burr, although the state Federalist party's leaders preferred Burr. He does not say whether Burr actively promoted his candidacy.[31]

In the most recent account of the pivotal presidential election of 1800, the distinguished historian James Roger Sharp presents an ambivalent view of Burr's conduct. Deploring Burr's refusal to disavow the presidency before the House voted, he ultimately rejects Burr's innocence. Sharp argues that the Republicans were willing to believe in Burr's integrity before January 1801, not afterwards.[32] Sharp contends that Burr had not forgotten the Virginia electors' failure to vote for him in the election of 1796, and held a grudge against Jefferson for that reason. But he showed political ineptitude

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[30] Ibid., 342.

[31] Lomask, *Burr*, 342-344. Burr attempted to pass himself off as the Republican candidate, although he did not reject the support of Federalists. A traditional "meeting of Republicans" nominated Burr for governor at the Tontine Coffee House in Albany on Feb. 18, 1804. Hamilton and DeWitt Clinton, a Republican leader who was mayor of New York City at this time, feared that Burr would win the election. He was not perceived as an idle threat. Lomask, *Burr*, 339-344.

[32] James Roger Sharp, The *Deadlocked Election of 1800: Jefferson, Burr, and the Union in the Balance* (Lawrence, Kans., 2010), 163.

in the long run, by failing to endorse Jefferson, since his only recourse was to gain Republican votes from New York congressmen like Edward Livingston, who did not intend to abandon Jefferson. "Burr's actions or inaction are perplexing at best," he concludes. "Clearly the prize of the presidency enticed him. It is likely that Burr believed he could keep open a possible election by the Federalists by staying above the fray in Albany, far from the center of the contest, by neither courting Federalist support nor burning his bridges with the Republicans…. In any case, the New Yorker's high-wire performance proved disastrous. Ultimately, his political instincts failed him, and he emerged from the crisis with his reputation ruined: a man condemned and reviled by both sides."[33]

Except for Hamilton, no one called Burr a demagogue or a Catiline, although Jefferson and his Virginia friends came close. In reviewing how Burr's contemporaries in the political world perceived him, and finding that he was not the monstrous demagogue that Jefferson, Hamilton, Madison and Monroe abhorred, we gain a different perspective from the traditional one on Burr and his time. Instead of taking the words of the political giants Hamilton and Jefferson as gospel, we might learn more about their (and Burr's) political world by examining the opinions of less notable political leaders from the Federalist and Republican parties. Although this is not exactly history "from the bottom up," it is in some ways history from "the middle up," in that it considers the opinions of second-rank politicians who, whatever their merit, outnumbered the few greats, such as Washington, Hamilton, and Jefferson. We may perhaps learn more about the political and social conditions of the Early Republic and Burr's place in it, by expanding our horizons from a few preeminent, extraordinary individuals to the greater number of average middling leaders. In examining lesser politicians' attitude toward Burr, we discover more about early American republican political culture, how democratic and/or partisan the early American government was, and whether figures

[33] Ibid., 163.

like Burr aroused the insecurity some leaders felt about the perpetuity of its republican experiment.[34]

[34] Dennis C. Rasmussen, *Fears of a Setting Sun: The Disillusionment of America's Founders* (Princeton, 2021).

CHAPTER 3

BURR'S EVANGELICAL ORIGINS

Whatever misdeeds he committed (and scholars continue to debate that topic), Aaron Burr's life (1756-1836) was from the beginning a tragic one, perhaps causing him to blur his ideas of right and wrong. He was grandson of the great evangelical Calvinist Protestant theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). Edwards was a Yale College graduate and pastor in Northampton, Mass., and an inspirational force behind the Great Awakening. Burr's father was the prominent religious thinker Aaron Burr, Sr., (1715-1757) president of the College of New Jersey (present-day Princeton). His mother was Esther (1732-1758), Jonathan Edwards' daughter. However, these primary members of Burr's family all died before he was two years old, leaving him an orphan. If he had tendencies to amorality and perhaps what we might call psychopathy or sociopathy, their origins may have arisen from this inevitably traumatic childhood experience of death and abandonment. Few of Burr's contemporaries, friends or enemies, publicly noted the irony that Jonathan Edwards, the foremost religious philosopher and moralistic revivalist of the eighteenth century, author of the terrifying sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1743), and believer that one could not by one's own actions defy the fate that the Almighty had in store for you, was the maternal grandfather of the allegedly rakish New York politician Aaron Burr, although he died when Burr was an infant.

Perhaps surprisingly, during the presidential election controversy of 1801, a Federalist newspaper that supported Burr, the *Albany Centinel*, argued that Burr's descent from a superlatively religious family (in contrast to Jefferson's tendencies toward religious "infidelity") automatically rendered him a man of virtue. It asserted, "There are many reasons why Col. Burr is preferable to Mr. Jefferson. His father was a very pious and worthy clergyman, he is not beloved by [Republicans], but above all, those

who know him best have the fullest belief that he will set up a rigid government."[35] Most other commentators, either in the press or privately, did not mention Burr's illustrious, although relatively impecunious heritage.

There was at least one belated exception: as one might surmise, the *sui generis* political philosopher qua curmudgeon, John Adams. Writing to Jefferson in old age, Adams insisted that Burr possessed sufficient expertise in political gyration to have beaten Jefferson for the presidency. He believed that it was mainly by chance that in February 1801, Jefferson gained the victory after thirty-six ballots in the House of Representatives. Gearing his analysis to his sprawling concept of "natural aristocracy," which he expanded from Jefferson's narrow criteria of education, "virtue and talents" to include prestigious ancestry, beauty, wealth, and *savoir-faire*, Adams insisted, "Aaron Burr had 100,000 votes from the single circumstance of his descent from President Burr and President Edwards." Adams considered this inherited prestige similar to that of a "feudal aristocracy" rather than the aristocracy of "virtue and talents" that he and Jefferson preferred. Adams warned Jefferson that the danger existed of an "artificial" aristocracy emerging in New York, Virginia, and New England among "rogues" willing to "Sacrifice every National Interest and honour, to private and party Objects."[36]

As far as John Adams was concerned, there was always a Burr on the horizon; and there were always people ready to follow him. However, only one scholar has followed Adams in stressing Burr's religious family

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[35] *Albany Centinel,* January 6, 1801, p. 2, quoted in Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe*, 248.

[36] John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Nov. 15, 1813, in Lester J. Cappon, ed., *Adams-Jefferson Letters* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 400-401. Historian Craig Bruce Smith views Adams' perspective as signifying the emergence of nationalism over parochial selfishness. "The natural aristocracy was a reflection of the Revolutionary changes in American honor. It stressed national over personal honor and exalted ethical conduct." Craig B. Smith, *American Honor: The Creation of the Nation's Ideals during the Revolutionary Era* (Chapel Hill, 2018), 236-37. In *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (London: Dilly, 1787), 183, 209, John Adams initially invoked the idea of "natural aristocracy," which he had probably gotten from James Harrington's *Oceana* (16566), one of his favorite books.

background: Suzanne Geissler's often overlooked *Jonathan Edwards to Aaron Burr, Jr.: From the Great Awakening to Democratic Politics* (1981). She views Burr as adopting a secular version of his grandfather Jonathan Edwards' post-millennialism, i.e., that Jesus Christ would return to earth after two thousand years of peace and happiness had passed. According to Geissler, Edwards and Burr agreed that the westward movement of U.S. settlement was a portent of the millennium. Therefore, she eccentrically concludes, by purportedly planning to unite the western states and Mexico in an empire that would join the United States, Burr espoused, not treason, but—complementing his antislavery views and advocacy of the direct choice of presidential electors by taxpayer suffrage—a democratic, republican utopia. "Aaron Burr's political ideas—social reform and western expansion—are easily in the Edwardsean tradition," she wrote. Her idealistic view of Burr as a secular evangelical imbued with humanitarian and democratic impulses is atypical; and she downplays his apparent acquiescence in Federalist plans to manipulate the House of Representatives to secure his victory over Jefferson. On the other hand, her opinion of Burr's conduct during the election controversy accords with those in works by Milton Lomask, Nathan Schachner, Nancy Isenberg, Joanne B. Freeman, and Walter McCaleb, laudatory of Burr.[37]

[37] Suzanne Geissler, *Jonathan Edwards to Aaron Burr, Jr.: From the Great Awakening to Democratic Politics* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1981), 223 (Burr as "champion of the underdog"), 237-238; Walter F. McCaleb, *Aaron Burr Conspiracy* (New York, 1903); Nathan Schachner, *Aaron Burr: A Biography* (New York, 1937).