

reputation. Others called it luck. His own circle of friends regarded his elevation as the legitimate result of a superiority to most of his rivals in knowledge, culture, and talents. * * * *

“Late in the autumn of 1783, Colonel Burr * * * * became a resident of the city of New York. In the spring of 1784, he was elected a member of the legislature, and, on the twelfth of October following, took his seat. * * * * Then followed three years of political calm in the state of New York, during which the name of Aaron Burr does not appear in politics.”

“During the period that elapsed between the conclusion of peace in 1783 and the formation of the [national] constitution of 1787, the question upon which parties in this state were divided was this: What are the rights of the tories in this commonwealth? Shall we whigs, triumphant over them after a seven years' contest, regard them as defeated enemies or as mistaken fellow-citizens? Shall the animosities and disabilities of the war be kept up and cherished, or shall the victors magnanimously let bygones be bygones?”

“In this controversy, there were three parties:

“First, the tories themselves, some of whom were blind enough to think that England after breathing awhile would attempt, and successfully too, to regain her colonies, the lost jewels of her diadem. * * * *

“Second, the whigs, who had borne the burdens and hardships of the war; many of whom had lost fortune, health, relations, friends in the struggle; all of whom, having seen that struggle prolonged and embittered by tory machinations, had learned to hate a tory worse than a British soldier. These men were indignant at the idea of conceding anything to tories. They demanded the enjoyment of the fruits of their triumph without sharing them with the enemy.

“Third, between these extreme parties, there was, as usual, a class of people who were in favor of making some concessions to the tories, and of gradually restoring all who would profess loyalty to the new order of things, to equal privileges with the whigs.

“Colonel Burr was a whig of the decided school, one of those who were called violent whigs. This was the popular party of that day. * * * *

“As there were three parties, so there were three groups of leading partisans.

“There were, first, the Clintons, of whom George Clinton, governor of the state, was the most important person. He was the undisputed leader of the popular party. He had been governor since 1777, and was re-elected, every other year, to that office, for eighteen years. The Clintons, as a family, were not at this time either numerous or rich. * * * * The Clintons were