

## WHERE DID THE WHISKEY REBELS GO?

Marco Sioli  
(Milan)

If the cause of the happiness of this country was examined into ... it would be found to arise as much from the great plenty of land in proportion to the inhabitants, which their citizens enjoyed, as from the wisdom of their political institutions.

*Albert Gallatin*

The Whiskey Rebellion was an organized movement of white farmers which swept the four counties of Western Pennsylvania – Fayette, Washington, Westmoreland and Allegheny – from 1790 to the end of 1794. This rebellion had the support of the majority of the population and made a show of strength when 7,000 backcountry inhabitants marched on Pittsburgh in the summer of 1794: striking participation considering that the First Census of 1790 reported a population of white free males, above the age of 16, of about 18,000.<sup>1</sup>

The Whiskey rebels' experience, re-evaluated by recent scholarship, shows the importance of ideas and political activity within the subaltern classes during the constitutional period. The strong links between this insurrection and the general quest for political autonomy advanced by the frontier farmers – starting with the Caroline Regulators of the pre-revolutionary period and continuing until Jefferson's administration – has emerged quite clearly from these studies, which find in this specific instance a common denominator for all Western protests. The Whiskey Rebellion, as these historians have shown, was the emblematic moment of an organized movement of white farmers who attempted, in connection with the Democratic Republican Societies, to democratize the government of the new nation.<sup>2</sup>

In the names of liberty and justice these rural people continued the battle against "tyranny", initiated by the revolutionary period, by every means starting with the organization of committees and the drawing up of petitions, moving to personal violence against Government tax representatives, and ending with the calling up of a self-organized militia. This last phase ended with the frontiersmen defeated by a

1. For the number of the farmers who marched on Pittsburgh see Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Incidents of the Insurrection in the Western Parts of Pennsylvania in the Year 1794*, Philadelphia, 1795, Vol. 1, p. 66; but other estimates, published in Eastern newspapers, ranged between 9,000 and 12,000 men. *First Census of U.S. 1790*, New York, 1976.

2. See, for example, the studies of Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution*, New York, 1986 and Jerry A. Clouse, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Southwestern Pennsylvania's Frontier People Test the American Constitution*, Harrisburg, Pa., 1994 but also Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspective*, Westport, 1985 and Barbara Karsky, "Agrarian Radicalism in the Late Revolutionary Period (1780-1795)," in Erich Angermann, ed., *New Wine in Old Skins: A Comparative View of Socio-Political Structures and Values Affecting the American Revolution*, Stuttgart, 1976.

numerous army organized by Alexander Hamilton and guided, in the first phase of the mission, by President Washington himself.<sup>3</sup>

Though this episode in United States history has been the object of broader studies, it still remains unclear what happened to the Whiskey rebels after their defeat by the action of the "Watermelon Army". It is certainly true that the quartering of troops in Western Pennsylvania contributed to aid the local economy with an injection of fresh money and new blood: in fact many of the soldiers sent to crush the insurrection not only spent money for food and whiskey, but also purchased land in these territories, moving with their families to settle there.

Furthermore, the Indians' defeat by the American Army - reorganized by Anthony Wayne - at Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794 and the treaty of peace stipulated the next year in Greenville, eliminated the Indian threat for Western Pennsylvania inhabitants. The great proprietors were the direct beneficiaries of these changes. The prices of land rose about 50 percent with the new stability created by both Washington's and Wayne's armies. Further, Jay's treaty with Spain (1795) secured the navigation of the lower Mississippi and so renewed more positive conditions of economic expansion.

But our interest here is not linked to the economic potential of trans-Allegheny regions during this period. Even if the actions of these Eastern land speculators are strictly connected with the political future of the new nation, our chief concern is rather with the political experience of the Western Pennsylvania crowd and its leaders. "Where did the Whiskey rebels go?" will be the main question and, subsequently we can ask ourselves: "Where can we find the heritage of the Whiskey rebels?"

To investigate these focal points, we have to come back to the defeat of the Whiskey rebels, when the army called to crush those engaged in or supporting rebellion, commanded by George Washington, terrorized the inhabitants of Western Pennsylvania. Violence, destruction and thievery inevitably accompanied the soldiers as in every war; people along the road taken by the "Watermelon Army" reported outrages and depredations. And even if there was no failing of Republican sentiments among most Western Pennsylvanians, the last meeting of the insurgents, held at Parkinson's Ferry on October 24, 1794, was completely controlled by the "friends of order". The radicals had been silenced or induced to fly the country.<sup>4</sup>

The representatives of this established authority - William Findley and David Redick - were sent into Bedford to try to convince President Washington to stop the troops. But the President was perhaps too occupied sitting for the famous Kemmelmeyer portrait, showing emblematically the majesty and the military power of the young nation, and the mission of these commissioners failed completely. For Findley, the major fault was to be ascribed to Alexander Hamilton, who had constituted himself the real commander of the army and supervisor of all the political and military decisions.<sup>5</sup>

3. About the structure of popular protest organized in fixed phases see Marco Sioli, "Whiskey Rebellion as Republican Citizenship", in Loretta Valtz Mannucci, ed., *People, Power and Violence. Rights and Citizenship*, Quaderno 3, Milan Group in Early United States History, Milano, 1992.

4. Leland D. Baldwin, *The Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising*, Pittsburgh, 1987, p.234.

5. William Findley, *History of the Insurrection in the Four Western Counties of Pennsylvania in the Year MDCCXCIV*, Philadelphia, 1796, pp.190-199. Concerning William Findley and his role in the insurrection

So the Secretary of the Treasury, a simple civilian and one of the most angry opponents of the Whiskey rebels, was at the head of the entire expedition. He acted in this case as a Secretary of War, forcing Washington's hand. Moreover, during the expedition, Hamilton occupied a tent finer and more striking than that of the General in charge - "Light Horse Harry" Lee - and he spent his time trying to resolve the problems of provisions for this enormous army and of preserving the discipline among the soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

By November, 1794, the Secretary of the Treasury, in his new role of inquisitor, had commanded the arrest and imprisonment of 150 men accused of treason and felony. Washington, instead, before leaving for Philadelphia, expressed only the hope that the army would "be able to send B (David Bradford) and H (Hermon Husband) ... to Philadelphia for their winter quarters". He was interested only in the leader's arrest as warning, but he knew that Western Pennsylvania citizens were not enemies and that there had not been a dangerous insurrection or any levying of war.<sup>7</sup>

At this point we have the first clear separation among the Whiskey rebels. On the one side, the people who chose to stay on their land, suffering the depredation of the soldiers and trying to defend themselves from the accusation of treason; on the other, 2,000 farmers dispersed into the wilderness as soon as the army arrived. In the event, the absence of real and ideological boundaries permitted these people to forge the pillar of the expansionist policy of the United States in the following decade. And that is why we cannot say that this separation was permanent; on the contrary, we shall see these farmers - people who stay and people who fly - still together.

Let us first look at those who remained in the Western Pennsylvania territories, who became victims of Federalist fears still running high. In fact, when the "Watermelon Army" did not find a rebel army to fight, it undertook a true "man hunt," without distinction between people taken as witnesses and people arrested for prosecution. The symbol of the rebellion, the liberty poles, were cut down and the interrogation of suspects lasted several days in the hope of discovering leaders of the rebellion. Those taken, among whom the aged Hermon Husband and reverend John Corbley, languished in the mud until they were escorted to Philadelphia, where they arrived on Christmas day, as symbols of the humiliation of the rebels and the victory of order.<sup>8</sup>

The trial in Philadelphia began in May, 1795, repropounding the old complaint of the distance of the Court from the Western territories. The insurgents were accused of "levying war against the United States" but the federal officers had great difficulties in obtaining the conviction of the guilty. In this case, the resistance to the exercise of federal authority became a political confrontation, showing the conflict between the

see Hans L. Eicholz, "A Closer Look at Modernity: the Case of William Findley and Trans Appalachian Political Thought," in "The Whiskey Rebellion and the Trans-Appalachian Frontier", *Topic: A Journal of the Liberal Arts*, Washington, Penn., 45 (Fall 1994), pp.57-72.

6. William Findley, *History of the Insurrection in the Four Western Counties of Pennsylvania*, p.227.

7. Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, November 17, 1794, Harold C. Syrett, ed., *Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 1961-1979, Vol.17, pp.380-381; George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, October 26, 1794, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. *The Writings of George Washington*, 1931-1944, Vol.34, p.9.

8. Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, pp.220-221 and Leland D. Baldwin, *The Whiskey Rebels*, pp.240-245.

“friends of order” and the “friends of liberty” and also the conflict between state and federal authority.<sup>9</sup>

Hermon Husband, for example, was prosecuted for his political honesty and for his criticism of Federalist leaders - “revolutionaries turned into tyrants,” he said - more than for his participation in the insurrection, and the same fate awaited the Baptist preacher, John Corbley, arrested and accused of treason and conspiracy to levy war against the United States. The only crime imputable to these preachers was their vision of social change, included in their messages for the development of a new society. Especially, Husband’s vision of an autonomous western paradise was not limited to Pennsylvania’s four Western counties, but his universal republic extended its boundaries West almost to the Pacific. As formulated by Husband, the New Jerusalem “Will form a kingdom to itself and will bring into vassallage all the provinces and peoples from Allegheny, or eastern wall, to the Atlantic Ocean.”<sup>10</sup>

We can see in these words the premonitory signs of the vision of a “yeomen empire” tailored to the needs of the Western farmers. This empire is described by Dorothy Fennell, one of the few Husband scholars, as a “society that valued regulation over private enterprise, community and family values over individualism and universal access to land over commercial development.”<sup>11</sup> Husband called for a new form of direct government, with real local autonomy, controlling a central supreme “council.” But especially, Husband’s proposal contained a reform of the court system, which weighed heavily upon farmers, and a new plan for the equal distribution of lands in the West.<sup>12</sup> An idea that anticipates the philosophy guiding the plan of division of the territory during the Jefferson Administration, a policy conducted by another Whiskey rebel leader, Albert Gallatin.

Husband was convinced that “the labouring, industrious people, the militia of the freemen, shall prevail over the standing armies of king and tyrants, that only rob them, and live upon their labour”.<sup>13</sup> We are close to the focal point of Husband’s thought that will leave a legacy to the new century, contributing to the formation of a generation of millennial radical abolitionists. In fact, Husband’s “New Jerusalem,” where slaves must be freed and American Indians receive inalienable rights to the land, offered a clear example of the community values of the Westerners that helped to translate their political tradition of opposition to “tyranny” into direct action.<sup>14</sup>

The biblical millennialism of the 1790’s, and especially Husband’s, formed a basis for the utopian vision of the next century centered on the key-words of the French

9. For the trial in Philadelphia and this vision of state and federal authority confrontation see Richard A. Ifft, “Treason in the Early Republic”, in Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion. Past and Present Perspective*, pp.176-177.

10. Johann David Schoepf. *Travels in the Confederation, 1783-4*, Philadelphia, 1911, Vol.1, p.295.

11. Quoted in Dorothy Fennell, “Hermon Husband’s New Jerusalem. Frontier Radicalism and the Millennialist Tradition,” in Elise Marienstras and Barbara Karsky, ed., *An Other Time An Other Space*, Nancy, 1986, p.71.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Hermond Husband, *Fourteenth Sermons on the Characters of Jacob’s Fourteen Sons*, Philadelphia, 1789, p.21.

14. *Ibid.*, pp.23-24. For the communitarian value and the social behaviour of the Western farmers see James Henretta, “Farmers and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-industrial America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 35 (January 1978), pp.3-33.

Revolution: liberty and the rights of the man, black people included. In this direction, Americans will be guided through a Second Great Awakening. If George Whitefield had found fertile ground on the frontier during the 1740's Great Awakening, these lands became again the seed ground of the dissenting tradition; this time not only in terms of widespread millennial fervor but through an upsurge in organized religious activism aiming at a gradual expansion of God's kingdom, rather than apocalyptic change. Several missionary societies were created to convert settlers along the frontiers, moving from the concept of a "yeoman empire" to the vast "benevolent empire" of education, moral and social reform organization targeting "false teachers" during the first years of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

But going back to the time of the Whiskey rebels, we can note that Husband and the other political leaders of the insurgency are not the only target of Federalist policy. The main objective of the Federalists was the attack on, and the destruction of, the Democratic Republican Societies which arose in the United States between 1793 and 1795. These were essentially political propaganda societies with Francophile sympathies, working through the organization of meetings and the composition of petitions to spread their point of view on political issues. The objectives of these Societies were varied, from the fight against the elitarian and Anglophile tendencies of the Washington administration to attempts to secure the navigation of the Mississippi River and to repeal the Whiskey Tax. They believed in local institutions, in government reduced to small units able to register the opinion of the common people.<sup>16</sup>

The Federalists worried about that, accusing these political organizations of fomenting the spirit of rebellion and anarchy in the American people. To them they appeared as extra-legal organizations trying to overthrow the Constitution and the institutional solution its application was evolving under Federalist tutelage. It was easy for the President to accuse these Societies for the explosion of the Whiskey Rebellion declaring that it "may be considered as the first ripe fruit of the Democratic Republican Societies." He portrayed Society members as "incendiaries of public peace and order," presenting their "doctrines with a view to poison and discontent the minds of the people".<sup>17</sup>

After Washington's denunciation and the attacks of the Federalist press that described these Societies as "Jacobin clubs", it seemed plausible to some to ascribe the immediate impulse to the immigration of "sans culottes" from Europe. The Swiss-born Albert Gallatin and the Scots-Irishman William Findley, identified by Eastern

15. The connection between the Husband's thought and the Second Great Awakening was studied by Ruth Bloch, *Visionary Republic. Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800*, Cambridge, Eng., 1989, pp.216-218.

16. The most comprehensive account of the Democratic Republican Societies is in Eugene Perry Link, *Democratic Republican Societies, 1790-1800*, New York, 1973. A specific study of the Western Pennsylvania Democratic Republican Societies is in Marco Sioli, "The Democratic Republican Societies at the End of the Eighteenth Century. The Western Pennsylvania Experience," *Pennsylvania History*, 60 (July 1994), pp.288-304. See also Jeffrey A. Davis, "The Whiskey Rebellion and the Demise of the Democratic-Republican Societies of Pennsylvania", in "The Whiskey Rebellion and the Trans-Appalachian Frontier", *Topic*, 45 (Fall 1994), pp.22-38.

17. George Washington to Henry Lee, August 26, 1794, in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, Vol.33, pp.474-479.

élites as the leaders of the Whiskey rebels, were cited by the *Gazette of the United States* on September 15, 1794 as the prime movers of the rebellion. And, though the Societies tried to refute the charge that they were the instigators of the Western Pennsylvania insurrection, the attack of the "friends of order" was so powerful that the prestige of the Democratic Republican Societies was greatly damaged and many clubs were obliged to dissolve.<sup>18</sup>

But Federalist lies had short legs and the election of 1794 showed the result of their policy. It was known that the Anti-federalists represented the local majority in the Western communities, but it was a surprise to find that they gained success and supporters everywhere in Pennsylvania, even among the urban middle classes—manufacturers and tradesmen—of the coastal towns, forging in this way the Jeffersonian coalition.<sup>19</sup> Without doubt it was the activities of the Democratic Republican Societies all over the new nation, from Maine to Georgia, that dominated the election of 1794, organizing a numerical majority into a Republican majority.

Together with the activity against the Democratic Republican Societies, the Federalists were still strongly trying to defeat the "Friends of liberty" inside the Washington government. Emblematic in this case is the Randolph affair. Edmund Randolph, the Secretary of State during the Washington presidency, resigned in the summer of 1795 due to the accusation of having held communications with the French minister to United States and having accepted bribes from him. Using a packet of dispatches, found on a French ship captured at sea by the British, from Joseph Fauchet - the French minister who substituted Gênet after the Girondists' fall from power - to his government, the Federalists destroyed Randolph's influence with the President.<sup>20</sup>

It was true that Fauchet was well informed about the state of rebellion on the Trans-Appalachian frontier. The dispatches described the situation of the inhabitants of Kentucky and Pennsylvania, talking about their remonstrances against the excise tax and the Federalist government. All these reports, however, were of fairly common knowledge as the Eastern newspapers printed copies of the petitions of Western farmers and other information included was not exclusive. Fauchet, eager to strengthen his own position, exaggerated his intimacy with the American secretary of State. Certainly, Randolph was not basically under attack for these dispatches, though they served as a public pretext, but rather for his position on the Whiskey Rebellion inside the Cabinet and his closeness to Washington.

Randolph's position concerning the Whiskey rebels was clear: militia ought not to be called out to suppress the insurgents, rather, a commission ought to be appointed to negotiate with them. Randolph was convinced that the strength of the new

18. *Gazette of the United States*, September 15, 1794. For the evidence that these Societies were not really involved in the Pennsylvania insurrection see William Miller, "The Democratic Republican Societies and the Whiskey Insurrection", *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 62 (July 1938), pp.324-349.

19. For example, Roland M. Bauman, in "Philadelphia's Manufacturers and the Excise Tax of 1794", Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspective*, pp.135-164, showed the participation of Philadelphia manufactures and tradesmen in the anti-excise protest and their gradually shifting toward the Republicans.

20. The analysis of the Randolph affair and the true reasons for his resignation are clarified by Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau, "George Washington and the Reputation of Edmund Randolph," *The Journal of American History*, 73 (June 1986), pp.15-34.

government did not lay in military force but in the people themselves, and from these convictions he derived a reluctance to use force and a preference for negotiation. The Secretary of State's position was a thorn in Federalist side. For the "Friends of the order" he was a traitor and they were determined to isolate him destroying his figure in the President's eyes.<sup>21</sup>

The French minister's dispatches were the opportunity to oust Randolph and his ideas from the government. Especially when news of Jay's Treaty with Great Britain spread throughout the nation and there was strong protest both in the Western communities and in the Eastern cities, the Federalists were afraid of Randolph's prestige, for he certainly was not a friend of Great Britain. Oliver Walcott succeeded Hamilton at the Treasury in January 1795, and all the other Federalists in the Washington Cabinet took this opportunity to work Randolph's political ruin. But Randolph was not the only influential person attacked by the Federalist's "paranoid style." Albert Gallatin was excluded from the Senate and the Federalists, now a majority in the House of Representatives, tried to expel him in the second session of the Third Congress, this time on the premise that the election from Fayette county was unlawful because of the state of rebellion of its inhabitants.<sup>22</sup>

So the preachers Husband and Corbley were arrested, the political prestige of the Democratic Republican Societies was destroyed and Secretary of State Edmund Randolph resigned. A resounding Federalist success, it seems. But now we have to observe the other leaders of the Western Pennsylvania insurrection of 1794. Leader David Bradford and the numerous rebels who fled into the "wilderness" had better luck. Bradford, born in Maryland about the year 1760, was a popular lawyer in Washington county. He served as deputy Attorney General for the county from 1783 until 1794 and he was also elected to the State Assembly in 1792. Again, he was involved in frontier independence movements and became one of the major leaders of the Whiskey Rebellion when, riding a "superb horse" in "splendid trapping," he guided the march on Pittsburgh in the summer of 1794.

Little is known about what happened to Bradford, still a young man in 1794, but that he did fly into the trans-Appalachian frontier is certain and he also succeeded in reaching Louisiana, then a Spanish possession. He resettled in Bayou Sara, province of New Feliciana, and it would be surprising if he engaged in no subsequent political activity, especially when the Spaniards attempted to exercise a severe control over the province. It is claimed that Bradford never returned to Washington, Pennsylvania, though it seems more likely that he returned at least once to settle his affairs. In any case, even if the property was disposed of through intermediaries, Bradford would have retained contact with his friends and political colleagues, creating a connection between United States and Spanish Louisiana inhabitants.<sup>23</sup>

If this figure needs more research, we can say without doubt that all the fleeing rebels who settled along the Ohio river were to benefit from the land distribution acts

21. *Ibid.*, p.24.

22. For Gallatin's defence see his speech in Henry Adams, ed., *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, Philadelphia, 1879, Vol.1, p.56.

23. Boyd Crumrine, *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania*, Philadelphia, 1882, p.483. Bradford resettled in Bayou, Louisiana Territory, where he lived the rest of his life.

that other former Whiskey rebel leaders, Albert Gallatin and William Findley, would create. These laws would help the inhabitants of the frontier and especially the small land-holders to overcome the weight of Eastern great property owners.

In fact, although the Anti-Federalists lost their struggle to reduce the strong centralization of nascent national powers, they worked, slowly and haltingly but steadily, to the formation of a Republican party and the consolidation of the popular movements.<sup>24</sup> Especially on the frontier, this Republican activity reached a high point with the adoption of the Kentucky resolution, drafted by Jefferson, that denounced the Alien and Sedition Act as “not law” and “altogether void and of no force”.<sup>25</sup> The popularity of Jefferson and the force of the Democratic party in the countryside became the special cocktail to combat the Federalist policy.

In this competition between Federalist and Republicans an important role was played by the former Whiskey rebel Albert Gallatin who, in the Fifth Congress, declared that “the true object” of the Federalists with the Sedition Laws was to “have the force to punish printers who may publish against them, while their opponents will remain alone and without redress”.<sup>26</sup>

At this point Gallatin becomes the most interesting figure of our discourse. He was born in 1761 to an upper class family in Geneva and emigrated to America in 1780 without the permission of his parents. He settled in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, in 1784 and was elected to the State legislature in 1790, and was already named United States Senator in 1793. For his participation in the Whiskey Rebellion, he was denied his seat in the Senate with the excuse of “dubious citizenry”. From 1795, he served for three terms in Congress and as Republican served as Secretary of the Treasury from 1801 to 1804, and it was in this position that he chiefly aided the cause of the former Whiskey rebels.<sup>27</sup>

The difficulties of initiating a constructive policy regarding the desultory, rambling and disorganized absorption of the Western territories into the Federal union were clear. At the same time, the increasing movement of settlers into the lands along the Ohio line - enriched and “marked” by these 2,000 Whiskey rebels - was a powerful political fact. Finally, these lands still constituted a notable attraction for swarms of speculators. Never as in the Federalist period did entrepreneurs have success in promoting the policy of large tracts sale of public land.

Hamilton’s financial plan moved, in facts, toward the accomodation of wealthy men or organizations ready to purchase large quantities of public lands for “development”. These lands, Hamilton suggested, might subsequently be sold in varying quantities. Thus the untried federal government would avoid the long-range difficulties and expense of managing and defending the public domain by supporting “moneyed individuals and companies, who will buy to sell again”. Hamilton’s decision to give no credit for the purchase of tracts less than ten miles square, aimed

24. About the competition between Federalists and Republicans see Richard Buel Jr., *Securing the Revolution. Ideology in American Politics 1789-1815*, Ithaca, pp.214-240.

25. For the Kentucky Resolution see Adrienne Koch and Harry Ammon, “The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions. An Episode in Jefferson’s and Madison’s Defense of Civil Liberties,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 5 (April 1948), pp.145-176.

26. *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, Washington, 1834-1856, Vol.5, p.2162.

27. See Henry Adams, *The Life of Albert Gallatin*, New York, 1879.



especially at avoiding the problems of land management, shifting responsibility and expense to large investors.<sup>28</sup>

This situation permitted, or rather, favoured, the creation of a two tiered system of property. On the one hand, those who came directly into the frontier settling without regard to ownership, creating a "physical asset" as product of their labour which transformed "wilderness" into "farms". On the other hand, the great proprietors who had the "legal right" derived from the acquisition of public domain.<sup>29</sup>

It was with the presence in the United States Congress of Gallatin and the other Western Pennsylvania delegate, William Findley, that the holders of "physical assets" obtained a voice in the debate that developed over the administration of the sale of the public domain. If Gallatin spoke in the Fourth Congress on the importance of land among American citizens, William Findley told Congressional representatives that "they ought not only to keep a wholesale but a retail store".<sup>30</sup> And these words represent an example of Findley's political style with echos of Poor Richard, a perfect version of the language of the small farmers who elected him, and for whom his ability to turn a striking phrase in every-day language enhanced a self-image as emblematic Republican citizens.

The Land Law "For the Sale of the Land of the United States in the Territory Northwest of the river Ohio and above to the mouth of the Kentucky river" of May, 1796 was in a certain measure helpful to this political position, according the possibility of delayed purchase, though by leaving all the enabling procedures under the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury it remained inoperative in the short run.<sup>31</sup> We will have wait for Jefferson's presidency and Gallatin's presence in the Cabinet to have an administrative system really close to the needs of the small farmers of the Western country. The Act of May 1800, in fact, did not change the minimum price per acre - two dollars each - but it did extend credit to the purchasers and reduced the minimum tract purchaseable to 320 acres.<sup>32</sup> As Congressman, Gallatin supported with passion the sale of small tracts of land to individual settlers. With the election of 1800 and the triumph of the Republicans, his role changed so that he was able to modify the philosophy guiding application of the Land Law.

Gallatin's decision that the public Receivers must accept any partial cash payment, however small, in land sales complicated, on the one hand, the calculation of interest and increased the number of payments, but - ideally and in this case more importantly - it put any person with a little savings in the condition to obtain property in land, on a par with great proprietors who could count on large sums of money. Furthermore, Gallatin established the Land Office in eighteen districts, for the first time decentralizing and expanding the system of the administration of public affairs. And

28. *American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States*, Washington, 1832-1861, Vol.1, p.8; Benjamin H. Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies*, New York, 1924, pp.59-60.

29. For this analysis of land property see Alan Taylor, "A Kind of War: the Contest of Land on the Northeastern Frontier 1750-1820", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 46 (January 1989), pp.4-5.

30. *Annals of the Congress of the United States*, Vol.5, p.339. For Gallatin's speech on the importance of land in the American territory see the quotation at the beginning of the paper. *Ibid.*, p.411.

31. Benjamin H. Hibbard, *A History of the Public Land Policies*, pp.67-68.

32. Payson J. Treat, *The National Land System 1785-1820*, New York, 1910, pp.94-99.

again, previously land officers had had no significant emolument; in fact - unlike during the Whiskey Rebellion, where the tax collector received a salary fixed by President Washington - Congress had established no salary for receivers, conceding only a small percentage on the sales and minor fees for service: a situation which invited bribery. Only in 1804, prompted by Gallatin,<sup>33</sup> did Congress authorize a salary of 500 dollars per year and a commission on sales.

We are not here concerned to investigate the responsibilities connected with handling public funds during Gallatin's term of office. It was rare, in fact, even after salaries had been fixed, for land officers not to be involved in the buying and selling of land for personal gain. What is certain is that Gallatin's reorganization encouraged and favoured an influx of farming families into the public lands offered for sale, in the optic favored by Thomas Jefferson for the promotion of a "yeoman Republic."<sup>34</sup>

So, we can conclude by saying that the defeat of the Whiskey rebels in the fall of 1794 did not put an end to the political activities of the rural people. They still fought against the great proprietors, who grew wealthy and politically powerful, for the preservation of the possession of their land: inside the Jefferson government, like Albert Gallatin; or on the floor of the House, like William Findley; in the sermons of the frontier preachers who carried on Husband's legacy; or in the new status assumed by the 2,000 rebels, one of whom was David Bradford, who fled deeper into the Western territories. In all these places, the battles of the Whiskey rebels still continued during the first decade of the Nineteenth century to resolve the farmers' difficulties, to obtain clear title of properties, or to combat the power of great proprietors in the courts or in the Land Offices; and they continued, too, in the formation of political institutions (for example, in Kentucky) as well as in active political presence.

Finally, to answer one of the questions we posed at the beginning of this paper, we can say that the legacy of the Whiskey rebels may be found in the people who continue to contrast land speculation in the new frontier territories, elevating the question of the management of public land to the status of first issue of the new American government. We can also seek out this heritage in those who defend the rural frontier classes against the creeping exclusion from political weight which threatens them as institutional procedures harden, responding still to the demands of settlers for the creation of a true "yeomen empire." The former Whiskey rebels, in their new roles and in their new places, will persist in putting to the test the *bona fide* and the functioning of the Republican institutions. Though in the end farmers will chiefly reap Jacksonian rhetoric, they will - thanks in no small manner to the efforts of ex-"Whiskey men" in their various local and national spaces - have obliged élites wishing to govern comfortably to invent that rhetoric.

33. *Ibid.*, pp.162-178.

34. For the administration of public funds during the Jefferson era see Malcom J. Rohrbough, *The Land Office Business. The Settlement and Administration of American Public Lands, 1789-1837*, New York, 1968, especially the second chapter "Albert Gallatin and the Expansion of the Land System," 1801-1812, pp.26-50.