



## To the Electors of the Southern District of the State of New York <http://edsitement.neh.gov>

Annotated excerpts from the EDSITEment resource [American Memory](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbpe&fileName=rbpe11/rbpe113/11300200/rbpe11300200page.db&recNum=0) [<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbpe&fileName=rbpe11/rbpe113/11300200/rbpe11300200page.db&recNum=0>]. NOTE: The language in the following is from the original. However, some spelling and punctuation has been standardized to avoid confusion. Words in italics are defined in the parentheses that follow. Periods of ellipsis represent gaps in the text.

Being *responsible* means having a program. The paragraph beginning with “Examine the history of the general Government for the last four years” implies the Republican program through its criticism of Federalist policies. The author goes on to outline the general Republican program in the second paragraph.

Examine the history of the general Government for the last four years. What does it exhibit but a series of *usurpation* (power grabs) and extravagance? Nothing was heard of but war or preparations for war. A navy was established to protect our commerce against the attacks of one power, but permitted to yield to the insolence, rapacity and arbitrary pretensions of another. Army establishments were introduced—the public debt accumulated—offices multiplied, and those who possessed the patriotism and firmness to disapprove of their pernicious measures, reproached & treated as enemies of their country. Taxes were increased--monies borrowed at an exorbitant interest—monarchical doctrines *countenanced* (tolerated) & encouraged—republican principles censured & *traduced* (criticized)—the powers of the President augmented beyond the limits of the constitution—Alien and Sedition laws enacted, and our citizens prosecuted and imprisoned for censuring the encroachments of the administration, and advocating with fidelity and firmness, the rights of the people.

Happily for the United States, the good sense of the people has prevailed. The election of Mr. Jefferson and Col. Burr, to the offices of President and Vice-President of the United States, has established a publican administration. It will be their honorable task to maintain the general and state constitutions in purity, to secure the rights of their fellow citizens, to restore a state of quiet and prosperity; to diminish the unnecessary expenses of the government, and to alleviate the *excessive burdens* (taxes) which have been improperly imposed upon the public.

Being *responsible* means having personnel with the potential to carry out that program. The six paragraphs beginning “Governor Clinton will be the firm supporter of the administration” offer a slate of candidates and review their qualifications. There is also criticism of the opposition candidate, Mr. Van Rensselaer.

Governor Clinton will be the firm supporter of the administration of the federal government; he will cordially unite and co-operate with Mr. Jefferson. Harmony will be

restored throughout every department of our public councils—the rights of the people will be protected and respected—the prosperity of the farmer, as well as the interests of the merchant encouraged, and economy, frugality and moderation promote the general welfare of the community.

Mr. Stephen Van Rensselaer, will probably pursue a different line of conduct; and on account of his opposition to Mr. Jefferson, impede the measures of the general government, and prevent the establishment of that harmony, conciliation and prosperity which would result from the election of a republican Governor.

In point of talents and experience, Mr. Van Rensselaer can never pretend to stand a competition with Governor Clinton. The latter has, for many years, exercised the office of chief magistrate of this state, with honor to himself, and usefulness to his country. His services have been long tried. We can calculate with certainty upon the benefits of his administration—we know his principles—we have had evidences of his attachment to the rights of his fellow citizens. We are convinced that he will administer the government with a spirit of economy—that he is the enemy of extravagance and unnecessary taxation, and that whilst he will yield a proper support to the administration of the general government—he will equally support the independence and respectability of the state establishments.

As a General Committee appointed in the city of New-York, to correspond with our fellow citizens in the Southern District, we feel it our duty to inform them, that Mr. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, of Albany, is the Republican candidate for the office of Lieutenant Governor, and Mr. Ezra L’Hommedien, is our candidate for senator for this district.

Mr. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer is a respectable inhabitant of the city of Albany. He is a man of found political principles, and highly respected for his services, his talents and integrity; and our republican fellow citizens of all the other districts have agreed to unite in his support.

Mr. L’Hommedieu, your present senator, is already well known to you. He has so often been your successful candidate, and so uniformly served you with fidelity, that encomiums respecting his personal merits are rendered wholly unnecessary.

Being *effective* in a democracy means garnering enough public support to assume office. That requires communication of your program. “To the electors of the Southern district of the State of New-York” was a broadside, defined in American Memory as a “Single-sheet notice(s) or announcement(s) printed on one or both sides, intended to be read unfolded.” Other methods of communication are exemplified by the following documents:

- **Newspapers:** “[Speech of Mr. Jefferson at his inaugural, Washington, March 4, 1801](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbpe&fileName=rbpe19/rbpe190/1900040a/rbpe1900040a.page.db&recNum=0)” [<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=rbpe&fileName=rbpe19/rbpe190/1900040a/rbpe1900040a.page.db&recNum=0>], published in the *National Intelligencer*, an organ of the Republican party.

- **Pamphlets:** “[To the electors of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1799](#)” [[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+1490240a\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+1490240a)))], a Federalist pamphlet opposing the election of Thomas M’Kean as Governor of Pennsylvania.
- **Leaflets/Letters:** “[Circular, New York](#)” [[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+1130070c\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/rbpebib:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+1130070c)))], a leaflet—in this case, from a Committee of Correspondence, another organizational tool—addressed to a set of specific recipients. This copy of the leaflet went to a Capt. Joseph Mowle.

Being *effective* also requires an institutional structure, an organization. The extended title of the document mentions the General Committee of New York, an arm of the Republican Party at the state level.

To the electors of the Southern district of the State of New-York. Friends and fellow citizens. The approaching election of a chief magistrate of the State of New-York, is entitled to peculiar attention ... By order of the General Committee in New-York, William Edgar, Chairman. Daniel D. Tompkins, Sec’ry New-York, April 7, 1801

Being *constitutional* means parties in and out of power both abide by the same ground rules, the Constitution. The passage and application of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 by the Federalists in power threatened legitimate opposition. Note the sentence in the document beginning, “Taxes were increased.”

Taxes were increased—monies borrowed at an exorbitant interest—monarchical doctrines countenanced & encouraged—republican principles censured & traduced—the powers of the President augmented beyond the limits of the constitution—Alien and Sedition laws enacted, and our citizens prosecuted and imprisoned for censuring the encroachments of the administration, and advocating with fidelity and firmness, the rights of the people.