Governor of Ohio

The gubernatorial election of 1814 was a tame affair after the campaigns of 1808 and 1810. The war had so preoccupied the voters of Ohio that state politics had been relegated to the background. The agitation over judicial review, the "sweeping resolution," and the Tammany Society was largely forgotten.

Eight or more persons were pointed out by the newspapers as fit candidates for the position of governor, but the contest finally narrowed down to Worthington and Othniel Looker, who had been acting governor since March, when Meigs resigned to accept the postmaster generalship. Looker was from Hamilton County, and had a fair following in that part of the state.

Early in the campaign Worthington appeared to be the popular choice. His vote against war seems to have constituted no obstacle to his nomination for the governorship; rather, the course of the war had confirmed his judgment. A Muskingum County Federal-Republican caucus put him in nomination, recalling that he had "had the discernment to perceive the bad policy of going to war without being prepared and the firmness and independence to vote against it." It is significant that the officers of an army regiment at Rossville (Piqua) nominated him in caucus, and that General Reazin Beall of Canton scotched a north-state intrigue against him. "Illus Ergo" of Butler County recommended him as "a man of unrivalled talents of unblemished reputation and unsullied honor." "An Elector" in the Scioto Gazette wrote of him as follows:

This gentleman possesses in an eminent degree, all the qualifications which the governor of the state of Ohio, ought to possess. He is inflexible in his political creed & strongly attached to the present administration—regular in his moral deportment; well acquainted with military discipline, and will no doubt perform the duties of governor with honor to himself & constituents.

Worthington's neighbor McArthur had a following in the state, and particularly in Ross County. Early in the campaign, a group of

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1 Zanesville Express and Republican Standard, September 14, 1814.
2 Miami Intelligencer (Hamilton), October 10, 1814.
3 Beall to Worthington, October 24, 1814, in WMOSL.
4 Miami Intelligencer, September 19, 1814.
5 Copied in Freeman's Chronicle (Franklinton), August 5, 1814.
McArthur’s supporters accused Worthington of using his influence to make Meigs Postmaster General in order to get him out of the way, but such a weak indictment had little weight, for Meigs had been none too popular as war governor. The resort to such an accusation indicates how little basis there was for any genuine opposition. McArthur would have run, however, since he was sick of the army, if he had been able to drum up sufficient support. He maintained that Worthington helped keep him in the army so that he could not be a candidate for the governorship. Worthington had been instrumental in getting him appointed brigadier general in charge of the Northwestern Army; but McArthur felt that he should have had the major generalship vacated by Harrison and given to Jackson when the latter was placed in charge of the 7th Military District. In a sense, McArthur had a legitimate complaint, for his army duty had prevented him from being a candidate to succeed Worthington as United States Senator, an office to which he aspired and for which he was considered a strong contestant.

There was more truth than fiction in the sarcastic analysis made by “Calculator” in Liberty Hall for September 27, when he wrote that “everybody” was for Worthington:

_The federalists will vote for him because he was a violent federalist; the sweeping resolutionists because he is the father of that interesting measure; the Tammanyites, because he is the head of that society; the opposers of the war, because he voted against the declaration of it; the supporters of the war, because he has regularly voted for war measures; the republicans, because he calls himself at present a republican; the military characters, because he has the title of general._

For the most part, the newspapers were unusually silent on political issues; at any rate, the result of the election was never in doubt. Concern over the course of the war filled the columns once devoted to personal abuse. Worthington and Tiffin were in Washington; the council fires of the Tammany wigwams were scattered; and the erstwhile combatants of the old junto were now largely in command of patronage.

The official count in the contest for the governorship was 15,879

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6 Joseph Kerr to Worthington, May 19, September 21, 1814, in WMOSL; Worthington to Kerr, September 30, 1814, in the McKell Collection. See the copy of a letter from Worthington to McArthur, October 30, in which he strongly rebukes him for being a party to such outrageous lies as had been started and cites many evidences of his continued loyalty to McArthur, both in peace and in war. In the McKell Collection.


8 James Barnes, editor of the Scioto Gazette, to Samuel Williams, October 26, 1814, RCHS.
for Worthington to 6,171 for Looker. Looker carried Clermont, Franklin, Greene, Scioto, and Hamilton counties; Worthington captured the rest, including the old Federalist strongholds of Jefferson, Washington, and Trumbull counties.  

Worthington’s arrival in Ohio on December 2 to assume his new duties was greeted by the Zanesville Express and Republican Standard, December 7, 1814, as follows:

At a time like this when war is raging upon our frontiers, and threatens the interior, to have so firm a patriot — so enlightened a politician possessing the confidence of all parties, placed at the helm of our State, is a subject of sincere gratification.

On December 8 Worthington rode into Chillicothe from Adena, appeared before a joint session of the legislature, and, having taken the oath of office, delivered his inaugural address. It was really a war message, a call to renewed devotion to a cause thus far made ignominious by party faction. The new governor praised the Administration for seeking to avoid war and engaging in it only after a long “series of injury and insult and in defense of its just rights,” and for its willingness to negotiate at any time thereafter on reasonable and honorable terms. The negotiations at Ghent, he pointed out, had seemed to promise much, but they had disappointed reasonable expectations.

England, intoxicated . . . in the plentitude of her power, has forgotten right and justice and has offered as a basis of a treaty, propositions as insulting as they are unjust . . . ; propositions which aim a deadly blow at the liberty and independence of the nation, and would, if accepted, lead to national degradation and ruin. That there should have existed a difference of opinion on the policy of declaring war . . . was to be expected. It was a question on which men of the best intentions might differ; but the measure once adopted, I believed every man owing allegiance to the government bound in good faith to take the side of his country . . . and that his best exertions should be used to support and defend it . . . . It is now in the strictest sense of the word, a war of defense. The enemy, by the manner he wages the war; by the means he uses in the employment of savages and slaves . . . gives a character to the war which cannot be misunderstood, and leaves strong ground to believe that a subversion of our happy form of government, and as a consequence the subjugation of the country, are among the objects he wishes to effect. We are therefore impelled by every motive and bound by every tie which can influence man, to defend the liberties of our country.  

Worthington warned the legislators of the dangers which threatened the country and reminded them that the power to provide adequate

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8 Taylor, Ohio Statesmen, 78.
9 Zanesville Express, October 19, November 2, 1814; Miami Intelligencer, November 21, 1814.
10 Senate Journal, 13th General Assembly.
defense for the state lay in their hands, not in the hands of the Chief Executive. He pointed out that although he recognized the value of the party system in a democracy, party animosity had so deeply affected the energies of the nation that three campaigns against the enemy had accomplished little. He appealed to them as representatives of the people to recognize the seriousness of their responsibility and to unite in a common defense of the state and the country.

Worthington made it clear in his inaugural address that his first concern was for the safety of the state. The pressing need was to provision the army at Detroit, which McArthur reported as living on the adjacent country. In December, Worthington asked the legislature to authorize him to see that the soldiers were supplied. An investigating committee decided that McArthur's report was groundless, but gradually the contractors' service did improve. Had the situation not mended, Worthington would have supplied the posts with or without authorization.

The state of discipline in the army was very bad, and morale was low. Deserters were legion; a fifty-dollar reward was outstanding for their apprehension. Five of the thirty court-martialed at Chillicothe in July were shot. Worthington's vigorous activities soon brought about a change for the better. He firmly believed that the war was to be a long one and that preparations for an energetic defense were necessary. He had pointed out the frontier's lack of defenses to the Secretary of War just before leaving Washington, and he now took in hand the effective organization of the militia. He ordered muster rolls completed and arms located, cleaned, and stored. A new spirit was manifested. In a special message to the legislature on December 21, he asked for a new set of militia regulations which would prevent evasion of military service and desertion and provide a creditable and efficient force from the forty thousand young men available. He urged that township trustees be empowered to arm all members of the militia not able to arm themselves and that stores of provisions be held in reserve. On the twenty-third, he recommended the construction

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12 McArthur to Looker, October 15, 1814, RCHS.
13 Worthington's diary, December 9, 1814.
14 Miami Intelligencer, July 20 and August 5, 1814.
15 Worthington to Monroe, January 17, 1815, in Governor of Ohio, Executive Letter Book, 15, OHS.
of a line of blockhouses for the defense of the frontier. Constructed
by rangers and guarded by militia contingents in shifts of two months
each, they would cost little and provide a real defensive barrier. In
the same message he asked that five new regiments be organized and
mustered into service. (Incidentally, such a plan for strengthening
the militia of the whole Northwest was being considered, at his sug­
gestion, by Secretary of War James Monroe.) When Adjutant Gen­
eral Van Horne demurred at carrying out his order to muster the new
regiment of militia requested by McArthur, Worthington, determined
on effective and speedy action, himself ordered them to Fort Meigs,
and Van Horne resigned.

Joseph Kerr, who had been elected to serve out Worthington's
unexpired term in the Senate, reported from Washington, January 30,
that the fall of New Orleans was expected any minute and that Con­
gress had authorized eighty thousand more militia. He advised Worth­
ington to get the legislature to act for the safety of Ohio, for Monroe
could not be depended on, and there was no prospect of peace. Congress­
man James Caldwell informed Worthington, February 9,
that eighty thousand British veterans had been dispatched to America.
John Johnston wrote from Piqua in February that the British
were organizing an attack by Indians and regulars to take place in
the early summer, and had arms and equipment for ten thousand
Indians at Kingston. He reported frequent murders on the frontier:
"23 persons were murdered in one day at the Pidgeon Roost I[ndiana]
T[erritory]." In Johnston's opinion, no reliance could be placed now
or ever on the Indians.

Such reports stimulated the Governor to stronger measures, for the
legislature had done little to improve the situation. On February 13,
he urged the legislators in a strong message to take action on defense
measures before they adjourned:

There is no evidence on which to rest even an opinion that peace will result
from the present negotiations in Europe, . . . every arrival from thence strengthens
the impression that the enemy are making the most vigorous preparation for
prosecuting the war. The late desperate attempts at New Orleans, . . . affords
full evidence . . . how much may be expected from a proper state of preparation.
. . . Can it be necessary to remind you gentlemen of the extended and defenseless

16 Copy of letter from Worthington to Monroe, November 21, 1814, in the Ohio
State Archives, Executive Documents.
17 Kerr to Worthington, January 30, 1815, in the Rice Collection.
18 Caldwell to Worthington, February 9, 1815, in WMOSL.
19 Johnston to Worthington, February 9 and 19, 1815, in the Ohio State Archives,
Executive Documents.
frontier, which it becomes our duty to defend? . . . I feel bound from a most conscientious sense of duty . . . to recommend to your consideration the propriety of adopting such measures of defence, as the state of the country, in my opinion, imperiously requires before you adjourn.20

The same day, however, the legislature refused to ratify a hastily prepared bill which would have authorized the Governor to hold two regiments in readiness at all times for instant service.21 To Worthington's chagrin, a weak substitute of volunteers was proposed but, after dallying for half a day with this measure, the legislators adjourned on February 16 without action. The Governor regarded this failure as most reprehensible, and explicable only on the grounds of ignorance, provincialism, and lack of vision. Luckily, and perhaps to some extent justifying the legislature's failure to act, a few days later there were rumors of peace—rumors which were fortunately confirmed on February 22. A most critical and anxious period in the history of Ohio was thus brought to a close, and thanksgiving assemblies succeeded prayer meetings. The Governor appointed March 31 as an official "day of Thanksgiving and prayer."

Throughout his term of office, Worthington never lost his interest in the militia. He continued to regard a strong and well-disciplined military organization as one of the most necessary and useful forces of the state, and his constant care was to make service in the militia popular. His annual inspection tours, in company with one or both of his aides, Colonel John Moore and Edward King, his son-in-law, were a pleasant duty. His motto was "In time of peace we must prepare for war." During the last year of his second term, he secured one hundred thousand dollars' worth of arms for the state's fourteen brigades, and by a personal trip to Washington settled the government's charge against Ohio for arms and accouterments for 1,200 soldiers issued during the war.22 On this February trip he froze his nose and face, and was so sick with "bilious colic" on his return that he could not eat for seven days.23

On December 2, 1815, the Governor's second annual message was delivered. He requested that particular attention be given to pro-

23 Worthington's diary, February 7 to 24, 1818.
visions for education, recommended an increase in judges’ salaries, and urged a more responsible and effective expenditure of state funds for much-needed road improvement. Deprecating the custom of exploiting paupers by farming them out to contractors, he proposed the establishment of county poor farms under state regulation.24

On December 20, he sent a special message on land and banks to the legislature. He advocated that instead of selling land outright for taxes, only a portion of delinquent land sufficient on sale to pay the tax be forfeited in trust to the state with the privilege of redemption within two years: “Such a system . . . whilst it would afford ample indemnity to the state, would give a fair opportunity to the non-resident claimants to prevent the sacrifice of their property, and effectually put an end to the litigation and improper speculations produced by the former system.”

He deplored the increase in the number of banks in Ohio and denounced their debasement through processes of speculation and over-inflation. He proposed that the state regulate the banks by charter and cooperate with banks so chartered by investing state funds in their stock. Thus, if the state purchased one-fifth of the stock issues of banks about to be chartered or rechartered at an 8-per cent return, in a few years the tax burden on land might be reduced.

The legislatures of 1814 to 1816 did little in the way of legislation to meet the wishes of the Governor. They had denied him an emergency wartime militia, and now they failed to agree on a system of free education, on poor relief, and on an adequate road-building policy. Nevertheless, some modest and conservative measures were adopted. During the 1814-15 session, the militia regulations were revised; banks were restrained from issuing money without authorization, and a 4-per cent state tax was put on their dividends; the criminal code was amended; and the Governor was given authority to borrow funds to pay the direct tax.25

During the 1815-16 session, the legislature passed a law which went only so far as to make the erection of a poorhouse discretionary with each county and to provide that each township might erect its own poorhouse if the county failed to act. The compulsory pauper-care law was revised, but its provisions did not alter the arrangement by which the poor were cared for under contract and their children apprenticed.26 Banks were again authorized to issue money, but the

24 Senate Journal, 14th General Assembly, 10-18.
25 Chase, Statutes, II, 856-901.
26 Ibid., 928, 942-45.
stockholders were made responsible for it; however, the Governor's recommendations were carried out to the extent that each new bank was required to assign 4 per cent of its stock to the state, the dividends from which were to be applied to the purchase of more stock until one-sixth of its total was owned by the state.\textsuperscript{27} The legislature also followed Worthington's wishes in refusing to endorse the resolutions of the Massachusetts and Connecticut assemblies providing for constitutional amendments excluding Indians not taxed and Negroes from the census for the purpose of representation, requiring a two-thirds vote of all states for the admission of new states, and denying Congress the right to lay embargoes of more than sixty days.\textsuperscript{28}

The election of 1816 was dull, for Worthington had little opposition. He even found time during the months preceding it to lay out the town of Logan near his mill at the falls of the Hockhocking, a delightful country underlaid with large deposits of coal, which led him to hope that the town might soon become the Pittsburgh of Ohio. Judge Ethan Allen Brown of the Ohio Supreme Court, Colonel James Dunlap of Chillicothe, and Joseph Vance of Urbana were nominated to oppose him.\textsuperscript{29} Worthington announced in August that he would serve again if elected, and he was nominated by numerous caucuses over the state. The election was held on October 8. The \textit{Ohio Monitor} (Columbus) conceded on the tenth that Worthington was elected "by an almost unanimous vote" despite his "time serving policy" and his parsimony. An editorial in the \textit{Western Spy} (Cincinnati) on the eighteenth expressed the hope that "his excellency . . . will not feel mortified . . . that he should condescend again to accept the office of Governor of this backwoods state. . . . It would manifest a spirit of condescension which ever gives additional lustre to true greatness." The vote was Worthington 22,931, Dunlap 6,295, Brown 1,607.\textsuperscript{30} The "Grand Sachem of the [Tammany] Tribe of Ohio," as the \textit{Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette} called him, carried thirty-two counties, including the old Federalist strongholds of Trumbull, Hamilton, Warren, and Washington. Dunlap carried eight, including Ross County. Brown won four.

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}, 904-905, 913-24.
\textsuperscript{28} Governor of Ohio, Executive Letter Book, 1814-18, 96.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ohio Monitor}, October 8, 1816.
\textsuperscript{30} Senate Journal, 15th General Assembly, 46-47.
The banking situation, which had engaged Worthington's interest during the summer of 1816, was to some degree a campaign issue. The failure to recharter the National Bank in 1811 had resulted in the establishment of a profusion of unauthorized "wildcat" banks, which flooded the country with depreciated money. The Ohio banks had not suspended specie payment until January, 1815, when the general inflation made it necessary to do so. Worthington had voted against the recharter of the United States Bank in 1811, but in 1816 he, like Clay, was in favor of it. There were now twenty-one authorized banks in Ohio and a very large number of wildcats; prices were inflated, and prosperity seemed to reign. It was "the jubilee of swindlers and Saturnalia of non-specie paying banks," but a period of resumption and deflation had been forecast by the recharter of the United States Bank, which meant the day of judgment was near for the wildcats.

A contest arose as to whether a branch of the National Bank which had been authorized for Ohio should be opened in Chillicothe or in Cincinnati. At a meeting of Chillicothe stockholders, Worthington was selected to go to Philadelphia and Washington and use his influence to secure the bank for Chillicothe. Since Mrs. Worthington had been ill and the doctor had ordered travel, he took her and his youngest child with him. They visited in the homes of John Jacob Astor and Rufus King in New York, and traveled up the Hudson to West Point to visit the Governor's son James. While there, Worthington addressed the cadets.

Worthington was severely criticized by the papers of Cincinnati for having used his influence in behalf of Chillicothe. The Western Spy, November 15, reported that instead of being on the job as governor, he had "descended to the grade of a mere pettifogging intriguer for the pecuniary or commercial interests of his own particular section of the state... an avowed agent of sectional interests." In January, 1817, the directors of the National Bank awarded Cincinnati the branch, but Worthington, assisted by his son-in-law, Edward King, persisted in his efforts and made such a strong case for Chillicothe that in October that city also was given a branch.

The resumption of specie payment by the chartered banks was

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necessitated by the presence of the National Banks. As a result, their paper rose in value while that of the unauthorized banks sank still lower. The directors of the chartered banks, who wished the "wildcats" destroyed, were naturally pleased. Unfortunately, however, not only the wildcat banks but also the chartered banks had overinflated their currency and accepted a good deal of doubtful paper, especially through the land offices. When the United States Bank restricted its issues and began to press the Ohio banks for redemption of the enormous amounts of paper money they held while refusing to accept any save their own paper and specie, a general collapse ensued. Thus an institution introduced as a great good lost its popularity because of an unavoidable but too precipitous operation. The history of the Panic lies outside the bounds of this account, but it may be said that Worthington's popularity declined because he seemed to be guilty of special pleading: he had not only supported the National Bank but was a director of both its Ohio branches. Moreover, he served on the committee of the federal bank which met in Philadelphia in November, 1819, and made a report on that bank's losses, gains, and general prospects—a report which, though none too encouraging at the time, was proved by later events to be overoptimistic.\(^32\)

Ohio's seat of government was moved to Columbus during the summer of 1816. Worthington's friend, John Kerr of Columbus, had contracted in 1812 to erect the necessary buildings and, despite the war, had succeeded in getting the statehouse built on the corner of one of the two ten-acre lots donated by him for that purpose. These ten-acre donations were part of a 1,200-acre plot owned by Kerr and his associates, the remainder of which they laid off in in- and out-lots. Here, in the yet unfinished capitol building at the corner of Third and State streets, the Fifteenth General Assembly met on December 2. The capitol was not finished for another year. Worthington himself supervised the clearing of the grounds by the state's prisoners and had the area ploughed and enclosed by a five-rail mortised fence.

The Governor's annual message was read on December 3. Again he asked that a public school system, one of the most pressing needs of the rising generation, be established. He stressed the necessity for financing better roads and water routes in order to expedite the marketing of Ohio's abundant crops and products, and to that end

\(^{32}\) *Niles Register*, November 18, 1819.
 GOVERNOR OF OHIO  

requested the legislators to abandon their plans to reduce taxes on land, a proposal which had been gathering strength for some time. He advised economy and industry as the proper means of recovery from the disorganized state of finances and urged a more liberal patronage of home industries.\footnote{33 Senate Journal, 15th General Assembly, 8-12.}

In his second inaugural address, delivered on December 9, he made a plea for penal recodification so that a vigorous program of reform might be made possible:

_The system with reference to the reform of offenders is defective. A criminal is imprisoned . . . and kept at hard labor, the proceeds of which, . . . goes into the state treasury; and at the expiration of his time he is turned out on the world, degraded, perhaps penniless and with no other clothes than a penitentiary uniform, to be pointed at with the finger of scorn and contempt. . . . It is very true that crimes against society should always be held in abhorrence, and justice requires that they should be punished; but whilst we do justice let us not forget to love mercy. . . . It is our duty to give such a human being a fair opportunity of reform. Persuaded . . . that the good people of Ohio do not wish to profit by the miseries of the unfortunate, I recommend . . . the propriety of giving to persons confined . . . at the expiration of their terms, . . . the net proceeds of their labor. . . . Such an arrangement would unquestionably . . . encourage industry, sobriety and economy[,] the comforts and conveniences of this life may be obtained without resorting to means which violate the rights of others._\footnote{34 Ibid., 56-58.}

Two days later, December 11, the Governor sent a message to the General Assembly asking its members to determine how the state could be of assistance in the Erie Canal project and urging that this important undertaking receive all possible encouragement. He enclosed a letter from DeWitt Clinton, president of the New York Board of Canal Commissioners, which urged Ohio to participate as fully as possible in the construction of the canal. Four weeks later, a committee made up of Robert Lucas, Almon Ruggles, and Aaron Wheeler reported enthusiastically in favor of Ohio's active participation in the project. A resolution was passed authorizing the Governor to continue correspondence with Clinton concerning what contribution Ohio could make.\footnote{35 Ibid., 67, 189-92.}

The legislature paid little heed to the Governor's other requests. Less legislation was passed than in any previous session. The land tax was reduced, the incorporation of turnpike companies was authorized, some changes were made in the criminal law, and several banks and towns were incorporated, but that was about all.\footnote{36 Chase, Statutes, II, 1000-1030; Laws of Ohio, XV (Columbus, 1817), 165-67.}
In his annual message of December, 1817, the Governor discussed more vigorously than ever the matters on which he wished action. He deplored the inadequate number and inferior quality of the teachers available in the state. He made a strong plea for the establishment of a state system of education and a free state normal school at Columbus for indigent but able boys who, when qualified, could be employed as teachers. He lamented the folly of spreading the road-building funds so widely that none of the roads were good; he urged that the main roads be put in condition before expenditures were made elsewhere. He felt that supervisors of road-building and repair should be responsible for a particular section of each road, should not be permitted to dissipate their resources or shift their responsibilities by overlapping duties, and should be paid in accordance with the results obtained. Again, he urged the stimulation of home industry by buying at home:

As far as circumstances will permit, every community should rely on its own resources. To depend on those of others, when by the exercise of economy and industry we have the means of supplying our own wants—never fails to produce the worst effects. Since the late war the nation has been inundated with the manufactures of foreign countries. . . . What we do manufacture is better generally than that which we import. . . . [We should confine our buying in every instance where possible to the products of our own state and thus give] the proper encouragement to manufacturing in the state.87

Practically no legislation was passed during the 1817-18 session. Seven new banks were chartered and six counties established, but the greater part of the time was spent in "windy warfare" over the advisability of taxing the United States Bank.88 Most of the matters recommended were considered in committee, and several bills were drawn, but none was passed.

During Worthington's second administration, an attempt was made to settle the dispute over the northern boundary of Ohio. The dividing line was rerun by William Harris under orders from Surveyor General Edward Tiffin, but Governor Cass of Michigan refused to accept it, and a controversy arose that was to result some years later in the so-called "Erie War."

President Monroe made a tour of Ohio in August, 1817. He visited the state capital in company with Governor Cass of Michigan, Gen-

87 Senate Journal, 16th General Assembly, 11-14.
eral Jacob Brown and Alexander Macomb, and their aides. Governor Worthington took the whole party to Chillicothe and entertained them at Adena for dinner and the first night of their stay. They were given a reception by the citizens of Chillicothe, who were unanimous in their praise of the modest and affable manner of their new Chief Executive. He, in turn, appeared to be extremely grateful for the marks of affection and respect paid him, and was delighted with the splendid views afforded from the vantage points about town, particularly from "Mr. James' hill." Governor Worthington spent several days escorting him and his party about the central part of the state.99

If Worthington's own handiwork in the constitution of 1802 made him largely a figurehead as governor, it did not keep him from being very active whenever he could find constructive work to do. His most enduring monument, of course, is the state itself, which he helped to create. Of lesser importance but a substantial achievement, the Ohio State Library is his memorial. Dependent on politics and poorly financed as it has sometimes been since Worthington's day, at the time of its establishment it was a fine institution. Without authorization—something Worthington could scarcely get from a jealous legislature—but with the advice of Charles Hammond and a few other interested legislators, Worthington purchased from the contingent fund granted him 509 books as a nucleus for an Ohio State Library.40 Moreover, he provided for its furnishings, appointed a librarian, and secured a set of rules for its government from the Library of Congress through his good friend William H. Crawford.41

In presenting the state with his purchase, he wrote as follows to the legislature, December 2, 1817:

[The contingent fund] has enabled me to purchase a small but valuable collection of books which are intended as the commencement of a library for the state. In the performance of this act, I was guided by what I conceived the best interest of the state, by placing within the reach of the representatives of the people, such information as will aid them in the performance of the important duties they are delegated to perform.42

42 Senate Journal, 16th General Assembly, 15.
The next summer, he inspected the penitentiaries of Pennsylvania and New York and secured plans and estimates for a new penitentiary for Ohio. In his first message of 1814, he had advocated reform of the penal code, and now he was instrumental in making possible a more commodious and better-equipped institution for the housing and reformation of lawbreakers. Jeremy Bentham heard of his interest in prison reform and education and sent him, through Ambassador John Quincy Adams, a set of his works on those subjects, including both his *Christomatheia* and *Panopticon*.

On January 20, 1818, while addressing the legislature regarding the Bentham gift, Worthington took the opportunity of announcing his retirement from the governorship:

> I avail myself, gentlemen, of this opportunity, through you to inform my fellow citizens that I do not desire to be considered a candidate for the office of governor at the next general election. I have deemed this early notice proper, in order to give the good people of Ohio full time to select a successor.

He suggested at the same time that the governor's salary be increased before a new incumbent was chosen and that provision be made for a governor’s residence in Columbus.

Ethan Allen Brown was the popular choice for governor in 1818, largely because he was in favor of taxing the United States Bank. James Dunlap of Chillicothe, the runner-up in 1816, was his opponent. McArthur was mentioned, but his opposition to taxation of the Bank made him unpopular. Worthington may have hoped that Jeremiah Morrow would be elected and that he would be chosen to replace him in the Senate; at least Brown and McArthur accused him of entertaining that idea, and many of McArthur’s friends interpreted his trip to Washington in 1817 as part of the design. The argument lacked point, however, for Morrow refused to accept the nomination for governor or to run for reelection to the Senate. McArthur also withdrew from the race for the governorship, and Brown overwhelmingly defeated Dunlap.

Governor Worthington’s valedictory was read to the legislature, December 7, 1818, by his private secretary and son-in-law, Edward King. His first exhortation concerned education:

> Among the measures which I have heretofore recommended to the Legislature, . . . and on which they have not acted, a good plan for the education of the rising generation, has been considered first in importance.
Time, and further reflection have confirmed me in the opinions I have before communicated; and from a sense of duty to the state, I must again recommend the subject to your attention. Surely, nothing can be more important. . . . I feel convinced a perpetuation of that freedom, we now possess, greatly depends on the means, which may be used, under Providence, to produce that state of general information, which will enable the people to appreciate the liberty they enjoy. . . . I am fully convinced, it is the first duty of the Legislature to adopt, with as little delay as possible, a system for the establishment of elementary schools, throughout the state. . . . [If nothing is done] the poorer class . . . will be brought up in a state of comparative ignorance, unable to manage, with propriety, their private concerns, much less to take any part in the management of public affairs: and what is still more to be lamented, unacquainted with those religious and moral precepts and principles, without which they cannot be good citizens. . . . I avail myself of this the last opportunity, offered me, of recommending to your serious attention a subject of so much importance.45

Worthington urged the necessity of internal improvements as second only to educational planning. Roads needed to be improved and waterways made navigable so that commerce might flow easily and cheaply. He laid before the legislature a copy of a letter sent to William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury,46 urging completion of the National Road to St. Louis, as well as federal aid for certain post roads, notably those between Cincinnati and Toledo; Zanesville and Maysville, Kentucky; Portsmouth and Sandusky via Columbus; and Cleveland, Ohio, and Washington, Pennsylvania. He suggested that the Miami and Maumee rivers be joined by a canal and that other headwaters be similarly connected.

Worthington believed that the exportation of capital for goods of foreign manufacture was the principal cause of the depression; it had injured home industries and helped drain the nation of its specie. He maintained that with bountiful raw materials available for the manufacture of clothing and other necessary commodities at home, it was unpatriotic for citizens to "give a preference to foreign manufactured articles, generally inferior to those we can, and do make. . . . The result must be a state of dependence and embarrassment, producing the worst consequences to the country."47

He deplored the inhumane treatment of the poor and expressed regret that adequate care of them had not yet been made compulsory.

The act "to authorize the establishment of poor houses" leaves it discretionary with the commissioners to purchase land, on which to erect a poor house. The advantage, to every county from purchasing lands, before the price becomes

46 Worthington to Crawford, October 1, 1818, in House Journal, 17th General Assembly, 18-25.
47 Senate Journal, 17th General Assembly, 12.
advanced, and by maintaining the poor in houses erected for that purpose, are so evident as in my opinion to make it the duty of the commissioners to purchase lands with the least delay. The present mode of maintaining the poor, besides the extraordinary expense it incurs, is not calculated to ensure them even humane treatment. Put off to the lowest bidder, their food, raiment, and treatment must be proportionably wretched. I . . . recommend to your consideration that the act be so amended as to effect the objects just stated.

Worthington's concern about restoring banks and currency in Ohio to a sound and stable basis prompted him to recommend that the chartered banks be incorporated in a state bank and only their issues be received for taxes. Such a plan, he believed, in conjunction with the stabilizing effect of the National Bank would lessen the force of the depression. He did not denounce the projected plan to tax the Ohio branches of the National Bank, but since he was a director and stockholder, it was hardly necessary to announce his opinion on that subject.

It is most significant that he was the first governor to ask openly for a rigid regulation or suppression of saloons. He had seen many friends and neighbors die prematurely from the effects of drinking, and he was strongly opposed to the use of alcohol despite the fact that he himself had manufactured and shipped thousands of gallons of whiskey down the Mississippi. In his last address to the legislature, he voiced his concern:

*The immoderate use of ardent spirits is productive of much evil in society. Need I attempt, gentlemen, to prove to you how often the unhappy mother, and her innocent children are brought to poverty and distress, and, often, to an untimely grave, by the intemperance of the more unhappy and wretched father? Need I remind you of the riots and litigation which have their origin in this vice, and is there not good ground to believe that many of the worst crimes against society have their origin in the same source. Nothing aids more in the practice of this vice, than what are usually called tippling houses, or dram shops. I have no doubt the putting down of such houses, would have the best effects as they are really nuisances in society.*

It appears that Worthington's popularity suffered little decline during his four years as governor. On December 12, 1818, the anti-Tammany *Western Spy*, which had attacked him for working for a branch of the National Bank at Chillicothe, hailed Ethan Allen Brown as an able successor to our "late worthy Governor." In the contest for United States Senator to succeed Jeremiah Morrow, who refused

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44 Ibid., 13.
46 Ibid., 16.
to run again, Worthington made a good showing but was defeated on the fourth ballot after having led on the first three. Colonel William A. Trimble of Hillsboro, a wounded veteran and brother of Allen Trimble, was elected. Worthington's advocacy of the National Bank and the fact that he was a director of it probably were his chief handicaps, although he had not anticipated that the connection would be detrimental. He apparently expected to be elected, for William H. Crawford congratulated him on his contemplated return to "The Councils of the Nation," and his niece, Nancy Bedinger Swearingen, wrote her father that the Governor "is to be Senator." It is noteworthy that the newspapers did not attack him and that there was considerable popular discontent with the choice of Trimble, who was relatively unknown and whose war services were his chief claim to preferment.

A review of the administrations of Governor Worthington shows that little of the legislation he suggested was enacted. There was a definite tendency on the part of the legislature to evade the inauguration of new or expensive projects. The state was young, and most of her people were just emerging from poverty. Comprehensive schemes involving tremendous expenditures were deliberately shelved, but more from necessity than from lack of interest. Even the canal project was adopted only after long delay and with much misgiving. Progress was dependent upon stabilization of the currency, disrupted by the war and the Panic of 1818-22. Worthington had argued that stabilization could be brought about through the influence of the National Bank, the regulation of state banks, and the stimulation of home manufactures.

It is worthy of note that during the administration of his immediate successor, the first important step toward curbing the liquor traffic in Ohio was taken; a law was passed regulating the establishment and licensing of taverns. A free system of education, penal reform, and internal improvements were soon to follow. In no small degree, Worthington's labors were tardily bearing fruit.

In closing this chapter it seems appropriate to quote Worthington's own estimate of his four years as governor. On December 31, 1818, he wrote as follows in his diary:

Since the 22nd of last month I have been principally engaged in public duties and three weeks of the time at Columbus closing my duties as Gov-

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Nancy Swearingen to Henry Bedinger, December 20, 1818, RCHS.

Chase, Statutes, II, 1046-47.
error & on a reviewing my conduct for the 4 years I have held this office
I feel truly grateful to God to have nothing to charge myself with but regret
it has not been in my power to do the good I wished to the state. I feel
very conscious that I have left nothing undone in my power and I am content
& grateful. I feel now a freeman & released from responsibility.