

= Caleb Strong =

Caleb Strong (January 9 , 1745 ? November 7 , 1819) was a Massachusetts lawyer and politician who served as the sixth and tenth Governor of Massachusetts between 1800 and 1807 , and again from 1812 until 1816 . He assisted in drafting the Massachusetts State Constitution in 1779 and served as a state senator and on the Massachusetts Governor 's Council before being elected to the inaugural United States Senate . A leading member of the Massachusetts Federalist Party , his political success delayed the decline of the Federalists in Massachusetts .

A successful Northampton lawyer prior to 1774 , Strong was politically active in the rebel cause during the American Revolutionary War . He played an influential role in the development of the United States Constitution at the 1788 Philadelphia Convention , and , as a US Senator , in the passage of its 11th Amendment . He also played a leading role in the passage of the Judiciary Act of 1789 , which established the federal court system .

Adept at moderating the sometimes harsh political conflict between Federalists and Democratic @-@ Republicans and popular in Massachusetts , he navigated the state in a Federalist direction through the early years of the 19th century as the rest of the country became progressively more Republican . Although he sought to retire from politics after losing the 1807 governor 's race , the advent of the War of 1812 brought him back to the governor 's office as a committed opponent of the war . He refused United States Army requests that state militia be placed under army command , and in 1814 sought to engage Nova Scotia Governor John Coape Sherbrooke in peace talks . The state and federal government 's weak defense of Massachusetts ' northern frontier during Strong 's tenure contributed to the successful drive for Maine 's statehood , which was granted in 1820 .

= = Early years = =

Caleb Strong was born on January 9 , 1745 , in Northampton , one of the principal towns of Hampshire County on the Connecticut River in the Province of Massachusetts Bay . His parents were Phebe Lyman Strong and Caleb Strong , the latter a descendant of early Massachusetts settlers such as John Strong , a 1630 immigrant to Massachusetts who was one of the founders of Northampton and the lead elder of the church for many years . Caleb was their only son . He received his early education from Rev. Samuel Moody , and entered Harvard College in 1760 , graduating four years later with high honors . He was shortly thereafter afflicted with smallpox , which temporarily blinded him and prevented him from engaging in the study of law for several years . He studied law with Joseph Hawley , was admitted to the bar in 1772 , and began the practice of law in Northampton . Hawley was also a political mentor , shaping Strong 's views on relations between the colonies and Great Britain .

= = American Revolution = =

Strong and Hawley were both elected to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress in 1774 . When the American Revolutionary War broke out in 1775 , Strong was unable to serve in the military because of his damaged sight , but he was otherwise active in the Patriot cause . He served on the Northampton Committee of Safety and in other local offices , but refused service in the Continental Congress . He was a delegate to the 1779 Massachusetts Constitutional Convention , and was elected to the committee that drafted the state constitution , ratified in 1780 . He then served on the first governor 's council and in the state senate from 1780 to 1789 .

Strong 's legal practice thrived during the tumultuous war years , and was one of the most successful in Hampshire County . He became a judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1775 , and was appointed county attorney of Hampshire County the following year , a post he held until 1800 . On more than one occasion he was offered a seat on the state 's supreme court , but rejected the position on account of its inadequate salary . Strong was described by a contemporary as meticulously detailed in his preparation of legal paperwork and a persuasive advocate when speaking to a jury .

In 1781 Strong was one of the lawyers (another was Worcester lawyer and future United States Attorney General Levi Lincoln , Sr.) who worked on a series of legal cases surrounding Quock Walker , a former slave seeking to claim his freedom . One of the cases , Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. Nathaniel Jennison , firmly established that slavery was incompatible with the new state constitution .

= = United States Senator = =

Strong was elected as a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention that drafted the U.S. Constitution in 1787 . A committed Federalist , Strong opposed the idea of the Electoral College as a means of electing the president , instead supporting the idea that the legislature should choose him . Although he initially opposed proposals that the number of senators should be equal for all states , he eventually changed his mind , enabling passage of the Connecticut Compromise . To temper the power of the states , he introduced language requiring tax legislation to originate in the House of Representatives . Illness of his wife forced him to return to Massachusetts before the work was completed , so he did not sign the document . He was a vocal supporter of its adoption by the state 's ratifying convention .

When the Constitution came into force in 1789 , Strong was chosen by the state legislature to serve in the United States Senate . As what is now known as a Class 2 Senator he came up for reelection in 1792 , when he was again chosen . He was one of the principal drafters of the Judiciary Act of 1789 , which established the federal courts . He was also instrumental in 1793 and 1794 in the development and passage by Congress of the 11th Amendment to the United States Constitution . This measure was enacted in response to Chisholm v. Georgia , a Supreme Court decision in which a private individual sued the state of Georgia . The amendment expanded the sovereign immunity of states to limit suits against them by private individuals from other states .

Strong was also one of a small group of senators who convinced President George Washington in 1794 that a special envoy should be sent to Britain in order to avert war , and who convinced John Jay to accept that role . Jay ended up negotiating what became known as the Jay Treaty , which resolved a number of issues between the two nations , but also angered the leadership of Revolutionary France and was widely disliked , criticized , and opposed by Republicans .

Strong resigned his seat in 1796 and returned to private life in Northampton .

= = First term as governor = =

In the election of 1800 Strong was nominated by the Federalists as their candidate for governor ; his principal opponent was Elbridge Gerry , nominated by the Democratic @-@ Republicans . Strong was criticized by his opponents for his lack of military service and for the fact that he was a lawyer ; he countered by asserting his patriotism through his association with Joseph Hawley . His popularity in the western part of the state was decisive : the wide margin by which he won there overcame the smaller advantage by which Gerry carried the east . Acting Governor Moses Gill died ten days before Strong took office at the end of May .

Strong won annual reelection to the governor 's seat until 1807 . During this tenure the state introduced a new penitentiary system and reformed the judiciary , reducing the number of judges . Strong 's time as governor was also marked by virulent political debate in the state , principally over foreign policy related to British interference with Massachusetts maritime trade . That interference was a consequence of the ongoing Napoleonic Wars engulfing Europe . Over the years of Strong 's tenure the Republicans gradually gained in power both nationally and in Massachusetts .

In the 1806 election the Republicans secured a majority in the Massachusetts assembly , and the gubernatorial election was notably close . Running mainly against James Sullivan , Strong barely received a majority of the votes cast . With fewer than 200 votes in the balance , the Republican @-@ controlled legislature scrutinized the returns in a partisan manner , discarding ballots that had misspelled Strong 's name while retaining those that misspelled Sullivan 's and performing tallies in ways that favored their candidate . This process concluded with a finding that Strong in fact lacked a

majority of votes , which was what was then required to carry the election , as opposed to the modern plurality requirement . Strong 's Federalist allies in the legislature were able to publicize the partisan nature of the analysis , resulting in a hostile public backlash . He was proclaimed the winner after further , less biased , analysis corrected the count in his favor . However , in the 1807 election the rising tide of Republicanism swept Strong (along with other New England Federalists) out of office . Federalists asked him to run in 1808 , but he refused , noting that he had " done his part " and that his home base in Hampshire County was strongly Federalist .

= = Second term and War of 1812 = =

In 1812 Strong was convinced by Massachusetts Federalist leaders to come out of retirement to run once again for governor . War with Britain was imminent , and the Federalists sought a strong candidate to oppose Elbridge Gerry , who had been victorious against Christopher Gore in the previous two elections . Gerry , who had originally been somewhat moderate , became increasingly partisan during his tenure , and Federalists viewed Strong 's earlier success in office and relatively modest demeanor as assets . Strong 's victory in the election , which saw the Federalists also regain control of the legislature , was attributed to several factors : Federalists capitalized on the partisanship of the recent redistricting of the state that resulted in the coining of the term " gerrymander " , and there was strong antiwar sentiment in the state . Strong was reelected by wide margins in the following war years .

Strong took a principled stand against the War of 1812 , generally refusing to assist federal government efforts to prosecute the war . Strong was part of a chorus of Massachusetts (and more broadly New England) Federalists who complained that in " Mr. Madison 's War " the federal government was trampling state and individual rights . He adhered to the view that state militia could not be required to serve under regular army command . When the first such requests were made by U. S. Army General Henry Dearborn , Strong , with the backing of not just the Governor 's Council but also the Supreme Judicial Court , refused , arguing that there was no need to call out the militia because invasion was not imminent . Because of his stance against regular army command , the state was denied a shipment of arms that was instead diverted to frontier areas and the war theater . Strong also took no particular actions to prevent widespread smuggling along the state 's frontiers with the neighboring British provinces .

Strong 's opposition to regular army control was more nuanced than that of neighboring Connecticut Governor John Cotton Smith , who ensured that his militia always remained under state command . Strong was more concerned that the state militia not be used except in defense of the state 's borders , and compromised on the issue of command . In 1812 , not long after refusing General Dearborn 's request , he authorized the dispatch of militia companies to the state 's eastern district (now Maine) under United States Army command .

With the British naval blockade tightening and threatening the state 's coastal communities in early 1814 , Strong authorized U. S. Brigadier General Thomas H. Cushing to command militia forces in the defenses of Boston Harbor , subject to reasonable limitations . Cushing was transferred to Connecticut , and General Dearborn again commanded the regular army forces in Massachusetts . Dearborn interpreted the agreement Strong had made with Cushing to apply statewide , and began reorganizing militia companies to conform to regular army practices . This engendered ill will among the militia , and Strong refused to place additional levies under Dearborn 's command .

The defense of Maine , however , proved problematic . Strong 's aide William H. Sumner negotiated an agreement with the Army command for the defense of Portland , but the ironically Republican @-@ dominated district militia objected , first to the idea of serving under any regular army leadership , and then to serving under a relatively low @-@ ranked officer (a lieutenant colonel) who was given command of Portland after the agreement was signed . Several units of local militia refused to perform their assigned duties . One consequence of the dispute was that most militia in the state remained under state control , and were thus paid for from state coffers at a cost that ran to \$ 200 @, @ 000 per month . This further strained the state economy , which was already suffering due to the British blockade .

Following the British seizure of Castine in September 1814 , Strong called the legislature into session early in October to respond to the occupation . Given that the federal government was unwilling to fund militia not under its control , the legislature authorized Strong to borrow money to fund a major expansion of the militia , but most of the funds acquired were spent improving Boston 's defenses . Another result of the special session was a call for a meeting of states opposed to the war , which became known as the Hartford Convention . Around the time of the convention , which was held in Hartford , Connecticut beginning in December 1814 , Strong secretly wrote to Nova Scotia Lieutenant @-@ Governor Sir John Coape Sherbrooke , essentially offering a separate peace in exchange for the return of the seized territory . He also refused to authorize temporary Massachusetts funding for a federally led expedition to recover Castine , leading to further cries of indignation from Maine 's Republicans . The Treaty of Ghent ended the war before the Nova Scotia negotiations went anywhere . Strong 's policies during the war are credited as one of the reasons for Maine 's drive for statehood , which came to a successful conclusion in 1820 .

In 1816 , with the war at an end , Strong elected once again to retire from politics . Strong died in Northampton on November 7 , 1819 , and was buried in its Bridge Street Cemetery .

= = Family , charity , and legacy = =

In 1777 Strong married Sarah Hooker , the daughter of a local pastor . They had nine children , four of whom survived the couple . Strong was active in his church and was a leading member of local missionary and Bible societies . He was a founding member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences , and a member of the Massachusetts Historical Society . In 1813 , Strong was also elected a member of the American Antiquarian Society .

In World War II , the United States liberty ship SS Caleb Strong was named in his honor . The town of Strong , Maine , incorporated in 1801 , was named for Strong and Windham Township , Portage County , Ohio was originally named Strongsbury in his honor . The Strongsbury land had been allocated to Strong as part of his ownership share in the Ohio Company , and was sold by him and several minority partners in 1810 .