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## **Thanks,**

Brandon Blaylock, Sam Burcham, Dr. Christopher Maynard,  
Dr. Chizuru Saeki, and Dr. Carolyn Barske.

This volume is dedicated to (the late) George Lindsey, friend and  
alumni of the University of North Alabama.

The image on the front cover is of members of the 1911  
Florence State Normal School football team. Florence State  
Normal School was the precursor to the University of North  
Alabama.

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## WORLD HISTORY

# Culture of Violence: Livestock, Honor, and Feuding in the Scottish Borders

Clint Alley

A popular bit in blue-collar comedian Jeff Foxworthy's routine holds that any burglar worth his salt knows best which homes to rob and which to avoid. If a thief, says Foxworthy, is presented with "two houses, and one of them has a manicured lawn with daisies growing in the flowerpot," the thief will probably consider that house to be "easy pickins.'" But if the thief comes to "a house where the grass is...tall and there's a dog chained to the clothesline and a motor swinging from a tree" he will avoid trying to rob that house because "that's a house where a gun lives."<sup>1</sup>

Foxworthy's humorous observations about the relationship between poverty and violence have entertained audiences for many years. But there is much truth between the laughs. Poverty, perhaps more than any other human condition, has the potential to foster violence, especially where it exists with other external stressors such as instability in the home or political instability in the surrounding area. Teachers have observed this phenomenon among inner-city minority children for years. The *Handbook of Bullying in Schools* notes that "insofar as poverty begets violence... children in poor areas may be more likely to be aggressive as a normative, adaptive response to environmental risks."<sup>2</sup>

A poverty of natural resources can afflict a region in the same way that monetary poverty can afflict a household. In pre-industrial

1 P.T. Elliot and E.M. Lowery, *Cracker Ingenuity: Tips from the Trailer Park for the Chronically Broke* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003), 62.

2 Shane R. Jimerson, Susan M. Swearer, and Dorothy L. Espelage, eds. *Handbook of Bullying in Schools: An International Perspective* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2010), 127.

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societies which cannot develop economies of crop-growing due to poor land, an economy of herding is often developed as a necessity; and this economy of herding is connected directly to a culture of honor, pride, and—ultimately—violence. A prime example of this chain of events is the border region of Scotland in the late middle ages. This paper will demonstrate that the poverty of resources in that area and the subsequent culture of herding—paired with the volatile political nature of the region between the years of 1296 and 1603—was responsible for the culture of violence which immersed the region at that time.

The story of the Scottish borders is a story of contained chaos. It is one of anarchy surrounded by law, of scarcity bounded by plenty, and of violence encompassed by peace. Like a maelstrom in a pond enclosed by fields of plenty, the Borders were once a region of consummate bloodshed and lawlessness, a place where the art of feuding was perfected and practiced by true masters of calamity.

During the three-century stretch between the first War of Independence and the Union of the Crowns, royal blood and national allegiance meant little to the inhabitants of this dangerous land, who proved time and again that *survival* was their only watchword. In such an atmosphere, it was natural that the inhabitants relied heavily on family ties for protection. This, coupled with their strong sense of personal honor—a trait derived quite literally and probably quite accidentally from the land, itself—made the medieval border region the world's most natural laboratory for the practice of feuding.

The land, itself, was the borderers' first great enemy. Rocky and barren, the medieval borderers could grow few crops, even in times of peace. Agricultural experts and novices alike have long lamented the

poor quality of the border region's soil. Noted ethnologist John Gray of Adelaide University calls the small neck of the borders a place of "rural river valleys and bleak hills," of "hardy sheep and...marginal land."<sup>3</sup> That marginality is manifested in hundreds of thousands of acres of steep hills and craggy valleys, everywhere scattered with an abundance of ancient, volcanic rock. A study sponsored by Coventry University in 2006 said that "large parts [of the border region] have poor quality agricultural land and are typified by upland, low-intensity livestock farming, notably beef and lamb."<sup>4</sup>

Rural by nature, the border cannot produce any cereal crops in great quantity, a reality that—along with the below-average household income of the region—has caused the European Union to designate the borders as an Objective 2 area in the past decade; an area in need of special subsidies to help counteract the lagging local economy.<sup>5</sup> It was—and remains—useless for growing any staple crops in great proportion. Its greatest asset was an abundance of coal and iron-ore, which was exhausted in the region's early industrial period but which, to the pre-industrial society of 1296-1603, was virtually useless.

It was for this reason that, in a nation of growers, the borderers early developed an economy of herding. Livestock was the bread and butter of the borders. John Lesley, Bishop of Ross from 1567 to 1592, observed the link between the violence of the border region and the lack of agriculture, noting that the borderers as a people were

more turbulent and lawless than any of the other natives of Scotland—in times of peace despising husbandry; in times of

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3 John Gray, "Open Spaces and Dwelling Places: Being at Home on Hill Farms in the Scottish Borders," *American Ethnologist* 26, no. 2 (1999): 440-441.

4 B. Ilbery, and D. Maye, "Retailing Local Food in the Scottish-English Borders: A Supply-Chain Perspective," *Geoforum* 37, no. 3 (2006): 354.

5 Ilbery and Maye, 354.



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war reduced to great poverty by daily incursions of the enemy. Living on flesh, milk and curds, boiled barley, they have little acquaintance with bread, or with good beer or wine; neither do they take much pleasure in them when they get them.<sup>6</sup>

This carnivorous lifestyle owes as much to the impoverished land on which the borderers lived as it did to the frequent warfare of either side. Lesley notes that grain products were scarce on the border, as well as products grown from the vine. Instead, the region was one of prolific livestock ownership. The people of the border invested heavily in their livestock, particularly the patriarch of a border clan, whose “superior wealth,” Sir Walter Scott said, “consisted in his extensive herds and flocks” of cattle and sheep, respectively.<sup>7</sup> The reason for this, Scott goes on to explain, is that “however extensive his territories were, he could use no part of them for his own peculiar profit, excepting just so much as he was able...to stock with sheep and black cattle.”<sup>8</sup>

The net result of this culture of prolific livestock ownership was a society where a great deal of the wealth was portable, and therefore could be easily stolen; a problem made worse in the borders by the incessant armed incursions of hungry soldiers from both sides during times of war. In the legal vacuum produced by three centuries of warfare, the only recourse for recovery of stolen property was often for an individual to personally recover that stolen property. This combination of portable wealth and weak central authority produced a breed of people whose natural inclination was toward both punitive and preemptive violence.

This culture of violence demanded that the men be able to defend their own property and, consequently, prove their worth and ability to hold and keep wealth to the community. This consciousness of

6 Gilbert J. Minto, *Border Sketches* (1870), 22-23.

7 Walter Scott, *The Border Antiquities of England and Scotland*, vol. 1 (1814), xlvi.

8 Scott, xlv.

community standing, self-worth and pride in being able to defend ones possessions constitutes a most basic definition of personal honor. The implications of an entire population endowed with this heightened sense of personal honor are that violence on the border was not simply brutal, but also frequent and commonplace. Clashes between individuals often revolved around livestock, and those clashes often sparked small-scale ‘private wars’ to defend the honor of the offended person.

For the border reivers—men of the warrior-class who specialized in the stealing of livestock—the concept of personal honor extended beyond the ability just to defend their own holdings and included taking pride in their ability to steal the livestock of another without being caught. In the sixteenth century, Lesley says that as soon as the reivers

have seized upon the booty, they, in like manner, return home in the night through blind ways, and fetching many a compass. The more skilful any captain is to pass through those wild deserts, crooked turnings, and deep precipices, in the thickest mists and darkness, his reputation is the greater, and he is looked upon as a man of an excellent head.<sup>9</sup>

A sense of one’s standing in his community was a vital part of border life. Lesley implies that the reivers saw livestock theft not only as a means of livelihood and of improving their standing in the community, but as great sport. Like a star high school quarterback, reivers were local celebrities. They practiced their technique and refined their accoutrements to give them the greatest advantages for their illicit game, even going so far as to teach their horses to crawl through swamps on their knees to keep from being caught if they were chased.<sup>10</sup>

Horses were a precious commodity in all of Scotland, but nowhere were they so prevalent—or so desired—as in the border region, where

<sup>9</sup> Minto, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Minto, 23.

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infantry units were scarce during times of war and every man, from the highest nobleman to the lowest peasant, *rode* into battle. English embargoes on transporting horses to Scotland did little but whet the borderers' appetites and increase the profitability of cross-border equine theft.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps more than in any other part of Scotland, honor and livestock were inherently intertwined in the border region.

But in the tinderbox that was the border region, honor was not just a personal priority. It also acted as an umbrella-institution wherein many individuals of the same clan had a shared sense of family honor. This shared sense of honor probably originated as a defensive technique. As is seen in many developing nations where central authority is either weak or nonexistent, the first line of defense is often the family unit. In the borders, family was often the only line of defense. Border clans of this period were typically organized around the edicts of a strong paternal figure, whose power was upheld by an intricate network of extended family members and feudal dependents.

According to Sir Walter Scott, whose early interest in border history fueled his literary career and left us with many primary accounts which have otherwise been lost to time, the absolute power of a border chieftain was never questioned by his family. Due to the martial nature of their existence, border clans often had no choice but to submit unswervingly to the dominant male member of the clan. The survival of the clan and its honor depended on this devotion to such a degree that

as soldiers, they felt the necessity of submitting absolutely to their leader, while he exerted his authority with tolerable moderation; and, as commanding soldiers, the chief must have felt the hazard of pushing discipline into tyranny...He was not only the legislator and captain and

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<sup>11</sup> George M. Fraser, *The Steel Bonnets*, 5th ed. (Trowbridge, Wiltshire, United Kingdom: Redwood Books, 1995), 85.

father of his tribe, but it was to him that each individual of the name looked up for advice, subsistence, protection, and revenge.<sup>12</sup>

The Scottish clan, contrary to popular belief, was not composed completely of blood relatives. Instead, each clan contained a network of relatives at its nucleus, who operated with the support of non-family dependents, who did agricultural work and provided military service to the dominant family in exchange for protection and sustenance. These dependents frequently took on the surname of the family they served. Scotland was riddled with a patchwork of these local fiefdoms. As with everything else in the Borders during the medieval period, the protective nature of clan society was magnified due to the constant threat of invasion.

An important aspect of border honor was faithfulness to the clan to which one had sworn allegiance. Borderers time and again proved that they held their chiefs in higher esteem than the kings of Scotland, even going so far as to engage royal soldiers in direct combat if the chief or the honor of the clan was threatened by the king. In fact, loyalty to the head of border clans was so fierce among the inhabitants of the region that James I of England (James VI of Scotland) focused on “justlie punisheing the maist perversed and rebellious ring leaderis (whais amendement wes disperate) and transporting otheris of them furth of this isle” in his 1609 campaign to bring stability to the border.<sup>13</sup>

This strong sense of honor was not isolated to the border region. During this time, armed struggle to defend individual and corporate honor was not uncommon. What was exemplary about the sense of honor displayed on the border was the rapidness with which confrontations over offended honor ballooned into fierce private wars.

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<sup>12</sup> Scott, xliv.

<sup>13</sup> University of St Andrews, *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707*, 12 April 1609.

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One such example of a “private war” in the border region began in 1526. The clans of Kerr and Scott were two of the most powerful families on the border, and they often contested each other for the office of Warden of the Middle March—a coveted position for reiver families because it guaranteed virtual immunity to punishment for the warden’s family during his term in office. The contest for the office of warden, however, was a sideshow to the true rivalry between the two clans. This rivalry began with the desires of a fourteen-year-old king.<sup>14</sup>

The adolescent James V of Scotland despised the oppressive regency of his stepfather, Archibald Douglas, the 6th Earl of Angus. After a year of virtual imprisonment by Angus, the young king secretly enlisted the aid of Sir Walter Scott, 3rd Knight of Buccleuch to help him escape—an arrangement which no doubt was made based on Scott’s lifelong devotion to James IV, the young king’s late father, who had knighted Scott on the field after his service in the Battle of Flodden. On 25 July, with six-hundred lances at his command, Scott waylaid the king’s retinue at the town of Melrose. The retinue, composed primarily of Kerrs under Andrew Kerr, Lord Cessford (the chief of one half of the Kerr clan), repulsed the attack, inflicting some 16% fatalities on the Scotts in the process. The Kerrs, led by their chief, gave chase to the retreating Scotts. At a crucial point in the engagement, one of the riders under Scott turned (at a place in the road still known as “Turn Again”) and lanced Cessford to death before continuing his flight.<sup>15</sup>

The battle was described to parliament by seventeen men on 21 November 1526 and recorded in a “Declaration of Innocence.” According to the seventeen (consisting of Angus and several Kerrs, among others)

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<sup>14</sup> Fraser, 182.

<sup>15</sup> Fraser, 183.

Scott attacked the party with “ane greite multitude of brokin men” on the road to Edinburgh in order to draw the young king “to thar inutile [guidance] and evill wais.”<sup>16</sup>

This incident touched off a brutal feud between the two clans—two of the most powerful families in the border region—which lasted for almost three decades and resulted in the deaths of numerous hundreds of people on both sides. Scott was found guilty of treason by Angus’ government and forced into exile after paying a fine of £10,000. However, two years later, when James V was finally free of Angus’ power, Parliament—at the king’s behest—acquitted Scott, declaring him “innocent of all crymes imputt to him therthrow, and of the summondis of tresoune aganis him rasit and all punctis contenit tharintill.”<sup>17</sup>

However, the Cessford Kerrs’ honor had been insulted, and their chief had been slain. The incident was enough to draw the two wings of the Kerr clan—themselves prone to frequent feuding between each other—together to avenge the disgrace to their family name. Despite an attempt to end the feud by the intermarriage of Scott to Janet Kerr, the daughter of Andrew Kerr of Ferniehurst,<sup>18</sup> the fighting continued sporadically and viciously wherever members of the opposing factions happened to meet—in open fields, forests, marketplaces, side streets, and hundreds of other places that have no doubt been lost to history.

The Kerrs finally got their revenge on Scott, himself, in October 1552, twenty-six years after the battle at Melrose. While strolling on High Street in Edinburgh one evening, Scott was ambushed by a party of Kerrs—possibly including some of the sons of Andrew Kerr of Cessford—lead by John Hume of Coldenknowes, who made the first strike at Scott,

<sup>16</sup> *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 21 Nov 1526.

<sup>17</sup> *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 5 Sep 1528.

<sup>18</sup> Scott’s own mother had been a Kerr, as well—of the Cessford branch.

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shouting to the Kerrs, “Stike! Ane straik for thy father’s sake!”<sup>19</sup>

Scott’s death was the culmination of the feud between Kerrs and Scotts. The gang responsible for his murder was outlawed, and official treaties of reconciliation were drawn up between the two sides, followed by further intermarriages.<sup>20</sup> But this episode in border history was indicative of many aspects of border culture. Central authority was weak, which is evident given the uncertain situation of the young king’s custody (a problem which was unfortunately frequent in Scottish history, and probably added greatly to the lawless character of the border). That authority was considered subjective and was often ignored, as when Scott attacked the forces of the regent because the king had schemed with him to do so; and Scott no doubt felt that he, himself, would be a better regent than Angus.

The role of honor in the Kerr-Scott feud was almost as central as that of family connections. Wounded family honor escalated the conflict exponentially. But this bent toward rapid escalation also owes much to the deteriorated political climate of the border region during these three key centuries, when the border region was one of the most dangerous places in Europe. Three hundred years of frequent warfare between the kings of England and the kings of Scotland meant that the border region changed hands often. The border, itself, was—and remains—a narrow one. Bounded on two sides by ocean, the narrow neck of land that makes up the Scottish Borders is just a scant few miles longer than the length of Rhode Island’s western border. These close quarters amplified and intensified the culture of violence practiced by the inhabitants.

In addition to the geography of the border region, the politics of

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<sup>19</sup> Fraser, 183.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

living on the front lines of a centuries-old struggle played a vital role in shaping the culture of the people who dwelt in the Scottish Borders. With armed incursions frequent and invasion a constant threat, the borderers were often left in a political vacuum. In this state of limbo, the borderers acted not only as the chief protectors of their own families and possessions but also as Scotland's first responders. Part warning whistle, part guard dog, the borderers were the first to know when an invasion had been launched from the south.

It is perhaps for this reason that royal forces made only weak efforts to curb the lawlessness of the border people until the Union of the Crowns. In extant records of the Scottish parliaments between the First War for Independence and the Union of the Crowns, a dearth of knowledge of the border's culture of violence is available. In fact, almost every parliamentary record which mentions the word "border" in these early days also contains a combination of the words "lawlessness," "death," "plunder," "rob," "fugitive," "rebellious," "theft," "slaughter," "hostility," "offence," "disobedience," "murder," "outlaw," "notorious," and "fugitive." The lawless acts of the borderers were well-known, but these records also display that very little effort was made on the part of any king's government to curb the chaos on the border—even in those rare instances when the monarchy was strong enough to offer aid.

To the same degree that it is advantageous for a family living in a bad neighborhood to keep a vicious dog chained near the front door, it was greatly advantageous for the king of Scotland to have such rough and violent people living at the hostile southern border of his kingdom. Indeed, the method of combat practiced and passed down through generations of borderers was more successful at slowing and eluding an



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enemy than in defeating him in open combat.

For a Scottish king to gather his forces and prepare for war in central and highland Scotland, he would need the precious time that could be bought by allowing the borderers to do to his enemies what they did best: engage them in guerilla warfare, disrupt their supply lines, and damage enemy morale—actions they would perform for the sake of protecting their own property and families, whether they held any loyalty to the king or not. In effect, it can be said that, by allowing the lawlessness of the reivers to continue virtually unchecked, the kings of Scotland held the borderers hostage to their own depravations, perhaps with the hope of creating an immense minefield of guerilla fighters which would, in return, play a great part in deterring an enemy invasion.

However, if this was, indeed, the tactic of the Scottish kings during this three hundred year period, it must be noted that it backfired on numerous occasions. A lack of royal authority preceded a lack of respect for royal power. The borderers often held their own chiefs in higher esteem than the kings of Scotland, and one cannot blame them. From the chiefs they received protection, stability, and sustenance. From the king they received very little. Even in times of impending war, when the king knew that the English would likely invade, the borderers received little more than promises. One such example is seen in a parliamentary record of 19 October 1456, which says

Item as to the secunde artikill tuichande the supple of  
the bordouris, the provisione of the defence of the realme  
agane the summyr sesone etc., the thre estatis thinkis at  
the bordouraris mysteris nocht sa mekill supple as thai  
dyde in the tyme that this matir was lade to the king, and  
at thai may this yere, Gode be lowyt, defende thame self  
better than fernyear be cause first thai ar bettir cornyt  
than thai war fernyere and thar innemys war cornyt,

secundly thai haif specialte at the lest at the twa bordouris quhill candilness. On the west bordoure the wyntir dois sindry skaithe, ande the clergy presumys thar may be specialte gottin to thame and it be desiryt, and thai throw the Inglismen will alsueill consent till a specialte fra candilness to weddirdais as thai dide now to candilness. Considerande also that the Inglismen has hade this somir bygane and traistis to haif this somir to this surfet, cost and travell ande thai be nocht suppleit be the wyntir weire and be redy to the soumir weire. And all thing considerit thai haif maide mekill mair travell and chargis of the weyr in this somir bigane than our bordouraris hade, tharfor thai think the bordouraris sulde be content at this tyme. And quhen ony gret ourset is lik to cum on the bordouraris we think the inlandis men sulde be redy in thar supple.<sup>21</sup>

The Scots had good reason to busy themselves with the “defence of the realme” in the fall of 1456. Earlier that year, the young James II of Scotland had ordered an ill-fated invasion of the Isle of Man to press his questionable rights to that territory, which, at the time, was controlled by the English crown. Fears of English retribution drove the Scots to make preparations for war; preparations which, curiously, included denying essential supplies of grain (“cornyt”) to the borderers.

The Scots parliament (“the thre estatis”) denied the borderers’ request for supplies and reinforcements in the face of imminent invasion on the grounds that the borderers not only had more grain at that time compared to the amount they had had during a previous invasion, but also that due to a “specialty” or agreement with the English, the borderers had had all summer to lay up a larger store of grain to prepare for the coming invasion, but had squandered it, unlike their English counterparts, who had grown enough grain to last until the following winter. In short, parliament told the borderers that, due to their own idleness, they would

21 *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 19 Oct 1456.

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just have to “make do” with what they had in the face of invasion, with a passing promise that the “inlandis men” would be ready to help the borderers if they were overcome.

This act of parliament gives a salient glance into the political and economic situation of the borders during the High Middle Ages. The lack of grain grown by the borderers is not surprising given the poor condition of border soil. And parliament’s ambivalent attitude toward the borderers’ hunger in time of war is telling of their overall attitude toward the border region, itself. The preservation of law and order in the borders during this period was clearly not a priority for the king or for parliament. According to further legislation, the position of “warden of the west border” was not created until 1484, many years after the creation of similar positions in other parts of Scotland.<sup>22</sup>

But this ambivalence ran both ways. The borderers, perhaps because of their hung-out-to-dry treatment by the central authorities, rarely heeded royal writ or authority. Lesley states that “the approach of royal forces, if sent against them, seems to them a game; for they are so protected by the nature of the country, that if driven from the woods they take refuge in the mountains, and if disturbed there, they retreat to the mosses and morasses, where scarcely men on foot can follow them, and no horses save their own, trained to go through the bogs on their knees.”<sup>23</sup> Lesley also records that there was no more-lawless part of the nation in his time than the border region.

No king’s government did more to quiet the borders than that of James VI of Scotland (James I of England). Starting with a flurry of parliamentary activity in the late 1590s, James sought to end the

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<sup>22</sup> *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 24 Feb 1484.

<sup>23</sup> Minto, 23.

“barbarous crueltie, wickednes and incivilitie” that reigned on the border.<sup>24</sup> Part of the reason for this lies in James’s personality. Perhaps more than any king before him, James put teeth to his belief that God had ordained him to personally rule as king. His philosophy toward monarchy held that a king’s kingdom was his own personal property, and that dissension of any type was not to be tolerated.

Another reason for this sudden crack-down on border violence in the late 1590s was James’s impending inheritance. With the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, James inherited the throne of England, uniting the two nations in the Union of the Crowns. As the sovereign of both nations, a savage border became a liability for James. Also, with authority on both sides of the border, James became the first king with the power necessary to subdue the border from England *and* Scotland.

These acts of parliament were aimed directly at snuffing out the favorite activities of the border reivers. In 1599, the Scottish Parliament issued an “Act regarding border thefts,” which allowed for execution of thieves on the spot, repealing an earlier legal tradition which held that the goods of captured thieves were merely to be remitted to their victims and little else done to the thieves. Furthermore, the Act punished those who harbored thieves almost as harshly, declaring that the king’s wardens had the authority to burn their homes and publicly humiliate their wives and children at the “cross market of the shire.” Indeed, the act said specifically that the wives and children of those who harbored thieves were to be considered just as guilty of the crime as the homeowner.<sup>25</sup>

But the *coup de gras* of the border reivers and their way of life came in 1609. The “Act regarding fugitive persons of the borders to the inland”

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24 *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 31 July 1599.

25 *Ibid.*

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forced law and order down the throats of the borderers in a way that no previous act or royal edict had dared. It went beyond the border region to every corner of the kingdom. Salient parts of the act read:

Forsamekle as the kingis majestie is resolved to purge the mydele schyres of this isle, heirtofoir callit the bordouris of Scotland and England, of that barbarous crueltie, wickednes and incivilitie whilk be inveterat custome almaist wes become naturall to mony of the inhabitantis thairof, and to reduce thame to the knowlege, love and fear of God, reverence of his majesteis authoritie, obedience of his lawes and duetie to thair neighbouris, for accomplisheing of that maist royall designe maid chouse [of ane] to be commissioner in these boundis whome by mony assurede prouffis, former employments of greatest consequence, his majestie knew [to] be indewit with all qualiteis necessair for sa weichtie a charge, wha following preciselie the rules of his majesties maist prudent directionis and useing all possibill diligence and dexteritie in prosecutioun thairof, maid sa happie progress in that good course as justlie punisheing the maist perversed and rebellious ring leaderis (whais amendement wes desperate) and transporting otheris of them furth of this isle, the rest wer brocht to verie settled quietnes and obedience of his majesteis lawes, a verie few number of outlawes onlie exceptit, wha being sa earnestlie searched and perseivit in these boundis as all hope of escaping and langer impunitie wes takin frome them, they have by maist subtile and craftie meanis by changeing thair names and dissembling the place of their nativitie convoyed thame selffis in the incountries of this realme and insinuated them selffis in service with noble men and others of good qualitie, not onlie theirby eschewing thair deserved punishment, bot also abuseing and harmeing his majesteis good subjectis by thair darnit stouthes in the incountrie, transported, ressait and quietlie sold in the boundis of the laite bordouris, and agane steilling geir furth thairof and out of the boundis of these middle shyres and outting and selling the same in the incountries, besyd that otheres of the saidis outlawis had bene allured and had ressait and oversicht in the incountries by some men of rank and pouer, to be instrumentis and executouris of sic revenge and mischeif aganis these to quhome they beir malice,

grudge or querrell, whilk for fear of his majesteis lawes and authoritie they durst not attempt by them selffis; for remede whereof, his majestie, with advyse and consent of the estaittis of parliament, statutis and ordanis that na man shall heireftir either ressave or retene ony man borne or lang habituat in the lait bordouris in his service or company or upoun his landis unless he have certane knowlege or a trew and authentik testimoniall of his majesteis great commissioner of the late bordouris or his deputtis of the said bordour mannis trew name and surname, place of his nativitie and reporte of his treuth and lautie, and that he is na knawin malefactour bot repute a duetefull and obedient subject, under the paine to incur the danger and to be maid answerable, civilie and criminalie, to his majestie and all his lauchfull subjectis for all actionis and crymes whilk micht be onywayes layed to the charge of the saidis broken men for ony cause or occasioun either preceding or during the tyme of thair ressaveing or reteneing thame in thair service, company or upoun thair landis as gif the ressaitter had committit the saidis faultis thame selffis.<sup>26</sup>

The crux of this act states that, due to the harsh punishments meted out by the 1599 “Border thefts” act, many of the most dangerous “ringleaders” of the reivers had changed their surnames and fled inland to be employed (presumably as “strong-men”) by the inland nobility. The 1609 act rooted out these fugitive reivers by threatening inlanders that, if they hired a borderer of ill repute, they themselves would “be maid answerable, civilie and criminalie...for all actionis and crymes whilk micht be onywayes layed to the charge of the saidis broken men for ony cause or occasioun either preceding or during the tyme of thair ressaveing or reteneing thame in thair service.”<sup>27</sup> By this act, Parliament made the hiring of border reivers just as much a crime as the act of reiving, itself.

No doubt the resulting prejudice against hiring anyone who spoke with a border accent or carried a border surname created great economic

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26 *Records of the Parliament of Scotland*, 12 April 1609.

27 *Ibid.*

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strain on law-abiding border citizens, economic strain which served in large part to make the practice of reiving, once and for all, fall from favor at home.

Whatever the king's motives, the acts of 1599 and 1609 finally subdued the border. The king destroyed the culture of violence in the borders by virtually declaring war on the families of the reivers. By a combination of chance (James gaining control of both sides of the border, eliminating the necessity of a vicious, "advanced-guard" border society) and force, (deporting, executing, and publicly humiliating the most violent elements of border society), James created a tipping point in the borders.

Deportation (most often to Ulster, where James was also asserting his royal authority at this time) played an especially important role in cleansing the border of its violent heritage. Since the borderers' honor—and thus their violent nature—was entwined with their family identity, James's forces very keenly broke apart and humiliated the families of the most active reivers, and by extending punishment to those who gave them any type of comfort or support within the entire realm, he gave the reivers nowhere to turn. Everything about the "cleansing" of the border region had to do with the forced separation of the family unit; be it by deportation, execution, or the act of fugitives changing their surnames and vacating the region.

With the destruction of the most violent border families as an example, the delicate system of honor that had reigned for many years in the borders was forever unbalanced, and the culture of violence that had torn through the region unwound in the borders, even while it was being transplanted to other regions. As Scott said, "protection was the most

sacred duty of a chief to his followers, and this he was expected to extend in all forms and under almost all circumstances. If one of the clan chanced either to slay a man, or commit any similar aggression, the chief was expected to defend him by all means, legal or illegal."<sup>28</sup> When the border chieftains could no longer resist royal authority and provide protection to their own outlawed kin, the balance of power effectively shifted in the region, and within a generation, the borders were no longer the no-man's-land of lawlessness that they had been for the previous three centuries.

However, the culture of violence begotten from the herding economy, tribal mentality, and universal sense of honor in the Scottish borders did not die completely with the edicts of James I. The borderers' bent toward herding, intense pride, family loyalty and honor continued to remain a strong force in the societal structure of their descendants. Wherever border culture was transplanted, sporadic feuding and violence was still prone to break out in times of great civil strife for generations after the Ulster Plantation.

In Ulster, the descendants of the most volatile reiver families continued to work masterpieces of lawlessness against both the native Irish *and* their counterpart English transplants. It is a cultural pattern that remained homogenous and potent when many of their descendants quit Ulster a century later for the rugged southern Appalachian Mountains of the New World. The Appalachians continue to provide a fascinating laboratory for sociologists. The isolation of the mountains has not only preserved some border dialects, surnames, and folk culture, but the rocky soil has also preserved the border tradition of herding, and the accompanying cultural emphasis on family honor and distrust of central authority in many mountain communities. And, especially in periods

<sup>28</sup> Scott, xlvi.



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when central authority has been weak or nonexistent, violent feuds have rocked mountain communities sporadically over the past four centuries.

Understanding the border of Scotland during the High Middle Ages is to understand the connection between a people and their geography, their politics, and their collective sense of morality. The connection between the culture of violence and livestock in the medieval border region is undeniable. Had the border between England and Scotland been a place suitable for growing large quantities of cereal crops, the violence and instability which plagued the area during Scotland's precarious centuries would probably not have existed. Likewise, if there had been stronger central authority in the region—as there was in the years after the Union of the Crowns—there would have been little reason for the herding borderers to develop such strong and sensitive customs of pride and honor. As it was, all of these things combined like a perfect storm at one place and point in time to create a distinctive culture of violence.

# La Morte de la Culture Populaire Française

Sam Burcham

*Rois ivres de sang et d'orgueil;  
Le peuple souverain s'avance,  
Tyrans descendez au cercueil.*

--Thomas Rousseau, *L'âme du peuple du soldat*

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1790, a sopping company of national guardsmen and citizens stood in a rain-flooded field with their eyes transfixed upon that which had been “transformed into huge elliptic arena in the center of which rose a huge altar to the patrie [to the state, the nation itself],” known as the Champ de Mars.<sup>1</sup> It was here that a great festival would soon begin. And it was this newly built altar, perhaps, that characterized the very nature of the festival. Inscribed upon it was a message defining the nation. It read:

The Nation, the Law, and the King.  
The Nation is you, the Law is also you.  
The King is the guardian of the Law.<sup>2</sup>

This, of course, was what the celebration was all about; the people were to celebrate the fact that they were the very law that governed the nation of France. All eyes would be diverted from the altar’s inscription, however, as the Sacrament of Holy Mass began. Yet this Mass would bear quite an unusual mark—it would be “said on the altar of the patrie, not on the altar of Christ,” in which case “it seemed that the sovereignty of man and

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1 Emmet Kennedy, *A Cultural History of the French Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 330.

2 *Ibid.*, 331.

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nation rather than that of God was being celebrated.”<sup>3</sup> This unique reading of the Mass was quite unlike anything that had ever happened at any other French festival or celebration. In fact, it was almost as if it were not *French* at all. The pouring rain, it seems, was symbolically washing away the sovereignty that God and his divinely-appointed king had once had in France. The people would now define new sovereigns—the nation and its people.

The celebration outlined above is that of the Festival of Federation. While there is evidence to support the idea that this was still a Christian celebration, the reading of the Mass on altar of the patrie and not that of Christ, as well as the fact that the king’s chair was on the same level as that of the president of the National Assembly (the king’s chair was customarily elevated above all others), suggests otherwise. The Festival of Federation, then, serves as a precursor to the coming dechristianization movement that would hit its stride in 1793 and in which the people would transfer sovereignty from God, his Son, and King Louis XVI to themselves. Therefore, the Revolution that would begin in 1789 would also be a religious reformation. And it would be a reformation of the most extreme sort since it sought a complete doctrinal change; it sought a complete removal of the Christian God from France. This extreme reformation is evident in the way in which a predominately Christian themed popular culture would come to promote a shift in sovereignty from God and king, to the nation and its people. In a country where Catholicism fundamentally defined all that the French were, and subsequently what popular culture was, all would be undone. As Timothy Tackett states, seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century France was a nation in which “the parish clergyman was first and foremost director of souls,

3 Ibid.

the essential link with rural world between man and the supernatural, man and his salvation."<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the patrie and Christianity were intrinsically linked. But with Christianity's removal amidst the Revolution and its concurrent reformation, could the nation still be considered France? I suggest that it could not. In this Nation of Revolution, then, the newly-sovereign people would have to alter their forms of popular culture to promote the nation and themselves as divine authority—they would create a culture that was decidedly non-French. This article will analyze the role the Catholic Church played in France before dechristianization, before looking at the way non-Christian forms of popular culture—particularly songs, art, and festivals—would transfer divinity from God and king to the nation and its people. Ultimately, we will see that popular culture during the Revolution could not be considered *French* at all.

To fully understand the impact that this transfer of sovereignty had on destroying what was French popular culture, one must first understand the role that the Catholic Church played in the nation before the Revolution. We will first look at the rural parish. According to Georges Lefebvre, "the church...was above all the center of collective life."<sup>5</sup> This was especially the case in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The people in the countryside were often illiterate and work oriented, and they depended upon the rural parish to meet a great many of their needs. But perhaps most importantly, the Church would give such harsh lifestyles deeper meaning. The teachings of the Catholic Church would suggest that there was something more, something better than the lives they plodded so determinedly through on earth. Ultimately, the Church provided these persons with hope for salvation. But while such

4 Timothy Tackett, *Priest & Parish in Eighteenth-Century France: A Social and Political Study of the Curés in a Diocese of Dauphiné, 1750-1791* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 152.

5 Kennedy, 28.

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a fundamental human need should not be discounted, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century parish would provide people with more than this. The Church would be the arbiter of the most important parts of rural human experience—baptism, marriage, and burial. And the Church would also play a role in the everyday lives of such parishioners, for even the church bells “marked off with great emotional force the hours of work and worship, the processions, the feast days of the liturgical year, [and] the passing events of life and death.”<sup>6</sup> The priest would also serve as a source of news for the rural community since “the pulpit provided the only means of publicizing government policies to a largely illiterate mass audience.”<sup>7</sup> Because their days were spent working, Sundays provided a means for men and women to learn the latest news, not to mention a means for social interaction. It would seem, then, that for the rural dwelling family the Church was of the utmost importance, making Tackett’s claim regarding the centrality of the Church and Christianity in French rural life a valid one.

In urban areas, the Church also maintained its centrality to human life, but it did so in different ways. Paris, for example, afforded men and women with much more than days spent farming, marked by the ringing of church bells. Instead, the capital “had the greatest concentration of intellectuals, artists, and such cultural institutions as salons, theaters, academies, [and] booksellers.”<sup>8</sup> It would seem that with so many different institutions present, the spiritual would take a backseat to the secular. However, Paris had the most convents and monasteries of any city in

France.<sup>9</sup> By some estimates, the clergy in France “amounted to...100,000,”

6 Tackett, 152.

7 Norman Hampson, *A Social History of the French Revolution* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 29.

8 Kennedy, 30.

9 Ibid.

but those employed in some capacity by the Church—as well as by convents and monasteries—must have exceeded even these numbers, making the number of people directly involved with urban churches perhaps even greater than those in rural areas.<sup>10</sup> There were many specific jobs that required the attention of both clergy and the laity. In some parts of the nation there could be as many as thirty ecclesiastics at one time who were employed at a single church. Such urban centrality is reflected in the way in which at “Notre-Dame one [man] was a *chevicier* who had to sleep in the church as a night duty priest, another a sacristan of masses, and a third the sacristan of the chapelle de la Vierge.”<sup>11</sup> There would also be those who were responsible for caring for relics, altar ornaments, the keeping of minutes, and even attendance registers. Each person who held such a position was an employee of the church. As for lay employees, churches were “in oversight of lawyers, registrars, bailiffs, collectors, and the like.”<sup>12</sup> But church appointment did not end there, for every profession from that of mason and goldsmith, to that of cleaner and dog-catcher (yes, dog catcher), had their place in the parish system.

Thus, it would seem as though an eighteenth-century France that was so dependent upon the Church would be the last place that one would expect to find cries for religious reform. But then came the Revolution and with it the deposition of the sovereign king and dechristianization. It is important to note, however, that the stage had been set for a religious reformation long before the Revolution. As early as 1685, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes had “guaranteed for all time the predominance of the Roman Catholic religion, in perpetual alliance with His Most

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<sup>10</sup> Hampson, 28.

<sup>11</sup> John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth Century France, Volume 1: The Clerical Establishment and its Social Ramifications* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 423.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

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Christian Majesty.”<sup>13</sup> In all actuality, it looked as though the revocation of this edict was anything but reformatinal since it created religious uniformity. But it was under this umbrella of guaranteed Catholicism at the beginning of the Revolution that the clergy would set about *improving* (i.e.—reforming) their religion. Such improvements would focus on the “cultivation of religious music; research into ecclesiastical history—and on the pursuit of power and office.”<sup>14</sup> And the clergy certainly did gain power and office insomuch as the Church “intervened in the political, social, and economic life of the community at all levels while itself escaping from secular control.”<sup>15</sup> The Church would receive its income based on tithes, while remaining exempt from taxes, thus allowing their wealth to accumulate. The Church would also have substantial influence over the crown, would maintain the rights to censor all published materials, and would dominate education within France. With such evidence in tow, we can see that French life had begun to stray further and further away from a real spiritual connection to the Church—eighteenth-century France came to be a nation that was “against a life of religious contemplation.”<sup>16</sup> And when Louis XVI was forcibly made to return to Paris from his shameful attempt to flee to Varennes, extreme religious reform in the form of dechristianization would begin. The king’s flight would prompt the removal of his power and authority. This deposition of the sovereign king would also serve as a deposition of God. After all, if the king was no longer worthy of his claim to the throne—and he had received this claim by appointment from God—then perhaps there was no longer any need for a Christian God in France. And if there was no need for God, there

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13 Hampson, 27.

14 Ibid., 28.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid., 30.

would, of course, be no need for Catholicism, the clergy, or the Church. To further symbolize the removal of sovereignty from God and king, a new constitution was put into effect to govern the new non-Christian Nation of Revolution. In essence, these events would serve as visual evidence as to the transfer of sovereignty to the nation—one that was not *France*, for France had always had a sovereign king linked with a sovereign God. However, this transfer created a problem. French culture, as it had been defined until this point, could no longer exist since the Catholic Church would no longer play a central role in French life. We now turn our attention to the way in which popular culture—specifically songs, art, and festivals—would cease to be French as the result of dechristianization and would seek to promote the idea of a sovereign Nation of Revolution.

Prior to the Revolution, French music was almost exclusively religious. Certainly, one could hear non-religious songs in cafés, at the theater, or in bars; but these songs had little, if anything, to do with the national state of affairs. Songs of meaning, then, were religious. This, of course, was because most important parts of French life had links to Christianity. A look at the liturgical calendar yields a number of holy days and feast days which called for meaningful songs. On one particular Easter in Angers, for example, “two ecclesiastics in dalmatics wearing gloves and red hats represented the mourning women and approached the long white curtains symbolic of the ‘sepulchre’; the gospel words were read, and from the ‘tomb’ emerged the ‘angels,’ two chaplains in copes wearing silver-mounted ostrich eggs and singing ‘Alleluia, Ressurrexit Dominus.’”<sup>17</sup> Such a spectacle had reached its pinnacle with a religious song as necessary means of expressing the joy of Christ’s resurrection; it could not be expressed in mere words. Obviously, the singing of

<sup>17</sup> McManners, 423.



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the “Alleluia, Ressurrexit Dominus” served as a means of emotional expression. But the singing at the celebration would not end there, for the choir would respond to this song with a singing of “Deo gratias, Alleluia,” before the service would end with what was arguably the most important song in France until the time of the Revolution, the Te Deum. This traditional song of praise was sung at any celebration of importance. If France emerged victorious in war, the Te Deum was sung. In response to births, marriages, and baptisms, the Te Deum was sung. And, of course, at the king’s coronation this hymn of praise was sung. Thus, it seems that this Christian song of praise “had been drawn out of its devotional and liturgical context to be made the propaganda manifestation of the monarchy.”<sup>18</sup> Essentially, the song was praising God, Christ, and the divinely appointed king. We can also see the importance of this song in Toulouse, where it was apparently sung seventy-two times between 1730 and 1780.<sup>19</sup> Here, it was sung for everything from the canonization of saints, to the recovery of the king’s health. Christian singing would not be exclusive to celebratory events, though, for in “times of national danger the psalm *Deus judicium* would be sung,” while a more solemn *Tenebrae* would be performed during the season of Lent.<sup>20</sup> The aforementioned songs for the celebrations of births would have their remorseful counterparts as well, for songs would also mark the end of life. While most of these pieces outlined above were performed and provided by the maître de musique, or the music teacher, there is evidence to suggest that when lay persons wrote songs, these also subscribed to religious themes. Again, such was the case at Toulouse where locally composed carols “depicting each guild and community in town bringing picturesquely

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 446.

characteristic offerings to the manger," were written by young men each year during Christmastide and in hopes of having their songs chosen by the church choir.<sup>21</sup> And finally, the most important aspect of religious life—the high Mass—would contain a great number of musical pieces, such as “the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Benedictus.”<sup>22</sup> The songs sung during Mass were not confined to those selections, however, for “motets might be added after the Epistle and during the Offertory and the Consecration.”<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, religious songs were a part of everyday life in every area of France. And this was only natural since clerics of old France were well aware of “the ways in which art [could] serve religious ends” and would knowingly use songs to keep Christianity and the Church at the center of French culture.<sup>24</sup>

The dechristianization movement that would accompany the Revolution necessitated a shift in the nature of the songs which would be sung in the Nation of Revolution, however. No longer could the *Te Deum* be sung in praise of the king, for there was no king to praise after his execution in 1793. And as we have already acknowledged, this was symbolic of the death of God in France, as well. Free of God and the king, the people would transfer sovereignty to the nation and themselves. Therefore, songs that had played such a central role in French cultural life, would have God stripped from their stanzas and would promote the nation and the people as deities creating a genre of music that could no longer be considered French.

This shift in the character of French songs would be gradual, for initially songs would seek to combine a Revolutionary mentality with

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21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 445.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 436.

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Christian themes and scriptures. For example, this excerpt from Marc-Antoine Desaugiers' *hiérodrame*, suggests this combination of Christianity and Revolution:

### CITIZEN

Regain your courage and fight: You are called to liberty!  
Our enemies have drawn the sword to destroy the weak and  
indignant;  
Let their sword enter into their own hearts.  
(Kings 4.9; Fal. 5.13; Ps. 36. 14, 15)

### CITIZEN AND CHOIR

May our enemies blush and be dispersed; that they flee and that  
they may perish.  
(Ps. 6.14; Ps. 67.1)

### CHORUS OF WOMEN DURING THE PRECEDING

O God help us!  
(Ps. 78.9)

### THE CITIZEN AND THE CHORUS

Yes God will come to our help.

### THE CITIZEN

The Lord rejects the councils (or counsels) of the princes.  
Let us run and destroy their odious fortress.  
God will combat for us. Let it be.  
(Ps. 32.10; Isa. 51.22)<sup>25</sup>

This collection of songs was written to commemorate the storming of the Bastille, but it “used a church genre (the sung psalm) to celebrate particularly the Fourteenth of July.”<sup>26</sup> As the reformation-amidst-revolution continued to mount, however—culminating with the removal of the Church and king—God would no longer be the help of the nation. Instead, songs would come to represent the nation as bringing about its own liberty. Thus, the nation no longer needed to glorify God through song. This sentiment is evident in “satirical songs directed against the court [that of the divinely-appointed king] and the formerly privileged

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<sup>25</sup> Kennedy, 240.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

orders were cross parodies of sacred hymns.<sup>27</sup> One example is the “O Filii,” (translated as “O Daughter”), which was a sacred Easter hymn. The words to this hymn would be altered to claim that the archbishop of Paris was a thief of the most sordid kind, while further claiming that the pope was a turkey.<sup>28</sup> But songwriters would soon make the transition from simply parodying existing hymns, to that of creating their very own which would deify the nation or national characteristics which were represented by the people. Such new hymns included: “Hymn to Equality,” Hymn to Humanity,” “Hymn on Peace,” and even one entitled “Hymn to the Eternal,” all of which offered “constant sanctification of the patrie.”<sup>29</sup> Even the most professional of songwriters from the Institut national de Musique would create hymns that dethroned God and Louis XVI and which would be distributed to the military. Rousseau’s *L’âme du peuple et du soldat*, a government subsidy that saw “100,000 copies...distributed to the army,” would include this kind of professionally written military hymn.<sup>30</sup> Included in this particular subsidy were the song lyrics which were placed at the beginning of this article. Translated, they read:

Tremblez, ennemis de la France,	Quake, enemies of France,
Rois ivres de sang et d’orgueil;	Kings drunken with blood and arrogance;
Le peuple souverain s’avance;	The sovereign people advance;
Tyrans descendez au cercueil.	Tyrants descend to the tomb. <sup>31</sup>

Here, Rousseau begins by defining the enemies of France, the king and his God, before he asserts that the “sovereign people” will justifiably keep these enemies at bay. Notice that there is no build up to the transfer of

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27 Ibid., 257.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 241.

30 Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1789* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 121.

31 Ibid., 122.

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sovereignty from God and king to the people. Rousseau seems to suggest that national sovereignty is an understood trait and that the nation had always held it; their rights as deities had been kept from them by those who desired these rights for their own purposes (i.e. — God, the pope, clerics, and the king), but this would be the case no longer. Whatever Rousseau's intent, however, it is clear that the transfer of sovereignty is official. After all, the king has been deposed and with him, God, the Church, and Christianity. One final hymn that promotes a deified Nation of Revolution is François de Neufchâteau's "Hymn to Liberty."

O Liberty, holy Liberty!  
Goddess of an enlightened people!  
Reign today in this sanctuary,  
By you this temple is purified!  
Liberty! Before you reason chases away imposture:  
Error flees, fanaticism is vanquished.  
Our gospel is nature.  
And our cult is virtue.

Love one's country and one's brothers,  
Serve the sovereign people,  
These are the sacred characteristics,  
And the faith of a Republican.  
Of a shattered hell  
He does not fear the empty flame;  
Of an illusory heaven  
He does not wait for false treasures;  
Heaven is in peace of soul,  
And hell in remorse.<sup>32</sup>

Every line of this hymn is carefully constructed in such a way as to desanctify Christianity and then transfer this sanctity to the Nation of Revolution. In the very first line, the national concept of "Liberty" is referred to as being holy, a characteristic which had previously been reserved for the Christ as well as the French king. By the time we make it to the fourth line, Christianity has been discredited further, as the

32 Kennedy, 281.

song proclaims that “the temple is purified.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, Christ has been removed from the sanctuary, for the church is an acceptable place only for holy Liberty to reside. As the song moves into the second stanza, it reaffirms this new idea that people of the nation are the true sovereigns. Perhaps the most important line of this stanza—of the entire song—is the seventeenth. Here, the song declares that heaven is simply an illusion. In doing so, it further implies that a sovereign God must also be an illusion. After all, how can God exist within a realm that itself does not exist? Thus, the “Hymn of Liberty,” “sung at the height of the dechristianization movement,” undoubtedly promoted the assertion that the nation was its own new deity.<sup>34</sup> It was, then, a new music for a new nation, a non-French song culture for the Nation of Revolution.

While many famous songs and hymns were a large part of daily French life, the same cannot be said of the great works of art which were religious in nature before the Revolution began. Paintings and sculptures were not part of everyday life for the average French citizen. However, there was in fact one particular form of art which was widespread and readily available—the architecture of the church. Recall that the Church employed an incredibly large number of people due to its many specific needs. Obviously, such employees would be continually reminded of the sovereignty of God and king while working within any given church. But even those who were not official employees would receive the same divine reinforcement each time they were present for the holy Mass. An example of architecture as a re-enforcer of the divinity of God and king can be seen in the vision Soufflot had in September of 1764 for a new church in Sainte-Geneviève. His vision was that of “a cross-shaped building with four

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33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., 281.

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equal arms, lighted by forty-two large windows, a central dome under which the reliquary of the saint would repose, and an altar with a colossal *glorie* of angels set in one of the arms, and, outside, a vast colonnade.”<sup>35</sup> Certainly, the entirety of the proposed design was meant to reinforce the mighty power of God. It must indeed seem doubtful that anyone could be present at such a church, looking at the *glorie* of angels, without being reminded of their Creator as well as their link to Him—the divinely appointed king. Likewise, between 1699 and 1725 at the Notre-Dame in Paris, there were “fifty-two high stalls and twenty-six low ones, their back decorated with bas-relief and the pillars between the seats carved in foliated scrolls and the instruments of the Passion,” commissioned as a reminder of God’s majesty.<sup>36</sup> There were even “statues of the Virgin and of Louis XII and Louis XVI commissioned,” which further supported the nature of any king’s divine appointment. It can be assumed, then, that each time a man or woman entered a church that he or she would be presented with an artistic representation of the sovereignty of God and king through architecture.<sup>37</sup>

As was the case with songs, the dechristianization of the Church as a building was gradual. After 1793, it would seem that “changes were episodic and destructive, getting rid of excesses of an unfashionable past.”<sup>38</sup> As church architectural art was secularized, stained glass windows and statues of the saints, and even of Christ, would be removed entirely after Louis’ execution, as churches closed altogether and dechristianization moved the Nation of Revolution more determinedly forward.

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35 McManners, 437.

36 Ibid., 444.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

With the secularization of both rural and urban churches, however, these buildings would no longer be a part of national life, in which another kind of decidedly non-French popular art would take center stage in asserting that the people were truly sovereign in the Nation of Revolution—newspaper and journal prints. Such prints satirized the Church and the kingship, stripping them of their divinity and transferring it to the nation and its people. Before the Revolution, “printing and publishing had been tightly controlled by the government and by the printers’ guild,” in which “the number of printing shops was limited to thirty-six in the capital and 266 in the French provinces.”<sup>39</sup> However, under the umbrella of the Revolution, the number of printers would grow, and by “1798 there were 221 printing shops in the capital.”<sup>40</sup> With the number of printers increased and the number of newspapers and journals that were being printed escalating, there were more people exposed to dechristianizing prints. According to Joan B. Landes, “From the Revolution’s outset, allegorical imagery served as a vocabulary for depicting...the new nation.”<sup>41</sup> One such print that would promote the new sovereign nation would be *Liberty Triumphant, Destroying Abusive Powers* from the newspaper *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*. Much as Neufchâteau’s “Hymn to Liberty” did in an audible way, this print deified “Liberty” visually. Here, Liberty is positioned over symbols of the *ancien régime*, and “with her left hand she throws a lightning bolt at the symbols of despotism, monarchy, clerical rule, and aristocracy.”<sup>42</sup> More specifically, Liberty, a characteristic of the sovereign

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39 Jeremy D. Popkin, *Revolutionary News: The Press in France, 1789-1799* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 61.

40 *Ibid.*, 63.

41 Joan B. Landes, *Visualizing the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 42.

42 *Ibid.*, 43.



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nation, is rendering God and His divinely appointed king obsolete through the use of a lightning bolt. Furthermore, the transfer of divinity to the nation is evident in the way in which beams of light surround her head, much like that of the halo in Christian iconography.<sup>43</sup> As for the clergy and the king, they are further discredited by a 1790 print entitled *Le Pied de nez ou L'Aristocratie écrasée* or *A Nose Thumbed, or the Aristocracy Crushed*. On a fundamental level, this print "calls for the crushing of the holders of all privileges."<sup>44</sup> Here, clergymen and nuns are ridiculed as they are depicted with overtly large noses. And for Joan Landes, the "nose is linked to the phallus" in which case the clergy and aristocracy are "lowered from the eternal sphere of their pretended nobility and spirituality to the base order of the body and its most elemental needs."<sup>45</sup> To associate the clergy with something as profane as that of sexual desire, was to quite forcibly discredit the Church, as well. The message, then, became more than one of a God who was simply no longer needed, but of a God who is to be avoided for He is perverse. As for the divinely appointed king, a "crowned masculine figure is splayed out, gripping a serpent (another symbol of distrust and sexuality) that originates in his mouth as the hooked end of his nose and comes out of his anus."<sup>46</sup> Again, the king is depicted at his lowest point, and his fallen state reveals a defeated monarch and a defeated God. The viewer's eye is inevitably drawn upwards at this point to see "standing triumphantly above these ruined, helpless creatures...an allegory of the nation."<sup>47</sup> Thus, the nation is the true deity in this print, hovering over the unholy king and clergy.

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Finally, Pierre-Paul Prud'hon's 1793 print, *Liberty*, provides

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 50.

45 Ibid., 52.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

viewers with a representation of the shift in sovereignty to the nation, successfully completed. Once again, Liberty is presented as a divine goddess, but Prud'hon's representation features something which had previously gone unseen in dechristianized art. Here, beneath the deified Liberty's right foot "lie various human heads, one of which is crowned."<sup>48</sup> While the other prints mentioned in this article did in fact depict a monarchy which had been overthrown and stripped of its sovereignty, the divinely appointed king is here dead. He has been killed by Liberty and the divine nation. With the monarch dead, the sovereignty of the king can seemingly never again exist, and by association, neither can the sovereignty of God since he had provided the king with the divine rights that the nation came to control. Furthermore, the goddess "carries [in her left hand] a broken yoke symbolizing the overthrow of oppression, and in her right [hand] and ax, [the] instrument of liberation."<sup>49</sup> As such, it seems that this print suggests the finality of the shift in sovereignty, what with the images of a dead king and the deified Liberty herself standing over him as the central focus of the print. Such prints replaced the religious architectural art of the Church that had previously been a central part of French culture, courtesy of a booming print industry. But, again, such art cannot be considered French and instead must join the revised songs of national deification as part of a new popular culture for the Nation of Revolution.

Certainly, dechristianized songs and art had quite an impact on the everyday lives of the people of the Nation of Revolution, but perhaps no form of popular culture was more important than the festival. Prior to the Revolution, the religious festival and ceremonial ritual was the

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48 Kennedy, 281.

49 Ibid.

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seminal form of French culture. This was especially true in rural areas where “local tradition: a sub-Christian, or perhaps pre-Christian culture... was constantly influencing the forms of Catholic worship.”<sup>50</sup> Here, folk-Christian festivals that went along with holy days and feast days, including Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, etc. were quite important, but there were other religious festivals to be celebrated, as well. For example, the Lenten cycle was “inseparably linked to the popular festivities of Carnival and Mardi-Gras,” and feast days for a parish’s patron saint were “accompanied by profane celebrations known in the diocese as *vogues*.”<sup>51</sup> There were also folk-Christian ceremonial rituals that were practiced for more specific reasons. The people of L’Epine would make a pilgrimage to a spring in Notre-Dame where it was said that the ceremonial and “ritual washing of the basin by a nude virgin” would provide their community with relief from drought.<sup>52</sup> Similar processions were made to chapels in Ribiers or La Fare, in the event that an infant died, where the people would perform a ceremonial ritual to revive the child so he or she could be baptized.<sup>53</sup>

As for religious festivals and ceremonies in urban areas, the most obvious one to mention would be the *Sacre*, the king’s coronation. On June 11, 1775, in Reims, this religious festival commenced at seven o’clock in the morning as “the procession set off down the newly constructed way to the archbishop’s palace.”<sup>54</sup> It was here that Louis XVI would kneel at the sacred altar of Christ as holy water was sprinkled over his head, and the following prayer was uttered:

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50 Tackett, 209.

51 Ibid., 211.

52 Ibid., 210.

53 Ibid.

54 McManners, 7-8.

God almighty and eternal, who hast elevated to the kingdom thy servant Louis, grant that he may ensure the good of his subjects in all the course of his reign, and never depart from the paths of justice and truth.<sup>55</sup>

Such a prayer that publicly declared Louis's "elevated" state would leave no doubt in the minds of those present that their sovereign God had appointed Louis to be their sovereign king. To further promote Louis XVI as a divinely-appointed king who was linked to God, he would also receive seven unctions, like those that bishops received. This meant that the "Church received him [Louis] into the circle of its chosen ministry by giving him communion in both kinds, a prerogative of the clergy."<sup>56</sup> All of these elements were clearly arranged so as to promote the idea that the king was God's anointed. Yet, as was the case with songs and printed art, this part of cultural life would have to change in order to promote the transfer of sanctity to the nation after the deposition of God and king. There would, then, no longer be *French* cultural religious festivals, but instead festivals for the Nation of Revolution.

To counter the number of religious festivals which had been a central part of French life prior to the Revolution, the National Assembly would promote many new festivals that would suggest that the nation and its people were divine, while God and his king were not. Such festivals were those for Continental Peace, the 18 of Fructidor, Enlightenment, Labor, Liberty, Reason, Regeneration, the Federation, the Republic, and the sovereignty of the people.<sup>57</sup> We have, of course, already looked at the importance of the Festival of Federation as it was outlined at the beginning of this essay. It is here that we turn to the Festival of the Supreme Being.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>57</sup> Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), xv-xviii.

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While this festival was celebrated nationwide, we will limit our focus to the celebration as it took place in Paris on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1794. We will further analyze that which its creator, Maximillian Robespierre, said about this important celebration. Mona Ozouf, the foremost scholar of festivals during the French Revolution, claims that “what the festival was trying to demonstrate is not clear. Neither religious fanaticism, nor atheism: the Festival of the Supreme Being...stretched between denunciation of monarch and rejection of anarchy.”<sup>58</sup> It is within this stretched-between state that I see a festival which supports the deification of nation and humankind.

Certainly, those human beings in the Nation of Revolution could see their sovereignty reflected in the way in which the festival was fastidiously organized. For example, every woman’s hair was to be styled in the same way; only certain pieces of music were to be performed; and the types of flowers that girls could carry was standardized to reflect unity. Such a display of organization had not been present in old France, with its monarch and its faith in God. Only a defied people could create such order effectively. But perhaps the belief in this piece of popular culture as one that defied the nation is nowhere more evident than in the words of Maximillian Robespierre. He claimed that it was a celebration “worshipping a deist ‘supreme being’ while resisting the more extreme tendency of some to eliminate spirituality outright through an atheistic ‘cult of reason.’”<sup>59</sup> If not God or king, then who else could this ‘supreme being’ be than that of the people of the Nation of Revolution themselves.

The sovereignty of the people and their nation was not restricted

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>59</sup> “Religion: The Cult of the Supreme Being,” *La Convention nationale, réimpression faite textuellement sur le moniteur original*, vol. 21 (Paris, 1842), 683-84 (from the *Gazette nationale*, no. 262, 22 Prairial, an II [10 June 1794]), 1.

to their unifying prowess, however. It is further evident in the way in which the festival seemed to glorify the nation above all else. The festival would begin at 5 o'clock in the morning as citizens would decorate their houses in the spirit of the Revolution, before a salvo from the artillery would signal each of them to make a procession to the National Garden. Here, again, we see the people as divine governors of a divine nation. After all, the 'spirit' of Revolution was the one that had maintained them through all of the tumultuous events in recent memory and not the Holy Spirit from God. Furthermore, their signal to process to the National Garden, to move forward as a nation, had not been a command from God but one from other people. No longer was God or king their governor, for they had maintained order themselves. Upon reaching the National Garden, Robespierre would provide the procession with an explanation for the festivities, claiming that "Never before has the world he [the 'supreme being'] created offered him a sight so worthy of his eyes."<sup>60</sup> This statement suggests much more about the nation than it does of the supposed creator to whom Robespierre refers. In essence, the statement glorifies the nation and its people for having brought about some kind of ideal and glorious age. Robespierre says nothing celebratory in regard to the creator; he simply acknowledges that a creator of some kind does exist. Furthermore, there is no mention of the creator as being a divine or powerful councilor. But perhaps the most revealing statement Robespierre makes about the new nation's purpose is that of a call-to-arms. To those present, he declared: "Frenchmen, Republicans, it is up to you to cleanse the earth they [the enemies of the sovereign nation] have sullied and to restore the justice they have banished from it."<sup>61</sup> Only a divine nation

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60 Ibid., 2.

61 Ibid.

would have the authority and ability to regenerate the earth. Therefore, the dechristianized festival would be the ultimate form of national popular culture—combining music, visuals, and ceremony—to promote a shift in sovereignty and subsequently create a non-French culture for the Nation of Revolution.

But such dechristianizing artifacts would all but disappear. The revised songs, printed art, and national festivals would fade away in eleven years. As Emmet Kennedy states, “Humanity was being taught to reach less to some being above and beyond than inward to the self and outward to all people to find human greatness.”<sup>62</sup> But the glorification of human greatness had never been a truly French ideal. As such, if the nation wanted to return to being one which could be called France, with its history, legacy, and faith in God intact, the Nation of Revolution would have to be abolished, and with it the popular culture which so forcibly promoted its divine nature. Perhaps Napoleon recognized this, for it was under his reign that the Concordat of 1801 would return Christianity to its former prominence in France. Napoleon himself, however, only saw religion as a political tool, as was evident when he stated, “In religion...I do not see the mystery of the Incarnation but the mystery of the social order.”<sup>63</sup> But there was one thing that Napoleon believed in; he believed in the power that Christianity had in regard to the collective life of the nation. And when the Concordat of 1801 came into effect mending the alliances with the Roman Catholic Church and allowing Christianity to flood the nation once again, perhaps it was then that French popular culture was able to become identifiably *French* again.

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<sup>62</sup> Kennedy, 338.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

# Hampton Court and the Perception of Cardinal Wolsey

Hannah Goode

The rise to power in Tudor times was hard if one was not of noble birth, but Thomas Wolsey somehow took that challenge and achieved greatness rising from a poor boy of Ipswich to the owner of four splendid residences, one of which was Hampton Court. Thomas Wolsey was a proclaimed self-made man who rose to power through his relationship with Henry VII and Henry VIII – power he illustrated through Hampton Court. While Wolsey portrayed himself as a self-made man, he did not really see himself as such. After Wolsey rose to greatness in King Henry VIII's court, he used Hampton Court as a symbol of his prominence and wealth. This rise to power shows up in every aspect of the Cardinal's life, especially in the vastness of Hampton Court. Hampton Court has 1,300 rooms, though some were added after Wolsey's time, and the palace and grounds spread over six acres. Architect John Summerson thought that Hampton Court showed "the essence of Wolsey – the plain English churchman who nevertheless made his sovereign the arbiter of Europe and who built and furnished Hampton Court to show foreign embassies that Henry VIII's chief minister knew how to live as graciously as any cardinal in Rome."<sup>1</sup> Wolsey wanted to show that he belonged, and Hampton Court was his way of demonstrating that.

Thomas Wolsey came from the small village of Ipswich, Suffolk, England. His father may have been a butcher, but sources show that this could have been a lie created either to bring Wolsey down or created by

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<sup>1</sup> Sir John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain: 1530-1830* (New Haven: The Yale University Press Pelican History of Art, 1953), 28.



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Wolsey himself to show how high he had ascended in the King's Court. George Cavendish asserts that the young Wolsey was not the poor boy he lead Henry VII to believe he was "in fine, upon a new and strict inquiry, several gentlemen in Suffolk are of opinion that Wolsey's father was in truth a reputable grazer in the town of Ipswich, and not a poor butcher and as many have asserted."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the Cardinal either never corrected anyone about the wealth and status of his family, or he just made the story up to look better in the eyes of Henry VII. The kitchens at Hampton Court attest to Wolsey's humble beginnings as Wolsey most likely spent a fair amount of time in this area of his home growing up—especially if he was from a poorer home. Therefore, he created large kitchens at the palace. He also needed vast kitchens because he had over five hundred people working at Hampton Court. The kitchens show his wealth and how far he had risen to achieve the splendor of Hampton Court Palace.

Thomas Wolsey attended Ipswich School and Magdalen College School before studying theology at Magdalen College, Oxford. T. W. Cameron writes that "Wolsey told him he had taken that degree at fifteen, which was a rare thing and seldom seen, and won him the honorable nickname of the boy-bachelor."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Wolsey was eleven when he started school there. He always asserted that he had done this on his own and that his success was his and his alone. Wolsey never had anything handed to him so he had to make it on his own. This drive for something greater motivated Wolsey to try his best and never give up in his struggle for the things he wanted even if it meant lying, cheating, and stealing

his way to the top. The only way for Wolsey to move forward was to

2 T. W. Cameron, "The Early Life of Thomas Wolsey," *The English Historical Review* 3 (July 1888): 459.

3 Ibid.

gain “admission to the university and entry into the Church [that] would open up unlimited possibilities.”<sup>4</sup> The Church offered a career for Wolsey who as a scholar and could do little more than become a priest with his education. Wolsey had what was necessary to become a priest, and “within [the] priesthood, there was fierce competition for the higher prizes which were there to be won by the priest with the necessary qualities – ability, energy, ruthlessness, and the knack of making useful friends.”<sup>5</sup> These qualities drove Wolsey’s decision to become a priest as he had all of these and more to add to the list, and they allowed him to become one of the most powerful men in King Henry VIII’s court.

In 1498 Wolsey was appointed Junior Bursar of Magdalen College; he was in charge of collecting funds to build a tower, but after some time he was released from this office for breaking the regulations. Wolsey’s tendency to cut through the red tape to get things done became one of his trademarks later in life. It was not long into Wolsey’s rise to power before he reached the king’s court. By 1502 he had become a chaplain to Henry Deane, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died the following year. He was then taken into the household of Sir Richard Nanfan who trusted Wolsey to be the executor of his estate. George Cavendish asserted how important it was for Wolsey to serve Nanfan: “this knight he served, and behaved him so discreetly and justly, that he received the special favor of his said master; insomuch that for his wit, gravity, and just behavior, he committed all the charge of his office to chaplain.”<sup>6</sup> Wolsey had an ability to make people trust him, leading him to the king after Nanfan’s death in 1507.

Wolsey gained the trust of King Henry VII because the king

4 Jasper Ridley, *The Statesman and the Fanatic* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1982), 16.

5 Ibid.

6 George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey* (London: J.M. Dent and Company, 1899), 6.

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had introduced measures to curb the power of the nobility and favored those from more humble backgrounds. This played right into Wolsey's advantage at the king's court. Wolsey won favor with Henry VII "through his instant labor and especial favor his chaplain was promoted to the king's service, and made his chaplain."<sup>7</sup> Wolsey was not promoted just because of his cunning ways; he was promoted because he was a hard worker and could accomplish the hard tasks at hand. Henry VII appointed Wolsey royal chaplain, and in this position Wolsey was secretary to Richard Foxe who recognized Wolsey's innate capability and commitment and appreciated his diligence and enthusiasm to do anything that was asked of him. Wolsey's remarkable rise to power from humble origins can be attributed to his high intellect, his extremely diligent nature, his driving ambition for power, and the connection he was able to attain with the king. He was approachable and welcoming when it came to the king, and his relationship with Henry VII was crucial in his rise to the Archbishopric of York and the control that Henry VIII would later give him.

Wolsey's rise coincided with the ascension of the new monarch, Henry VIII, whose personality, plans, and political mindset differed significantly from those of his father, Henry VII. The young Henry VIII was uninterested in the details of governing during his early years whereas under the tight, personal monarchy of Henry VII, Wolsey would have been unlikely to have obtained as much trust and responsibility. Wolsey was a man "whose head was full of subtle wit and policy. Perceiving a plain path to walk in towards promotion, he handled himself so politically, that he found the means to be one of the King's council, and to grow in good estimation and favor with the King."<sup>8</sup> Wolsey made

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7 Ibid.

8 Cavendish, 13.

his move, growing closer to the young King Henry VIII, and proved to be indispensable.

Thomas Wolsey's relationship with Henry VIII became one of the pivotal stepping stones in Wolsey's reaching prominence. One of the reasons for Wolsey's rise was because Henry saw him as a "suitable instrument for his own ambitions – and when he ceased to be such, he was dismissed."<sup>9</sup> Wolsey tried to take advantage of the young king who knew little about how to rule since he had been raised for the Church. Henry VIII was Henry VII's second son following his deceased elder brother, Arthur. Henry VIII was not prepared to become king, and Wolsey was more than willing to take advantage of a "young and lusty King" who was more than happy to place all the difficult business in Wolsey's capable hands.<sup>10</sup> Wolsey completely seduced Henry by distracting the young king with plans to turn Henry's palace into a "temple of all pleasures."<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Wolsey turned his sights on his own palace, Hampton Court.

Wolsey's Hampton Court possessed greatness that, in time, would surpass any dwelling the King had. Earnest Law asserts that "Wolsey had no sooner entered into possession of Hampton Court, than he began with characteristic energy to plan the erection of a vast and sumptuous edifice, commensurate with the dignity and wealth he had just attained to."<sup>12</sup> Hampton Court was a stage. Wolsey wanted his palace to be majestic and even more impressive than the King's court. Cardinal Wolsey "made no serious attempt to suppress these verses which were secretly circulating in manuscripts in the court and elsewhere; instead, he bribed Skelton, by

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9 Peter Gwyn, *The Kings Cardinal: The Rise and Fall of Thomas Wolsey* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1990), 4.

10 Cavendish, 14.

11 Ibid.

12 Earnest Law, *Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court* (London: William Clowes and Sons, Limited, 1892), 10.

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gifts and patronage, to write several poems in which he praised Wolsey in the most fulsome style."<sup>13</sup> One of Skelton's verses proclaimed, "Why come ye not to court? To which Court? To the King's court, Or to Hampton Court? Nay, to the King's court; The King's court should have the excellence; But Hampton Court Hath the preeminence."<sup>14</sup> Hampton Court was also very menacing. Earnest Law asserts that "the palace was very Tudor, red brick, pinnacles, gargoyles, and heraldic beats, on gambles."<sup>15</sup> Wolsey wanted people to fear and respect him, and he also wanted to prove to the world that he belonged with the aristocracy. Wolsey needed to validate that he was not just that poor boy who rose through the ranks, but that he had become a man of true power.

Once firmly entrenched in the king's favor, Wolsey wanted to keep the king out of the affairs of the state and leave it for him to run. By 1516 Wolsey had become "so proud that he considered himself the peer of the King's."<sup>16</sup> Henry VIII chose Wolsey to be his leading man because he shared the king's dreams, and Wolsey could turn them into reality through his forcefulness and desire to do the king's will. Although Wolsey wanted to do the king's will, he still yearned for the authority and affluence he could gain by keeping the king content. Earnest Law writes that "these were the earlier days of Henry's reign, when he conceived nothing but implicit trust and respect for his faithful Wolsey, and regarded Katharine with nothing but tender love."<sup>17</sup> These days would end with the rise of Anne Boleyn.

Henry trusted Wolsey with his most important matter -- his divorce from Catherine of Aragon. In this matter, Wolsey failed the king

<sup>13</sup> Ridley, 16.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>15</sup> Law, *Cardinal Wolsey*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Gwyn, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Law, *Cardinal Wolsey*, 15.

for what was most likely the first and only time. Anne Boleyn never liked the Cardinal because he was Catholic and she was protestant, and she wanted to influence the King in removing England from the grip of Rome. Anne “utterly hated the Cardinal and got Henry to give orders that he was not to come henceforth within three miles of the Court unless expressly summons.”<sup>18</sup> Anne also feared the Cardinal’s power over the King as “it was obviously potentially dangerous for him if someone else was exercising strong influence over Henry.”<sup>19</sup> With Wolsey losing his touch with the people of England and with Anne Boleyn whispering in the king’s ear that he was slowing Henry’s divorce, the Cardinal was bound to fall from the king’s graces. James Gairdner states that “the king knew very well that Wolsey had only failed because success was impossible. The divorce was a business in to which he had been unwillingly dragged; but he had done the utmost that he could in it, well knowing that it would be his ruin at any time not to give the king satisfaction”<sup>20</sup>

Another problem Wolsey faced was Henry’s decision to call his bluff. Henry VIII wanted to break from the Roman Catholic Church, and by doing so, he alienated Wolsey. The Cardinal did not even realize that his end was drawing near. In September he was visited by du Bellay who later stated, “I have less hope of his maintaining his influence, since my talk with him, than I had before, for I see he trusts in some of his own creatures, who, I am sure, have turned their coats. I am very shaken, for I should never have believed that they would have been so wicked; and the worst of it is that he does not realize it.”<sup>21</sup> By 1529 the Cardinal’s failure to

procure the divorce for Henry ultimately led to his arrest and seizure of

18 James Gairdner, “The Fall of Cardinal Wolsey,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, New Series* 13 (1889): 82.

19 Ridley, 190.

20 Gairdner, 76.

21 Ridley, 217.

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his property, including Hampton Court. Hampton Court is now known as Henry VIII's palace; the Cardinal is barely recognized as its builder. The great and powerful Wolsey was removed from the King's court, his most prized possession in the hands of the king. The king took residence at Hampton Court because it was even grander than the dwellings he owned. On his way to the Tower of London, to face the charge of treason, the great Wolsey fell ill and died. When the Cardinal fell from the king's graces so did "the greatness and splendor of Henry's reign."<sup>22</sup> No one could ever be compared with the great Cardinal and the legacy he left behind at Hampton Court.

Wolsey built Hampton Court to reflect the view he wanted people to have of him. He was ever the actor, and Hampton Court was his stage. Hampton Court embodies every aspect of what Wolsey wanted people to see in him when they looked at his palace. At times Hampton Court is very masculine and menacing, and other times there is beauty in the deep red Tudor brick and majestic grand halls. The Cardinal wanted to prove to the world that he belonged with the aristocracy and spared no expense building and upgrading the grand palace. It is proof of his power and greatness, and it is a reminder that power and glory came at a cost. Wolsey paid the ultimate price—he paid with his life. The image of the Cardinal is that of a brooding and powerful figure, a sinister string-puller who wanted nothing but to please his King and rise in power and riches. Hampton Court shows the longing Wolsey had for greatness employing "the best carvers, painters, and gilders in London... Sometimes he sent to Italy direct for decorative work. The terra-cotta medallion bust of the Roman Emperors surrounded with rich arabesque borders, which are affixed to the turrets in each side of the gateways of the courts, were

<sup>22</sup> Law, *Cardinal Wolsey*, 26.

ordered by him.”<sup>23</sup> The terra-cotta medallions still exist at Hampton Court, and they are one of the few things remaining from Wolsey’s reign in the palace. Not only did the outside of Hampton Court show his extravagance but the furniture and decoration inside did as well. Law writes that “rich as was the furniture of the Cardinal’s palace, and cast as was its extent, it only just adequate to meet the requirements of the enormous and splendid household which he maintained.”<sup>24</sup> Wolsey spared no expense on the grand dwelling; for example, he installed tapestries in every room and would have them changed weekly. He had created a palace that was celebrated throughout Europe “for the quantity of splendid Arras hangings that it contained. For this form of artistic decoration Wolsey appears in fact to have had a perfect passion.”<sup>25</sup> One room that remains of Wolsey’s is what is known as “Wolsey’s Closet.” It is a room that has been greatly reduced in size, but the dark carved panel walls still show the extent of Wolsey’s extravagance where “the whole decoration of this room, faded though it is by time, gives us that idea of splendor and richness without gaudiness, which was a characteristic of the artistic taste of the great Cardinal.”<sup>26</sup> His motto can still be seen in Latin, which translated to English means “the Lord be my helper.”

Hampton Court was to Wolsey what the White House is to the President; it was a symbol of power. Whoever lived there held all the power necessary to rule the world. This is what Wolsey wanted Hampton Court to be, a status symbol which suggested that he was there to rule. Hampton Court is that and so much more. It tells the story of a man who rose from nothing to become the most important man in England next

23 Ibid., 21.

24 Ibid, 31.

25 Earnest Law, *New Guide to the Royal Palace of Hampton Court with a New Catalogue of the Pictures* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1882), 7.

26 Ibid., 25.



to the king, though Wolsey did not want people to see him as such. He would have rather had people forget that he was once a poor boy and instead think of him as the all-powerful Cardinal who did the king's bidding. On a plaque at Hampton Court it says, "Henry and Wolsey wielded architecture and interior decoration like weapons. Spending extravagantly, they deployed artists, architects and craftsmen from all over Europe in a never-ending cultural battle with the rival courts of France and Holy Roman Empire."<sup>27</sup> Wolsey loved showing his power and grandeur through his architecture; it was his way to display his wealth and status. It was said that his palace "lit up the eyes of the beholders, by reason of their sumptuous work."<sup>28</sup> Thomas Wolsey used Hampton Court to show his prominence and wealth, but not even that could save him in the end.

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<sup>27</sup> Historical Royal Palaces. Hampton Court Palace: July, 9 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

# Citizenship and Soldiering: An Analysis of the Early Boy Scout Movement

Jason Hewer

A quick ferry ride across Poole Harbor took me to Brownsea Island on the southern coast of England. Brownsea Island is part of the British National Trust and is home to a variety of flora and fauna. It operates as a nature preserve now, but this was not always the case as back in 1907, it was private property. It was in this year that Robert Baden-Powell decided to make an experiment on the island by inviting twenty boys to come and camp for a week in what would become the first ever Boy Scout camp. It was easy for me to think back 100 years and picture myself at that first camp. Standing atop a cliff, looking down at the sandy beach as the waves broke upon it, I was imbued with the romanticism that must have inspired Baden-Powell to use “Scout-craft” as a means of character education. Yet for all the good Baden-Powell intended, Scouting has not been without its critics. In this paper I will explore the beginnings of the Scouting movement, the criticism it encountered in the period after the First World War, and the transformation the movement underwent in response to a changing society. I hope to prove that despite very clear retrospective military qualities, the Scouting movement was founded on views that were appropriate for the time; and as the years have progressed and society’s opinions have changed, Scouting has kept pace.

From its conception, the Scouting movement has been charged with indoctrinating our youth with military ideals; however, the Scouting movement has routinely rejected this accusation. Robert Baden-Powell, the

founder of the movement wrote an explanation of his movement in 1910:

So many people ask me, 'What *is* Scouting? What do Scouts *do*?'

Well, Scouting is not, as some seem to think, in any way connected with Soldiering. It is really the work of Colonial frontiersmen, coupled, in our case, with a good deal of knight-errantry. That is to say, the boys learn backwoodsmanship, and have, as part of their duty, to do a good turn to a fellow-creature every day. It is a method of developing among boys the manliness and character which are so much needed among our future citizens. It consists, briefly, in giving them Scouting-craft in place of loafing or rowdiness, which are now becoming so prevalent. To drive out a bad habit it is necessary to inculcate a substitute, and Scout-craft is the substitute we suggest. By Scout-craft I mean an education in character outside the school walls, as distinct from mere book-learning learnt within the school.<sup>1</sup>

So if Scouting is not about "Soldiering" but rather about the work of "Colonial frontiersmen", where do these accusations come from? It is necessary to look closely at the methods and materials of the movement to find an answer.

When reading through *Scouting for Boys*, Baden-Powell's highly successful handbook for the Scout movement, it becomes clear that the main goal of Scouting is to turn boys into better men. However, "better" is a highly subjective term. What constituted "better" for Baden-Powell? The Oath requisite for membership in the Boy Scout Association offers insight:

On my honour I promise that-

1. I will do my duty to God and the King.
2. I will do my best to help others, whatever it costs me.
3. I know the scout law, and will obey it.<sup>2</sup>

The Scout Oath is three-fold and listed in order of importance: duty to God and country, the highest calling; duty to others; and duty to self (the

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1 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: An Explanation* (1910), 1.

2 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A handbook for instruction in good citizenship* (London: Horace Cox, 1908), 40.

Scout Law being a list of twelve attributes a Scout possesses). The Oath really is a promise to be a better citizen, and citizenship is really what the Scouting movement is about. But it has been over 100 years since the conception of the Scouting movement. What was citizenship in 1908? Baden-Powell describes a good citizen in *Scouting for Boys*: “‘Country first, self second,’ should be your motto. Probably, if you ask yourself truly, you will find you have at present got them just the other way about.”<sup>3</sup> To Baden-Powell, “better” citizenship meant placing the needs of the country before the needs of the individual.

This view is not surprising coming from a soldier such as Baden-Powell who was hailed as a hero for his actions at the Siege of Mafeking in South Africa during the Boer Wars. He knew what devotion to country meant; and to him, I’m sure, citizenship involved being prepared to defend his country. In *Scouting for Boys* he writes, “Every boy ought to learn to shoot and to obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman, and merely gets killed like a squealing rabbit, being unable to defend himself.”<sup>4</sup> He goes on to say

A SCOUT OBEYS ORDERS of his patrol leader or scout master without question.

Even if he gets an order he does not like he must do as soldiers and sailors do, he must carry it out all the same *because it is his duty*; and after he has done it he can come and state any reasons against it: but he must must [*sic*] carry out the order at once. That is discipline.<sup>5</sup>

So if Scouting is not soldiering, why does *Scouting for Boys* have such a militaristic tone to it? Truthfully, it does not. It is a sizeable work, and with enough effort can probably be quoted to support anything. These

short passages do not offer a true feel for what the work was about. When

3 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Revised Edition* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1910), 25.

4 *Ibid.*, 16.

5 Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: A handbook for instruction in good citizenship*, 50.

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Baden-Powell states that Scouting is not soldiering, we would do well to believe that in his mind it is not. It is a system of educating boys in good citizenship in a way that appeals to their naturally adventurous spirits. In his own words, "With a view to making the subject appeal to boys, and to meet their spirit of adventure, I held up for their ideal the doings of backwoodsmen, knights, adventurers and explorers, as the heroes for them to follow. These I grouped generally under the title, 'Scouts.'"<sup>6</sup> The movement is full of secret signs and codes of honor. It places emphasis on tracking ability and outdoor skills. It puts boys in a group with which they can feel camaraderie. If in retrospect, the movement appears to have military qualities, it is more an anachronism than anything else because as society's perceptions of what "Soldiering" is have changed, so have the methods of the Scouting movement.

This is not to say that at the time of its conception Scouting was not charged by suspicious critics as being a militaristic organization. It was easy to lump the movement in with cadet corps that were springing up in various countries. The fact that Scouting was the idea of a soldier with an impressive military record did not help dispel these perceptions. The fact is, that at this time, and shortly after the Scouting movement began, a whole slew of youth movements began to spring up. Each of these movements professed its own ideology and put forth its own goals. There were communist movements such as the Russian Red Pioneers and the Young Communist League of Great Britain. There were authoritarian movements such as the Italian Balilla and the German Hitler Jugend. There were older, established movements such as the Young Men's Christian Association. And then there was Scouting. Where on the

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<sup>6</sup> Boy Scout Association, *Boy Scouts and Citizenship: The handbook of the Great International Jamboree* (London: 1920), 11.

spectrum of youth organizations did Scouting fit? If we can determine what organizations Scouting sought to associate itself with, or even what organizations sought to ally themselves with Scouting, then we gain better insight into the identity of the movement's critics and why they offered criticism.

Arguably, the biggest criticism of Baden-Powell and his early Scouting movement is his determination to keep up relations with the Hitler Jugend and the Balilla. In both Germany and Italy, the Scouting movement had been absorbed by these respective institutions. However, Baden-Powell hoped that by fostering good relations with the fascist organizations, common goals could be achieved. Baden-Powell certainly did not approve of the methods used by either group. He cringed at the thought of compulsory participation and eventually viewed the groups as state-run cadet corps. These characteristics stood in stark opposition to the volunteer basis of the Scouts which sought to foster initiative from within the boy rather than clear-cut obedience from without. Historian Tim Jeal makes the interesting point that after the Hitler Jugend participated in the Kristallnacht attacks "neither Baden-Powell nor any of the Scout and Guide leaders... ever again wrote or spoke a word in favour of maintaining contact with the Hitler Jugend."<sup>7</sup> This had not, however, stopped him from trying to associate with them in their early years.

If Baden-Powell invited cooperation with the fascist organizations, it follows that the liberal youth movements would seek to disassociate themselves from Scouting and would become some of its most ardent critics. In 1927, the Young Communist League of Great Britain went so far as to send Baden-Powell a coffin, a message which clearly meant

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<sup>7</sup> Tim Jeal, *The Boy-Man: The Life of Lord Baden-Powell* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1990), 547.

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“We hope you die!”<sup>8</sup> It is safe to conclude that they did not approve of Scouting’s goals. The communist youth movements viewed the Scouts as a tool to indoctrinate boys with national pride in a system they saw as evil. Scouting was very much a movement that sought to build men into good British subjects, and Baden-Powell’s insistence on cooperation with authoritarian regimes served to alienate the leftist youth movements and cement them in opposition to him.

The First World War saw both the rise of communism and marked a turning point in the Scouting movement. More than that, it marked a turning point in society in general. The carnage resulting from the conflict inspired a massive push away from anything thought to lead to another such disaster. Old standards such as nationalism and military prowess were placed under the microscope of public opinion and scrutinized for their role in starting the Great War. Where did the Boy Scouts fit into society’s new model? Scouting set itself up as a flexible organization, but how would it handle its new outspoken critics? For critics it did have. Even before the war, it was accused of being a military organization. In 1910, *The Advocate of Peace*, a pacifist publication, accused the Scouts of meaning “to catch the boys and fill their minds with the love of military performances before they are old enough to discriminate, and thus to foster the war spirit in the nation and promote the further growth of the navy and the army.”<sup>9</sup> After the war, these accusations became far more common; but as society demobilized, Scouting would follow suit.

Earlier in this paper, I identified several passages from the 1908 edition of *Scouting for Boys* which had a decidedly militaristic tone to them. Let us re-examine these passages. The first passage stated, “Every

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 544.

<sup>9</sup> “The Boy Scout Movement,” *The Advocate of Peace* 72, no. 10 (1910): 231.

boy ought to learn to shoot and to obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman, and merely gets killed like a squealing rabbit, being unable to defend himself."<sup>10</sup> It is significant that this passage was not included in later editions of the book.<sup>11</sup> In like manner, the excerpt that described obedience was re-written thus:

A SCOUT OBEYS ORDERS OF HIS *PARENTS*, PATROL LEADER, OR SCOUTMASTER WITHOUT QUESTION.

Even if he gets an order he does not like he must do as soldiers and sailors do, *and as he would do for his Captain in a football team*, he must carry it out all the same *because it is his duty*; and after he has done it he can come and state any reason against it: but he must carry out the order at once. That is discipline.<sup>12</sup> (Italics added to denote change.)

Although the allusions to military discipline were not omitted in this case, "Parents" were added to the list of people the scout is required to obey; and following orders of a football captain was added to the list of examples of situations where discipline is necessary. This clearly dilutes the original effect. Giving examples of respecting a football captain or a boy's parents by obeying their orders lends credibility to the assertion that obedience is a desirable quality without associating it with the military.

The shifting language of *Scouting for Boys* demonstrates how the aims of the program were changing with the times. However, the old adage "Actions speak louder than words" bears significant truth. If Scouting was, as Baden-Powell asserted, a peaceful movement, how would it show it? The answer came in the form of the first International Jamboree. Even before the war had ended, Scouting's leaders hoped to have a celebration to mark the ten-year anniversary of the Scouting

10 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1908), 9-10.

11 Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys: Memorial Edition*, 24th ed. (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1946), 31.

12 *Ibid.*, 46.



movement. Plans were made to hold the celebration in 1918 provided that the war had come to a close. Of course, the war had not concluded by the beginning of 1918. Moreover, it became apparent that something more than a celebration of Scouting was required. After careful consideration, it was determined to hold an assembly in 1920 that would foster unity among the various scouting organizations of the world. Reflecting on the event shortly after its conclusion, Baden-Powell wrote:

To bring impressions into their proper perspective after the shock of such revelation requires time and reflection, but there cannot have been one among us under that great dome who did not feel that here in these times of anxiety and doubt was unfolded a prospect full of promise and hope, where men and future men of all nations were gathered as brothers in mutual happy comradeship under a common ideal for the weal of the world.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to Scouts from across the British Empire, Scouts from 21 other nations arrived to represent their respective countries.<sup>14</sup> The number of nations represented in subsequent jamborees would continue to grow. In 2011, 146 countries came to the 22<sup>nd</sup> world jamboree in Sweden.<sup>15</sup> This in itself is a testament to the ultimate popularity of the movement in the post-war era.

That the jamboree movement was designed to promote peace in the world, there can be little doubt. The common theme in the speeches made to the scouts during this event was peace. The Archbishop of York, Cosmo Gordon Lang, charged the assembled body thus:

I am almost awed by the huge power of the boys assembled here. How is such a solemn trust as is implied in this Movement to be used? There is only one answer-

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<sup>13</sup> Boy Scouts International Bureau, *The Jamboree story: the full story of the eight World Jamborees of the Boy Scout movement, 1920-1955* (Jenkins, 1957), 15.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>15</sup> World Organization of the Scout Movement, *Scouts: Creating a Better World*, [http://scout.org/en/information\\_events/events/world\\_scout\\_events/jamboree/22nd\\_world\\_scout\\_jamboree](http://scout.org/en/information_events/events/world_scout_events/jamboree/22nd_world_scout_jamboree).

make a new and better world. You are out not to claim rights, but to do your duty; not to care for yourselves, but for others; not to work for the class, but for the commonwealth; not to suspect and fight other nations, but to make comrades and brothers.<sup>16</sup>

Baden-Powell, as the newly nominated Chief Scout of the World, gave the closing address. The address, being the last words spoken, in many ways set the tone of the entire event:

The war has taught us that if one nation tries to impose its particular will upon others, cruel reaction is bound to follow... If it be your will, let us go forth from here fully determined that we will develop among ourselves and our boys that comradeship, through the world-wide spirit of the Scout Brotherhood, so that we may help to develop peace and happiness in the world and good will among men. Brother Scouts, answer me. Will you join in this endeavour?<sup>17</sup>

Of course, the response was a hearty “Yes!” accompanied by boisterous applause. It can be seen as a sharp bit of strategy on Baden-Powell’s part to end with the asking of this poignant question.

Word choice was one of Baden-Powell’s exceptional strengths. Even the term “Jamboree” was not determined lightly. Baden-Powell wanted a term that would not be associated with anything else but Scouting. For this reason he passed up terms such as “rally” or “parade”.<sup>18</sup> A rally, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is a “rapid reassembling of forces for renewed effort or fighting” or a “meeting of the supporters of a cause, esp. in order to demonstrate the strength of public feeling, or to inspire or foster enthusiasm; *spec.* a political mass meeting” whereas to parade is defined as to “assemble (troops, etc.) for inspection or review”.<sup>19</sup> These words had connotations that the leaders of the

16 Boy Scouts International Bureau, 12.

17 Ibid., 15.

18 Ibid., 9.

19 OED Online, “rally, n.1”, June 2012, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed>.

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Scouting movement wished to distance themselves from. Jamboree was a relatively new term and was appropriately malleable. The Oxford English Dictionary defines jamboree as a “noisy revel; a carousal or spree.”<sup>20</sup>

Baden-Powell wrote of his word choice:

Different people assign different derivations to the word, but whatever its derivation, it will have quite a distinct meaning for most people after this year (1920). It will be associated with the greatest gathering of boys that has ever been held. ‘Jamboree’ to them implies a joyful, cheery gathering of boys with broad-brimmed hats and broad grins- complete in their workmanlike kit of shirt, shorts, staff, and scarf. They are the important part of the Jamboree.<sup>21</sup>

Even with the careful consideration placed into planning the Jamborees, they would also fall under scrutinizing eyes.

One controversial point related to the Jamboree movement was the eventual semi-inclusion of the German Hitler Jugend and the Italian Balilla as observers at the 4<sup>th</sup> jamboree in Gödöllő, Hungary.<sup>22</sup> These organizations were not part of the Boy Scout movement. In fact, in both cases they had superseded and suppressed the Boy Scouts in their respective countries. However, Baden-Powell saw an opportunity to foster goodwill between the organizations and hoped for cooperation not competition. It is for this reason, not for any shared doctrinal views, that the Scouts associated with these two fascist organizations. The vast majority of evidence shows the Scouts pushing away from any perception of military organization during this time. The jamborees even went so far as to discontinue the March Past of the Nations after the outbreak of WWII

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com/view/Entry/157707?rkey=MNWQYG&result=1&isAdvanced=false; OED Online, “parade, v.”, June 2012, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/137321?rkey=epxci9&result=3&isAdvanced=false>.

20 OED Online, “jambo’ree, n.”, June 2012, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/100700?redirectedFrom=jamboree>.

21 Boy Scouts International Bureau, 9.

22 Ibid., 40.

for fear that having boys march in rank under their various nations' flags would foster a military spirit.<sup>23</sup> These actions represent clear proof that the Scouting movement had no hidden military agenda.

After examining the evidence, it becomes clear that by *today's* standards the original Scout movement had military qualities. Moreover, after the First World War, it continued to have military qualities. It is even possible to trace militarism in Scouting up to the present day if one were so inclined. But if one were so inclined, that search would show the evidence of militarism ever decreasing. Scouting is a living organization. As the values of society change, so do the methods of the Scouting movement. Scouting will always have its critics. The period following the First World War was a time of particularly harsh criticism. However, Scouting has also proved itself as an organization dedicated to promoting world peace and cooperation. Baden-Powell's idea of a program that would foster good citizenship assist in character development has not come to the present day unchanged, but the essence of the idea lives on.

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23 Ibid., 13.

# Eighteenth-Century British Industrial Development and Nineteenth-Century British Industrial Dominance: A Case of Mutual Causation and Ongoing Innovation

Catherine James

Today, the concept of industrialization seems obsolete, germane only to underdeveloped nations and disengaged from economic vigor, not to mention environmentally hazardous and potentially life-threatening. However, in the nineteenth century, Britain marveled at its status as the world's preeminent industrial power, with contemporary Oxford historian Arnold Toynbee asserting in his renowned 1881 *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England* that industrialization was as crucial and definite an era in British history as the Wars of the Roses.<sup>1</sup> Although industrialization has received acknowledgment as an historical era since Toynbee's lectures, explaining Britain's emergence as a major industrial power has been more intangible and controversial, requiring the pinpointing of factors which made industrialization possible and necessitating the identification of the context in which industrialization actually began.

Nineteenth-century Britain possessed numerous advantages which could have allowed it to become the world's industrial leader. For example, Britain had a stable currency and reliable financial lender in the Bank of England.<sup>2</sup> As seen in its past success with wool and fish

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1 Christopher Harvie, "Revolution and the Rule of Law (1789-1851)," in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*, ed. Kenneth O. Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 419.

2 Robin W. Winks and Joan Neuberger, *Europe and the Making of Modernity, 1815-1914* (New

products, Britain was a commercial nation, and the possibility of greater profits could have stimulated industrialization.<sup>3</sup> Britain experienced a demographic surge in the nineteenth century, with its population doubling by midcentury and clustering in urban areas. A bigger population demanded more food and clothing, while a growing middle class desired luxury items such as china.<sup>4</sup> Also, Britain contained vast reserves of coal and iron ore, in addition to internal waterways that created a natural transportation system. British political stability supplied a nourishing environment for innovation and enterprise.<sup>5</sup> Finally, Britain witnessed the advent of the railroad, connecting raw materials to factories and factories to markets and consumers.<sup>6</sup> These economic, demographic, geographic, political, and technological factors certainly enhanced British industrialization in the nineteenth century, but they were not responsible for Britain's emergence as a major industrial power; indeed, railroad expansion did not transpire until after the mid-1800s. Instead, events of the preceding half-century are fundamental to explaining British industrialization. During the late eighteenth century, agricultural change, cotton's ascendancy, and diversion of a key economic rival combined to allow Britain to emerge as a major industrial power in the nineteenth century.

Eighteenth-century agricultural change was the prerequisite for extensive industrialization in the nineteenth century. In fact, "agriculture was the indispensable foundation for industry, for there was no other

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York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81.

3 Trevor Griffiths, Philip A. Hunt, and Patrick K. O'Brien, "Inventive Activity in the British Textile Industry, 1700-1800," *Journal of Economic History* 52, no. 4 (1992): 881.

4 Christopher Harvie and H. C. G. Matthew, *Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12-13.

5 Winks and Neuberger, 80-81.

6 *Ibid.*, 74-75.

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regular source of the nation's food."<sup>7</sup> British agriculture's improved yield and efficiency in the late eighteenth century had two significant effects: fewer agricultural laborers were needed, which gave industry a ready workforce, and greater internal productivity supplied industrial workers with food, which otherwise would have been imported.<sup>8</sup> Agricultural progress was sufficient to sustain the population during the transition to industrialization and, therefore, Britain emerged as an industrial power without a significant portion of its population perishing from malnutrition.<sup>9</sup> Overall, agricultural change after 1750 was so important because it allowed industrialization to both happen and flourish in the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> If industrialization was reliant upon agricultural progress, then there would have been no agricultural revolution without adoption of the enclosure system.

Enclosure signaled agricultural change by consolidating common lands. Prior to the late eighteenth century, the majority of British farm acreage was common land in villages, divided between grazing and arable land. Common lands afforded equal opportunity to every family, acting as a sort of safety net. Since land was communally held, farmers were compelled to abide by a mandatory crop choice and schedule.<sup>11</sup> Such rigidity meant agriculture was disinclined to change, neither planting

different crops nor attempting new farming methods. However, starting

in the 1750s, enclosure abolished common land and its associated rules,  
7 E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Making of Modern English Society* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), 77.

8 David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), 213.

9 Maxine Berg and Pat Hudson, "Rehabilitating the Industrial Revolution," *Economic History Review* 45, no. 1 (February 1992): 27.

10 John Komlos, "Nutrition, Population Growth, and the Industrial Revolution in England," *Social Science History* 14, no. 1 (1990): 82-85.

11 Robert Allen, "Agriculture during the Industrial Revolution," in *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700*, eds. Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1:97-98.

replacing the communal system with individual farm ownership or tenant farming. Between 1750 and 1760, Parliament passed approximately 150 enclosure acts, most at the behest of powerful landowners who wanted to increase their land's agricultural productivity.<sup>12</sup> Profit may have motivated enclosure, but the end result was an agricultural revolution that would feed an industrializing nation.

Whether small farmers or large landlords, the independence that enclosure imparted let them pursue new crops and techniques which greatly increased yield. For example, nutrient-rich silage crops, such as clover and turnips, were introduced and prevented weeds from growing in fields, as well as sustaining bigger herds of livestock and thereby producing more manure for fertilizer.<sup>13</sup> The silage crops also added nitrogen to the soil, which further boosted production. With enclosure, farmers could rotate crops, rather than limit themselves to permanent acreage for a specific crop like wheat. Yield per acre of wheat increased due to crop rotation, rising from 12 bushels per acre in 1750 to 20 plus bushels by 1800. Enclosure not only benefitted crops, but also relieved farmers, placing the burden of labor upon animals, whose numbers swelled because of more nutritious feed. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, horse power experienced a 27% growth rate and, in turn, served to enhance soil fertility by transporting loads of lime and sand to the fields. By 1800, British agriculture claimed an output per worker percentage growth of at least 60%.<sup>14</sup> That eighteenth century efficiency would support industrialization's growth, as it drew more workers away from agriculture into factories throughout the nineteenth century.

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12 Winks and Neuberger, 68.

13 C. Peter Timmer, "The Turnip, The New Husbandry, and The English Agricultural Revolution," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 83, no. 3 (1969): 382-83.

14 Pat Hudson, *The Industrial Revolution* (New York: Edward Arnold, 1992), 66-70.



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Agricultural efficiency and enclosure directly contributed to Britain's emergence as a major industrial power in the nineteenth century. Obviously, greater efficiency reduced the number of farmers required to feed the population and those displaced laborers needed other work, which would provide industry with a ready workforce as it simultaneously developed in the latter half of the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup> While the link between lost agricultural work and an available, cheap industrial labor supply has been well established, some historians have asserted British agricultural efficiency created a surplus to be sold on the international market. The notion of a surplus has been questioned, however, since between 1700 and 1800 British farmers were required to grow roughly 20 million bushels of grains to keep the population adequately fed.<sup>16</sup> Regardless, agriculture did produce enough food to sustain the population during the transition to industry, a pattern that much of the rest of the world would not follow. Enclosure also stimulated the shift to industrialization by displacing agricultural laborers, particularly as tenant farmers' rent doubled and even tripled from the enforcement of enclosure in the 1750s to the turn of the century.<sup>17</sup> In sum, enclosure affected 7.35 million acres and worked in tandem with agricultural efficiency to eliminate farming employment. Many small independent farmers sold their land immediately before enclosure was implemented or afterwards were forced to get rid of their land because they could not support families on such small acreage without access to pasture.<sup>18</sup> Eighteenth century agricultural change generated two factors – adequate food and displaced workers – essential to Britain's position as an

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15 Harvie and Matthew, 10.

16 Timmer, 382.

17 Landes, 213.

18 Hudson, 74-75.

industrial power in the nineteenth century, yet those factors were useless without a product to spur industrialization.

Cotton was the product which stimulated British industrialization and, more specifically, the mechanization necessary to industrialize on a large scale. Indeed, "cotton textiles were the power which towed the glider of industrialization into the air."<sup>19</sup> Records of raw cotton imports from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century verify that cotton acted as a root cause of Britain's emergence as a major industrial power. For example, in 1765, Britain imported 4,636 pounds of cotton, while in 1785 cotton imports rose to some 18,887 pounds. Still, imports jumped dramatically by 1805, with approximately 68,208 pounds imported that year – proving industrialization was an outgrowth of the late eighteenth century's innovation.<sup>20</sup> Cotton made innovation possible because of its malleability, which wool and linen lacked; moreover, Britain had access to a cost-efficient supply of cotton from the American South by the last decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> This product became the basis of British industrial power in the nineteenth century, not only due to its natural properties and availability, but also as a result of parliamentary law and pervasive fraud.

Parliament unwittingly thrust cotton into industrialization with a series of prohibitive acts in 1720 and 1721, which banned the importation of Indian cotton – both unfinished and finished goods. Ironically, this ban was meant to protect British wool and linen cottage industry, as well as infant attempts to mechanize the spinning of wool. However, the British public wanted cotton because of its affordability, and wool did not adapt to mechanization, its fibers being too coarse and wiry at the outset; therefore, cotton

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19 Harvie and Matthew, 14.

20 Abbott Payson Usher, "The Industrialization of Modern Britain," *Technology and Culture* 1, no. 2 (Spring 1960): 112-13.

21 Harvie and Matthew, 14.

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became the fiber of choice for mechanization.<sup>22</sup> Rampant fraud in the cottage industry further encouraged cotton's industrialization. Cottage workers often took raw goods "from one merchant and then [sold] the finished article to a competitor, stalling now one, now another, and they learned to set some of the raw material aside for their own use. Trying to conceal their embezzlement, weavers made thinner, poorer fabrics."<sup>23</sup> Such deception among cottage industry workers made employers aware of the benefits of regulation and, when cotton was mechanized, spinners and weavers would work in factories, under strict supervision throughout the entire day.<sup>24</sup> The environment in the latter half of the eighteenth century was set for mechanization of the cotton industry and three inventions allowed industrialization, absorbed displaced agricultural workers into factories, and assured Britain's industrial preeminence in the nineteenth century.

In 1829, Scottish social commentator Thomas Carlyle wrote about Britain's "Mechanical Age," describing it as "the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches and practices the great art of adapting means to ends."<sup>25</sup> The "Mechanical Age" Carlyle described in the nineteenth century was initiated in the late eighteenth century with the mechanization of the cotton industry, whose three greatest inventions – the spinning jenny, the water frame, and the mule – were paramount examples of "adapting means to ends." A surplus of farm laborers and frustrated cottage industry employers already existed, but the machines were lacking. However, in 1764, James Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny, followed by Richard Arkwright's water frame in 1769, and finally Samuel Crompton's mule in

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<sup>22</sup> Landes, 207.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times: The 'Mechanical Age,'" *Modern History Sourcebook – Industrial Revolution*, Fordham University History Department, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/carlyle-times.html> (accessed May 31, 2011).

1779. The mechanization of cotton textile production was transformed in an intense span of invention and the impact of these eighteenth century inventions and their link to Britain's nineteenth century industrial power was not lost on contemporaries, as revealed in Andrew Ure's 1835 *Philosophy of Manufactures*. A renowned Scottish scholar, Ure was amazed that the machines "enable[d] an operative to turn out a greater quantity of work than he could before – time, labor, and quality of work remaining constant, [and effected] a substitution of labor comparatively unskilled, for that which is more skilled."<sup>26</sup> Prior to 1764, each step in production was manual. Hargreaves' spinning jenny exchanged hands twisting fibers into yarn for rotating spindles, directed by metal bars, while Arkwright's water frame improved handwork by using a series of rollers to stretch out fibers into more durable yarn. Ultimately, Crompton's mule combined the spinning jenny and the water frame, which permitted the spinning of the finest, top-grade yarn possible. These inventions lessened the time needed to spin 100 pounds of cotton to 300 hours by the 1790s, as compared to roughly 50,000 hours required manually for the same amount.<sup>27</sup> Without doubt, cotton spurred industrialization, but changing the manner of work would change everything else.

By the 1790s, machinery had been invented to mechanize cotton textile production and therefore changed the manner in which people worked. Instead of home production, employees gathered into factory settings; rather than individual manufacture, factories introduced unified methods of production. Factories were necessary because of the massive

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26 Andrew Ure, "The Philosophy of the Manufacturers, 1835," Modern History Sourcebook – Industrial Revolution, Fordham University History Department, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1835ure.html> (accessed May 31, 2011).

27 Joel Mokyr, "Technological Change, 1700-1830," in *The Economic History of Britain Since 1700*, eds. Roderick Floud and Donald McCloskey, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1:19-20.

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machinery that cotton production required, yet they also ensured Britain's cotton textiles were the best and cheapest in the world – certainly, this is an example of the mutual causation in the eighteenth century that drove Britain to industrial power in the nineteenth century. Hargreaves's spinning jenny and Arkwright's water frame were responsible for raising production of cotton yarn tenfold by 1790, but the factory system made that increase possible. For example, the spinning jenny allowed mass production due to its simultaneous motions of anywhere from six to twenty-four spindles. While the jenny was usually powered by operators in a factory, Arkwright's water frame made the leap from manpower to using another source of energy – water. His machine used power from a watermill to operate a spinning frame, containing about one hundred spindles, and produce yarn. Although Hargreaves's invention did stimulate factory formation outside of the household, Arkwright's water frame necessitated a factory be built next to a power source and hundreds of employees work at a location removed from the household, but, in many cases, still within their villages. In 1779, Crompton's mule advanced power spinning further, being 30 times more productive than Arkwright's water frame. Only eight years later, Edmund Cartwright invented a water-powered loom to weave cotton cloth. These two devices – Crompton's mule and Cartwright's loom – began a continual process of concentration of factories and mills. In fact, the expansion of the factory system generated more than 50,000 power looms within Britain by 1830.<sup>28</sup> Cotton and related technology were the leading sector of British industrialization in the late eighteenth century and maintained that position into the early nineteenth century. However, cotton and its eighteenth-century-invented machines also served as catalysts to create more diverse in-

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<sup>28</sup> Winks and Neuberger, 71-73; Landes, 191-93.

dustrial development in Britain that would extend into the early nineteenth century and ensure British industrial supremacy.

Some modern historians refer to eighteenth-century cotton textile production as the “self-sustaining process of innovation,” a process which propelled Britain to industrial supremacy in the early nineteenth century. The “productivity growth at the rate experienced in cotton textiles was achieved elsewhere, but the success of cotton ... was intimately related to and dependent upon innovations and radical transformations in other branches of the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the technology used in cotton production, such as water power, spread to other infant industries in the late eighteenth century, including additional textile production like that of worsteds. Conversely, cotton demanded new technology to improve its quality and hence motivated engineering – such as fireproofing factories with metal columns and joists.<sup>30</sup> In 1795, English writer John Aikin gave witness to cotton’s “self-sustaining innovation,” declaring:

The prodigious extension of the several branches of the Manchester manufactures has likewise greatly increased the business of several trades and manufactures connected with or dependent upon them. The making of paper at mills in the vicinity has been brought to great perfection, and now includes all kinds, from the strongest parcelling paper to the finest writing sorts, and that on which banker’s bills are printed. A considerable iron foundry is established in Salford, in which are cast most of the articles wanted in Manchester and its neighborhood, consisting chiefly of large cast wheels for the cotton machines .... The tinplate workers have found additional employment in furnishing many articles for spinning machines; as have also the braziers in casting wheels for the motion-work of the rollers used in them; and the clock-makers in cutting them.<sup>31</sup>

29 Berg and Hudson, 32.

30 Harvie and Matthew, 15.

31 John Aikin, “A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester,” in *The Past Speaks*, ed. Walter Arnstein, 2nd ed. (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1993), 148-49.

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Aikin perfectly described the momentum that stemmed from cotton's industrialization and mechanization. Indeed, momentum characterized the late eighteenth century, from agricultural changes that produced a ready-made industrial labor supply to the innovations that generated continually improved machinery in cotton and then were transferred to subsequent areas of British industry.<sup>32</sup> Yet, momentum also combined with those root causes of industrialization – agriculture and cotton – in the late eighteenth century to create the final step in Britain's climb to the summit of industrial power in the nineteenth century.

A commercial advantage, specifically on the international market, comprised the final step in Britain's emergence as a major industrial power in the nineteenth century. Agricultural change and cotton production's mechanization had set off a chain reaction – first a surplus of laborers, then a surplus of goods, and finally a needed market beyond domestic consumption for those goods. Even though Britain demanded cotton textiles, the mechanization of the industry saturated the domestic market by the end of the eighteenth century. For example, in 1795, Britain produced 40 million yards of cotton, far exceeding British home need. Furthermore, cotton prices decreased as output rose with mechanization, from 38 shillings per pound of cotton yarn in 1786 to 2 shillings per pound by the early 1800s. At the same time, industrial workers' numbers grew, as seen in Manchester's factory and related population – which increased from approximately 40,000 in the 1780s to about 70,000 by 1801.<sup>33</sup> Cotton manufacturers attempted an early form of salesmanship on the home market, promoting cotton printed with national figures and attractive designs and encouraging customers to

<sup>32</sup> Winks and Neuberger, 64.

<sup>33</sup> "The City in European History – Industrial Manchester in the Nineteenth Century," Primary Sources, The Industrial Revolution, The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Department of History, [http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/manchester\\_19c.html](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/manchester_19c.html) (accessed May 31, 2011).

fulfill their desire for more cloth.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately for those manufacturers, the domestic market had reached its threshold, and Britain had to find an external market for surplus goods to maintain the eighteenth century status quo and to progress into the nineteenth century. However, Britain was well-situated to capture the international market, as it could sell for less. Cotton mechanization dramatically lowered the cost of labor and improved the final product. British industrial cotton produced on Cartwright's loom was of the same quality as the high-grade, non-mechanized Indian cotton textiles which dominated the international market, but it was much lower in price because of time-saving technical improvements.<sup>35</sup> In addition, Britain acquired a dependable supply of raw cotton in the last decade of the eighteenth century from the American South, primarily due to the cotton gin and guaranteed slave labor, and could thus expand its market without fear of disrupting its raw material supply.<sup>36</sup> Ultimately, Britain was able to gain a commercial advantage on the world market and deter industrial decline due to the diversion of a key economic rival in the late eighteenth century.

Between 1789 and 1815, Britain had a decided commercial advantage on the world market because France was embroiled in and diverted by the French Revolution and a series of subsequent wars. While agriculture provided the labor supply and cotton the product and the mechanization, the concurrent economic disengagement of France was perhaps the key factor in British emergence as a major industrial power in the nineteenth century. France, as well as the majority of the European continent, was consumed by war in the late eighteenth century and was greatly hindered in

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34 Griffiths, Hunt, and O'Brien, 891, 900-01.

35 George N. Von Tunzelmann, "Time-Saving Technical Change: The Cotton Industry in the English Industrial Revolution," *Explorations in Economic History* 32, no. 1 (1995): 17.

36 Mokyr, 1:19.



either competing with Britain or replicating British technology, a situation which “helped determine the relative technological performance” of Britain in that period.<sup>37</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, Britain was about to experience agricultural change and see the rise of cotton and mechanization, but was still on equal footing with other major European powers – Spain, Portugal, France, and the Dutch. By 1850, Britain was acknowledged as the unrivalled industrial power and the “workshop of the world.”<sup>38</sup> This distinction was due to Britain’s ability to seize the competitive advantage while the rest of Europe was occupied by war in the preceding century.

Nineteenth-century British thinkers were aware of the importance of the ongoing wars in Europe for British commercial advantage. In 1814, lawyer Patrick Colquhoun asserted that he believed “it [was] impossible to contemplate the progress of manufactures in Great Britain within the last thirty years without wonder and astonishment. Its rapidity, particularly since the commencement of the French revolutionary war, exceeds all credibility.”<sup>39</sup> Oddly, many modern historians seem to disregard this eighteenth-century factor in the emergence of nineteenth-century British industrial superiority, preferring instead to focus on late nineteenth-century developments in railroad transportation – particularly in India and Africa – and the consequent boost to British industrial expansion.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the international vacuum from 1789 to 1815 was crucial in establishing British industrial dominance, and the British navy played a key role in maintaining Britain’s newfound competitive advantage.<sup>41</sup>

Throughout that twenty-six year period, the British navy prevent-

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37 Ibid., 1:33.

38 J. R. Ward, “The Industrial Revolution and British Imperialism, 1750-1850,” *Economic History Review* 47, no. 1 (1994): 44.

39 Quoted in Berg and Hudson, 26.

40 Usher, 125.

41 Hobsbawm, 111.

ed efforts from mainland Europe, especially France, to enter the international market via the seas. Accordingly, Britain was able to seize approximately 50% of the existing world trade in cotton textiles that it did not already control.<sup>42</sup> While somewhat dubiously regarded today, British cotton producers at the time claimed that they supplied French troops with the cotton elements of their uniforms owing to British industrial supremacy.<sup>43</sup> Regardless of boastful tales, Britain certainly expanded its market and relieved the pressure of surplus cotton textiles at home. For example, Britain consolidated control of India, captured markets in South Africa and the Dutch East Indies, and obtained a lucrative trade agreement with former Spanish colonies in Latin America.<sup>44</sup> With the help of its navy, Britain was further enabled to claim the cotton trade with China by the 1790s. Overall, the vacuum created by mainland European wars allowed the worth of cotton exports to soar, from £13.6 million in 1786 to £24 million in 1796.<sup>45</sup> Britain's mechanization and the international market vacuum were a lucky coincidence, but they were fully utilized to continue the process of industrialization.

Based upon eighteenth-century agricultural change and mechanization of the cotton industry, British industrial dominance was indisputable by 1815. "As the only industrial power, [Britain] could undersell anyone else, and the less discrimination there was, the more she could undersell."<sup>46</sup> As ruthless as British industrial supremacy seems, it was simply a fact of the time. Continental European wars severely damaged the economy of rival European nations, and Britain prospered. If the conflicts from 1789 to 1815 did not create Britain's competitive advantage, then

42 Harvie, 423-24.

43 Ibid., 435.

44 Ibid., 436.

45 Ward, 56-60.

46 Hobsbawm, 196.

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they certainly widened the competitive gap in Britain's favor.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Britain made the most of the chaotic political and economic situation to strengthen its industrial standing around the world. Britain sought to sell its cheaper and better cotton textiles everywhere, without regard for protective tariffs or indigenous industries. Britain also protected its advanced machines, such as Crompton's mule and Cartwright's loom, with patents, which was an easier task in wartime due to a heightened sense of security and the naval blockade. Essentially, Britain preserved its lead on the international market by combining its cotton products with forcible sales.<sup>48</sup> Britain could maintain that level of commerce into the nineteenth century because its textile factories could easily meet increased demand, its machines capable of doubling replication.<sup>49</sup> In the late eighteenth century, Britain succeeded in cornering the international cotton market, a feat that was predictive of its standing as a major industrial power in the nineteenth century.

Before 1750, Britain was unquestionably agricultural and no modern industry existed; yet, in only a century, Britain would become the world's industrial leader.<sup>50</sup> Such astonishing and swift progress was made possible by three intertwined root causes which occurred in the late eighteenth century. Today, most historians agree that "Britain had the right combination at the right time" – and the right combination consisted of agricultural change, cotton's ascendancy, and diversion of a key economic rival.<sup>51</sup> The mutual causation of Britain's industrial revolution neither exceeded previous nor surpassed later achievements in historical progress, but both the intensity and duration of Britain's industrialization,

47 Moky, 1: 33.

48 Winks and Neuberger, 83.

49 Ward, 60-61.

50 "The City in European History – Industrial Manchester in the Nineteenth Century."

51 Winks and Neuberger, 83.

as well as its ability to advance without causing malnutrition, made it atypical of all subsequent world industrialization.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, agricultural change, cotton and mechanization, and commercial advantage coincided and “surged up with a suddenness for which it is difficult to find a parallel at any other time or place.”<sup>53</sup> The city of Manchester, England, serves to illustrate the intensity and power of British industrialization. In 1773, Manchester had no cotton mills and roughly 25,000 citizens; in 1802, it boasted 52 mills and a population of 95,000.<sup>54</sup> Undeniably, Britain witnessed a transition to industrialization from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century.

Explaining Britain’s emergence as a major industrial power requires pinpointing the root causes which made industrialization possible and necessitates the identification of the context in which industrialization actually began. As this paper has shown, eighteenth-century events were the combined root causes and context in which Britain emerged as an industrial power in the nineteenth century. While supported by modern historians, this view of British industrialization was first proposed by astute nineteenth-century British observers. In 1835, Andrew Ure observed that “when the first water-frames for spinning cotton were erected at Cromford, in the romantic valley of the Derwent, about sixty years ago, mankind were little aware of the mighty revolution which the new system of labor was destined by Providence to achieve.”<sup>55</sup> A similar opinion is found in Richard Guest’s *Compendious History of the Cotton Manufacture*, published in 1823. Guest noted that it was a “curious circumstance, that, when the Cotton Manufacture was in its infancy, all the operations ...

52 Komlos, 85.

53 Peter Temin, “Two Views of the British Industrial Revolution,” *Journal of Economic History* 57, no. 1 (March 1997): 64.

54 “The City in European History – Industrial Manchester in the Nineteenth Century.”

55 Ure, “The Philosophy of the Manufacturers, 1835.”

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were completed under the roof of the weaver's cottage. The course of improved manufacture which followed was to spin the yarn in factories." Guest was amazed that "those vast brick edifices in the vicinity of all the great manufacturing towns in the south of Lancashire, towering to the height of seventy or eighty feet, which strike the attention and excite the curiosity of the traveler, now perform labors which formerly employed whole villages."<sup>56</sup> In 1881, Arnold Toynbee, who first defined British industrialization as a distinct era, affirmed "an agrarian revolution plays as large part in the great industrial change of the end of the eighteenth century as does the revolution in manufacturing industries."<sup>57</sup> As those contemporaries noted, agricultural change, cotton, and competitive advantage on the world market made Britain the premier industrial power by the advent of the nineteenth century. Yet, Britain would continue its industrial dominance because innovation in those three original root industrial causes created an environment for greater industrial advancement, in effect a chain reaction of infinite possibility.

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56 Richard Guest, "The Steam Loom, 1823," Modern History Sourcebook – Industrial Revolution, Fordham University History Department, <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1823cotton.html> (accessed May 31, 2011).

57 Arnold Toynbee, "Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England, 1884," Modern History Sourcebook – Industrial Revolution, Fordham University History Department, <http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3113/toynbee/indrev> (accessed May 31, 2011).

# Politics, Persistence, and Power: The Strategy That Won the French Wars

Jackson Prather

In the year 1815, as the dust settled on the battlefield of Waterloo and the ink dried on the various agreements signed at the Congress of Vienna, Great Britain emerged as the undisputed hegemon of Europe. She commanded the seas and vanquished Napoleon. The Industrial Revolution powered the dynamic, robust British economy, and the Empire extended from the Caribbean to Southeast Asia and from the British Isles to the southern tip of Africa. Great Britain seemed invincible and the greatest power the world had yet known. However, the previous twenty-two years were among the most difficult and perilous in British history. For those two decades Great Britain was at near constant war with her age-old rival: France. Ultimately, Great Britain won the French Wars because of strategy.

The French Wars, as they were known in Britain, lasted from 1793-1815, with a brief ceasefire in 1802-1803 called the Peace of Amiens. The hostilities in Europe actually began in 1792 with the Coalition of Kings – an alliance between Prussia and Austria – that was created to end the French Revolution and reinstate the Bourbon monarchy. The combat expanded and soon embroiled Europe in the most destructive war it had yet seen. The first period of the war, lasting from 1792-1802, is known as the French Revolutionary War. By the time the war resumed in 1803, French General Napoleon Bonaparte had become the leader of France, and as such started the second phase of the war, the Napoleonic War

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(1803-1815). The wars were fought as a series of seven Coalitions against France, and these alliances were made up primarily of Great Britain, Austria, Prussia, and Russia. The Coalitions were named in order of their formation, from the First Coalition (1793-1797) to the Seventh Coalition (1815).

Great Britain was the most persistent and steadfast opponent of France, refusing to accept French dominance in Europe and remaining totally dedicated to the destruction of the French Empire. Although Britain would emerge with a complete victory over France, such a victory seemed unlikely if not impossible for the majority of the French Wars. France was a military juggernaut, and on numerous occasions Britain's allies were forced to surrender and left the British as the only power left opposing France's quest to conquer all of Europe.

Great Britain's strategy was to proceed with caution and pragmatism throughout the wars. Victory was a byproduct of Britain's ability to overcome and persevere when the odds were against her. The British political system encouraged dissent yet managed to consistently find solutions. Great Britain had far fewer soldiers than France but was much better at forging alliances. Britain's willingness to adapt when plans failed allowed her to develop a comprehensive strategy that would eventually lead to victory.

### **I. Overcoming Difficulties**

Britain's victory in the French Wars is all the more impressive when the difficulties she overcame are considered: internal political dissent and upheaval, a constant shortage of manpower, and recurring chaos in the Coalitions. Much of the domestic dissent was caused by the epic events unfolding across the English Channel. The British watched everything the

French did very closely, and this was no exception.

When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, the reaction in Britain was altogether confused. The previous century had seen the most intense stage of the Anglo-French rivalry, often referred to as the Second Hundred Years' War.<sup>1</sup> Hatred for the French was as fervent as ever in Britain, and the sour taste left by the French intervention in the War of American Independence still lingered. The British, always conscious of economic competition, saw the French Revolution as an opportunity to reassert their naval power globally and once and for all become the world's commercial titan.<sup>2</sup> The French Revolution was more than a mere regime change and, much like the American Revolution, produced strong ideology that challenged the status quo that existed in Europe. Many in Britain sympathized with this new political philosophy, including powerful men in Parliament, like Charles James Fox and William Pitt the Younger.<sup>3</sup> The British considered themselves to be a free people and the French to be subjects of a despotic government. Fox was a proponent of Britain welcoming the Revolution with open arms and embracing the revolutionary spirit that was sweeping the world. Fox's ideological rival, Edmund Burke, almost instantly recognized the threat that the French Revolution posed to both France and the whole of Europe. Burke went so far as to call the events in France an "irreparable calamity to mankind," and predicted that the Revolution would soon be taken over by some charismatic general that would lead France into perpetual war.<sup>4</sup> The rivalry between Fox and Burke would be played out not only in

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1 Clive Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 3.

2 Michael Duffy, "British Diplomacy and the French Wars 1789-1815," In *Britain and the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), 127.

3 Trevor Lloyd, *Empire: The History of the British Empire* (London: Hambledon and London, 2001), 63; William Pitt, *Orations on the French War* (London: London, 1906), 18.

4 Emsley, 10; Lloyd, 64.



Parliament, but also throughout the British public. Many were appalled at the behavior of the French, while others thought the Revolution wonderful and a sign of possible political reform in Britain as well.

Opinion began to sway in favor of the conservative opponents of the French Revolution in 1792. Tension between France and her two primary continental rivals, Prussia and Austria, reached a breaking point on 20 April 1792 when France declared war. Prussia and Austria were longtime rivals, having just fought a war in the late 1770s.<sup>5</sup> The events in France terrified the two nations enough to force an alliance of convenience, and they prepared for an invasion of France.<sup>6</sup> This alliance, known as the Coalition of Kings, was expected to crush the disorganized French armies and restore the Bourbon monarchy. Regardless of how confident many were of victory, the people of Britain had no interest in waging yet another war against France. British finances were still in poor order following the loss of the American colonies, and war against France did not provide any advantages for Britain. Therefore, Britain remained neutral. It was not until the surprising French victory over invading Austro-Prussian forces and the subsequent French invasion of the Low Countries<sup>7</sup> that Britain became concerned with France's behavior. Britain had always feared French expansionism, and in November 1792 France conquered and occupied present-day Belgium at the Battle of Jemappes.<sup>8</sup> The situation escalated in January 1793 with the execution of France's King Louis XVI. This action horrified the British people because they remembered what chaos and bloodshed resulted from the execution of a monarch in their own civil war during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Then, on 1

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5 War of Austrian Succession

6 Stephen Pope, *The Cassell Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars*. (London: Cassell, 1999), 10-16.

7 Present-day Belgium and the Netherlands

8 Pope, 17, 529.

February, France declared war on Great Britain. Although the British government had positioned itself to oppose France long before this declaration, the fact that France appeared the aggressor united many in Parliament and the public.<sup>9</sup>

Political and public dissent would continue for the course of the war. George III was involved in strategic planning, and his opinion was widely respected in Parliament. He supported prosecuting the war against France and finding European allies to fight alongside Britain.<sup>10</sup> William Pitt the Younger, George's hand-chosen Prime Minister, honored the King's wishes and sought peace only when it appeared favorable for Britain - as it did in 1802.<sup>11</sup> George III's involvement prevented any type of broadly supported coalition from forming within Parliament and alienated many factions, such as the Foxites. Fox strongly supported peace in 1796 as the First Coalition appeared to be on the brink of collapse, but George III insisted that no peace negotiations be held until after the completion of British expeditions to the East and West Indies.<sup>12</sup>

Popular dissent was also a problem for Britain throughout the war. Riots raged constantly and grew increasingly violent as the war affected more and more Britons. The Burdett riots in April 1810 and the food price riots that resulted from the poor harvest of 1811 epitomized this trend. Compounded by the ever-present fear of Irish insurrection, Britain was forced to tie down over forty thousand infantrymen and five regiments of cavalry for the purpose of maintaining domestic security.<sup>13</sup>

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9 Emsley, 23.

10 Christopher Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-1815* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 56.

11 Hervey Meyer Bowman, *Preliminary Stages of the Peace of Amiens* (Toronto: University Library, 1899), 59.

12 John Holland Rose, *Pitt and Napoleon: Essays and Letters* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1912), 238.

13 Hall, 71.

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King George III had no tolerance for such insubordination, and in June 1798 he wrote to Pitt about these riots: "I trust ... that as the sword is drawn it not be returned into the sheath until the whole country has submitted without condition."<sup>14</sup> These events siphoned valuable resources that could have otherwise been used against France.

Great Britain faced a massive shortage of manpower during the French Wars. At the outbreak of war, Britain's population was a little more than half that of France.<sup>15</sup> The British Army was always outnumbered in battle, and therefore was forced to rely on Coalitions to deploy enough men to fight the French. Even the combined forces of Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Britain struggled to match the enormous French armies, which were the result of *levee en masse*, or mass conscription. After 1796, France held the numerical advantage over the combined forces of the Coalition.<sup>16</sup> France neglected their navy and was able to put all of her manpower resources into the army, creating the most formidable fighting force the world had yet seen. Britain's constitutional system forbade such measures to force men into service. The British thought themselves a free people in direct contrast to the French. Conscription is the most coercive act a government can perform on its citizens, therefore the British government would not dare to mimic the French. Britain struggled mightily to convince men to sign up to be sent overseas. It was seen as a death sentence by the public to enlist in the British Army, especially after the horrifying casualties in the West Indies campaign of 1793 that resulted in the death of over sixty thousand British regulars from disease.<sup>17</sup>

This lack of manpower severely constrained Britain's strategic

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<sup>14</sup> Rose, 243.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Pope, 18.

<sup>17</sup> Mackesy, 156.

options and made large-scale offensive operations rare. The overwhelming majority of British soldiers were used in either the defense of the British Isles or in the protection of colonial possessions. This left small armies for invasions into Europe, which is the primary reason for Britain's lack of continental success prior to the Peninsular War in 1808. The lack of available men encouraged caution on the part of British commanders and fostered a reluctance to use British soldiers unless all other options had been exhausted. This strategy caused distrust among the Coalition allies and made it difficult for Britain to convince her allies of her dedication to the cause.

Great Britain was well aware that she could not defeat France on her own; France was equally aware that she could not defeat Britain on her own. The stalemate was compounded by the tactical situation: Britain was dominant on the seas, and France's land armies were unstoppable. These two great advantages cancelled one another out as Britain's navy blocked France from invading the British Isles, and France's army prevented Britain from being able to gain a foothold on the continent. In order to tip the balance of power in their favor the two rivals had to build powerful alliances. France and Napoleon conquered nations and conscripted their people into service or subdued foreign governments and forced them into alliances. The latter was the case in Spain and the Confederation of the Rhine. Great Britain, however, was the only power involved in the French Wars not interested in territorial gains in Europe, and therefore went about alliance building in a very different way: financial and tactical support. Despite Britain's success in building these Coalitions, they were very turbulent and unhappy alliances that resulted in infighting, betrayal, and rampant distrust.

In wars past, such as the Seven Years' War, Britain relied on significant numbers of European mercenaries (i.e. Prussians) and would support them with small detachments of British regulars. This, combined with a dominant British naval presence, was enough to defeat the enemy and emerge victorious. The Anglo-Prussian alliance was made all the more convenient by the lack of Prussian colonial ambitions and Britain's disinterest in territorial expansion in Europe.<sup>18</sup> However, with Prussia's rise in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and increased appetite for land in Northern Europe, notably in Hanover, the native land of the British monarchs, Britain could no longer rely on Prussia for ground forces. Furthermore, when Prussia and Austria formed the "Coalition of Kings" in 1792 to invade France, Prussia would need every soldier she could muster, leaving none to hire out to the British. For the British, a stronger, broader Coalition had to be built from all European countries threatened by French expansionism.

Britain built these Coalitions in two primary ways - financial support, through subsidies and loans, and tactical support, via weaponry donations and naval support.<sup>19</sup> In this way, Britain was able to cobble together Coalitions time and time again to resist French expansion. Britain did not initiate the First Coalition (1792-1797), but soon joined in early 1793 after the French invasion of the Low Countries and France's subsequent declaration of war on Britain. French victories in 1794 and 1795 threatened to collapse the Coalition, but Britain held it together until 1797 when Austria made a separate peace with France at Campo Formio. Almost two years later Britain, Austria, Russia, and several smaller nations formed the Second Coalition to oppose French actions on the Rhine

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<sup>18</sup> Pope, 12.

<sup>19</sup> Lloyd, 65.

and in Italy. Initial allied success soon gave way to humiliating defeat, primarily at the hands of France's rising star: Napoleon Bonaparte. The Second Coalition collapsed in 1801 despite Britain's valiant efforts to hold it together. By early 1802, Britain was the only nation still at war with France; soon the Peace of Amiens was signed between the two countries bringing about the only period between 1793 and 1815 that Britain and France were not at war.<sup>20</sup>

Great Britain was able to assess her strategy during this brief cessation of hostilities, because even the most optimistic Britons knew that Amiens was a mere ceasefire and more war was on the horizon. Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger and his top advisors believed that as long as Napoleon was in command in France, Britain would not be safe. Despite the peace treaty, Bonaparte remained aggressive with Britain, saying to the British ambassador Lord Malmesbury, "Our real enemy is England. The French Republic must either destroy the English monarchy or be destroyed by it."<sup>21</sup> Napoleon was not the only one making such declarations, however, as Lord Grenville, the British Foreign Secretary, had said that Britain would never allow France to be the ruler of the Low Countries.<sup>22</sup> The Peace of Amiens was merely an attempt by both nations to address domestic issues and retool for impending war.

The way in which the first two Coalitions ended seriously hindered Britain's trust in her allies. Despite agreements to the contrary, Coalition members made separate peace with France, alienating Britain and exposing the weakness of the Coalition to France. The lack of trust and respect was ubiquitous in the Coalitions. Prussia and Austria were

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20 David Chandler, *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1979), 96-97.

21 Bowman, 15.

22 Duffy, 128.

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age-old rivals; the flimsy Coalition of Kings in 1792 was marked by a total lack of coordination and rampant showmanship by the respective armies.<sup>23</sup> Prussia, Austria, and Russia all had territorial ambitions in Poland, which constantly caused rifts in the Coalition and distracted valuable resources away from the war against France. The obsession with Poland heavily frustrated Britain due to its total irrelevance to the French issue. Conversely, Britain's lack of interest in Eastern Europe caused Prussia, Austria, and Russia to view Britain as selfish. The three continental Coalition members also distrusted Britain because of her strategy during the first two Coalitions. While Britain maintained control of the seas and gained riches in the form of colonial possessions in the West and East Indies, Africa, and India, the continental allies endured heavy casualties and territorial losses (in the case of Austria and Prussia) at the hands of the French.<sup>24</sup> The allies consistently overestimated Britain's military strength, and at nearly every negotiation demanded that Britain open a western front against France.

Prussia, Austria, and Russia also repeatedly overestimated Britain's financial reserves and the liquidity of her wealth.<sup>25</sup> Following the War of American Independence, Britain was in a state of economic calamity. In 1783 William Pitt the Younger became Prime Minister, and because of his skill Britain's finances began to slowly improve. But just as things started to look better in the early 1790s, the war with France broke out, placing enormous strain on the British economy. Though Britain weathered the war better than any other European nation, she was not immune to debt and deficits. The lack of available funds for loans posed a problem for Britain every time she attempted to form a Coalition

<sup>23</sup> Pope, 10.

<sup>24</sup> Pope, 18-22.

<sup>25</sup> Duffy, 138.

or keep one together; an ally would ask for a significant sum of money but Britain could only provide a portion. Prussia, Russia, and Austria thought that Britain was being greedy and hoarding her money. Since, as the continental allies believed, Britain was not negotiating in good faith, they did not have to either. Russia had at the end of the Second Coalition formed the Armed Neutrality of the North and convinced Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia to join the league to oppose British commercial policy. Britain had used her navy to enforce a rule called the *right of search*, which essentially authorized British vessels to stop any ship, allied or neutral, to search for potential contraband headed for France. The sudden hostility from longtime allies posed several significant problems for Britain. Primarily, it threatened to undermine Britain's last effective weapon against France - the blockade. It also cut Britain off from valuable resources that she acquired from the Baltic: grain to feed the people of Britain (compounding food riots at home) and timber to build and repair ships. In 1801, Britain used force to coerce the Danes out of the league, and soon thereafter it fell apart.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, the Armed Neutrality of the North exemplified the hostilities among Coalition members and furthered the lack of trust among them.

Britain so heavily disliked her allies when war with France resumed in 1803 that many prominent British MPs such as Lord Grenville and Charles James Fox opposed the formation of a Third Coalition. Fox believed bringing Prussia and Austria into the war would "end in making Bonaparte as much in effect the monarch of Germany as he is France."<sup>27</sup> Had it not been for King George III's insistence, it is unlikely that Britain would have sought another Coalition because the first two Coalitions

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26 Chandler, 16-17.

27 Hall, 59.



ended in dismal failure. Britain loaned Prussia and Austria huge sums of money that were unlikely to ever be paid back, and the two continental allies had shown a complete inability to defeat or even slow down the French armies.<sup>28</sup>

The distrust manifested itself tactically on the battlefield throughout the wars, mostly in the form of a lack of coordination. In 1793, the First Coalition had France in a compromised situation, with armies in disarray and the French frontiers open to invasion. An inability to manage a systematic attack on France allowed the Revolutionary armies to regroup. By 1794 the window had passed and the French armies were on the offensive again.<sup>29</sup> The Sixth Coalition was also afflicted by the lack of coordination. Great Britain and Russia formed the alliance in 1812 following Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia; Portugal and Spain joined nominally to pledge support for their liberators, the British.<sup>30</sup> When Napoleon's armies limped back into central Europe, Prussia betrayed the French.<sup>31</sup> Despite the state of Napoleon's armies, he was able to regroup and destroy both Prussian and Austrian forces that launched dis-coordinated attacks against him. Even the victorious Seventh Coalition faced a lack of comprehensive battlefield strategy. Upon Napoleon's return in 1815, disagreement about whether to strike at the heart of France or confront the French army that was invading the Low Countries almost caused disaster. Fortunately for the Coalition, the Duke of Wellington marched to meet the French and crushed Napoleon, winning the most famous battle of the age at Waterloo.<sup>32</sup> Even with victory on the cusp,

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28 *Ibid.*, 60.

29 Pope, 17.

30 Chandler, 97.

31 Napoleon forced Prussia into an alliance following the Treaty of Tilsit. See Chandler, 441-442.

32 Chandler, 481.

the allies struggled to come together and fight Napoleon as one unified Coalition. The Coalitions were victorious in spite of themselves, for the distrust and lack of coordination gave France far more opportunities to continue fighting than she had earned.

## II. Colonial or Continental Strategy

When Great Britain joined the war in 1793 she faced a tough decision regarding her primary strategy. Henry Dundas, the Secretary of State for War from 1794-1801, was a strong proponent of a colonial strategy, which entailed conquering French and French-allied colonial possessions in order to deny France the income that would help continue the war.<sup>33</sup> Lord Grenville, who served as the Home Secretary, the War Secretary, and Prime Minister at various times throughout the war, argued for a continental strategy and never supported any peace negotiations with France.<sup>34</sup> Grenville believed that the only way to secure a true peace with France was total victory, and that included the defeat and abdication of Napoleon. Total victory could not be achieved by battles in the West Indies and India, so Grenville strongly advocated the use of British resources on the European continent to directly confront and defeat France. His opponents, including Dundas, disagreed primarily because of the potential cost of such a strategy; Britain had virtually no battlefield success against France in the first decade of the war and continued defeat could open up the British Isles to French invasion. The two strategies, colonial or continental, would be the primary argument among British policymakers throughout the French Wars.

At first, the debate was so heated and eloquently argued for both

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33 Henry Dundas, *Memoirs of the Right Honorable Henry Dundas, Lord Viscount Melville* (London: James Imray, 1805), 14-5; Chandler, 130.

34 Chandler, 184-185.

sides that Britain attempted to do both.<sup>35</sup> This dual strategy was doomed to fail, for Britain did not have the resources to pursue colonial conquests and continental confrontation. Inevitable failure of such a strategy was obvious to most all policymakers; even King George III recognized it. He wrote to Pitt in September 1793: “The misfortune of our situation is that we have too many objects to attend to, and our force must be consequently too small at each place.”<sup>36</sup>

Through trial and error – mostly the latter – Britain learned that Grenville was right. Britain could not have lasting peace and security without a total defeat of France. During the First Coalition, Britain aggressively sought French colonial possessions in the West Indies. In 1794, Britain captured Martinique, France’s major military outpost in the Caribbean.<sup>37</sup> By 1795 the Dutch had joined the war on the side of the French, and the British seized the opportunity by capturing the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon.<sup>38</sup> This strategy was highly successful for British commercial and colonial interests. India was now protected from French and Dutch intervention, which allowed for great expansion on the subcontinent by the British East India Company. Britain rationalized the conquest of India with the potential threat of Napoleon marching his army from Egypt to India in the footsteps of Alexander the Great. Britain wanted total control over India before the French Revolution had even started, but the war with France provided an opportunity and excuse to pacify India.<sup>39</sup>

The colonial strategy started to backfire by 1803. The West Indies campaign, although met with initial success, ended in disaster. Well over

35 Emsley, 55.

36 Rose, 225.

37 Emsley, 55.

38 Pope, 17-18.

39 Lloyd, 68-69.

60,000 British soldiers died from disease, with another 40,000 more being deemed unfit to fight. The effect of this mass loss of troops was twofold. First, many of the soldiers that died were Britain's finest regulars, well trained with some experience in India. Second, the West Indies disaster ruined British troop morale. Defections increased and recruitment of fresh troops became nearly impossible.<sup>40</sup> Strategically, the colonial strategy was ineffective relative to Britain's war goal to establish peace and security. It became clear that Britain had overestimated France's reliance on colonial income for her war effort, because with the French monarchy went the old systems of financing wars. France was not only able to harness all available domestic manpower for the war effort, but also all her financial resources. Napoleon paid little mind to the loss of the colonies, and only on one occasion - Peace of Amiens 1802 - did France want the captured colonies back. Following the Haitian revolution (1791-1804) and Napoleon's sale of Louisiana to the United States in 1803, Britain realized that France was willing to abandon colonial possessions for the sake of continuing her European conquests.<sup>41</sup> The British colonial strategy tied up huge numbers of warships and military personnel in the protection of Britain's increasingly massive Empire. British forces were spread thin, and French blockade running was becoming more of a problem.<sup>42</sup> Eventually, the fear of a French invasion forced Britain to refocus her efforts on Europe, but not before her strategy would cause problems with her Coalition allies.

While Great Britain was at the negotiating table with Prussia, Russia, and Austria trying to convince her allies of commitment to the European theatre, she was also conquering and plundering French and

40 Mackesy, 156-157.

41 Pope, 23.

42 Mackesy, 152.

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Dutch colonies. Prussia, Russia, and Austria had deployed large land armies in Europe to engage the French and had suffered heavily for it, so it was no surprise that the continental Coalition members saw Britain as getting rich and expanding her Empire while they endured embarrassing defeats and humiliating peace arrangements at the hands of the French.<sup>43</sup> If Britain was going to defeat France, she needed the trust and cooperation of the continental allies. In order to gain and keep that trust, Britain needed a permanent western front against France. The memory of Britain's repeated failures to gain a foothold in Western Europe made it very difficult for her to commit troops to a continental invasion.

When the French Wars first broke out in 1792 between France and Austro-Prussian forces, most European observers thought that the war would be short lived and end in French defeat. Rapid French victories at Valmy and Jemappes terrified the British, because it was at that point that it became obvious that France posed a threat to Britain directly.<sup>44</sup> If a Revolutionary army full of untrained volunteers could so thoroughly defeat the professional armies of Prussia and Austria, all of Europe had something to fear in French expansionism. Jemappes was strategically very threatening to Britain as well, for it opened the way for French control of the Low Countries, which were Britain's entry point for trade into Northern Europe. The great port of Antwerp provided a terrific location for France to assemble and launch an invasion force of Britain. Therefore, in February 1793, George III authorized Britain's first military action of the war by deploying one brigade of Foot Guards to push the French out of the Low Countries. George III's second son, the Duke of York, commanded this force. The Duke of York was not a competent

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<sup>43</sup> Duffy, 139.

<sup>44</sup> Chandler, 455-456, 214.

military commander, but even if he were, the expedition was doomed to fail. No general - not even Napoleon - could have emerged victorious with one brigade of light infantry against the hordes of the French Revolutionary army and the expert French artillery. To compound the difficulties, George III prohibited his son's forces from being amalgamated into a larger allied force, arguing that no British Royal would be made subordinate to a German commander.<sup>45</sup>

By 1795, the British were expelled from the Low Countries and France had become their *de facto* ruler. In June 1795, the British exhibited their trademark persistence and tried again, this time at Quiberon in southern Brittany, France. The Royal Navy deployed over three thousand French royalist émigré troops in an effort to create a counter-revolution. France quickly crushed the rebellion, which was marred by infighting among the royalist troops. Quiberon was the first and last major attempt by the British to use French émigré soldiers to foment a French rebellion, because as the British envoy reported to Parliament after the failure, "However [much] they hate one another, they all in the bottom detest us (the British)."<sup>46</sup> These routine defeats at the hands of an increasingly confident and experienced French army forced Britain to nearly abort the continental strategy time and time again, for it was cheaper and easier to conquer French colonies.

Events in the Iberian Peninsula provided Great Britain with the opportunity to open up the long awaited western front against France. Portugal, long considered a British ally despite an official alliance with France, repeatedly refused to comply with Napoleon's Continental System and continued to trade with the British and harbor Royal Navy

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45 Rose, 223-224.

46 Duffy, 132.

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vessels.<sup>47</sup> The Portuguese disobedience infuriated Napoleon and led to the deployment of French soldiers throughout Spain in preparation for an invasion of Portugal. The Spanish were not content with French rule either, and by 1807 the Iberian Peninsula was in open revolt against Napoleon. Spain requested British assistance in 1808, and Britain seized the opportunity and sent Lt. General Arthur Wellesley and General Sir John Moore to lead a British army in the liberation of Spain and Portugal. Success was not immediate, however. Napoleon himself marched a massive army across the Pyrenees and re-conquered Spain. Before he could finish off the British army at Corunna, he had to return to Paris because of increasing instability in his empire. The British army was able to escape, but General Moore was killed in the evacuation. Arthur Wellesley was now in command of the British forces.<sup>48</sup>

Wellesley waged a calculated war of successive defensive and offensive operations that frustrated and eventually defeated the French in Portugal and Spain. For his actions he was made the first Duke of Wellington and received the baton of Field Marshall from George IV. The Peninsular War lasted from 1807-1814,<sup>49</sup> and at varying times held down between 150,000 and 350,000 French soldiers while the British never deployed more than 50,000 men. Wellington's campaign was the most brilliant exhibition of British martial genius in history, causing France to bleed money and soldiers during a period when they could least afford it. Napoleon massively underestimated Wellington and the British, for in 1812 – the height of the Peninsular War – he embarked on the infamous invasion of Russia. The Peninsular War epitomized British strategy throughout the French Wars. Although at first unsuccessful,

<sup>47</sup> Chandler, 102-103.

<sup>48</sup> See Chandler 329-336 for background on Peninsular War.

<sup>49</sup> See Chandler 336-340 for details on Peninsular War.

Britain remained persistent and refused to capitulate to the French. Outnumbered, Britain used her resources expertly, letting the French be the aggressors until the opportunity to strike presented itself. That opportunity came at Salamanca and Vitoria, where Wellington proved he was as capable an offensive general as he was defensive. By late 1813, Portugal and Spain were free from French oppression, and on 7 October 1813 Wellington led his army through the Pyrenees and onto French soil, becoming the first allied army to do so since 1793. This British victory combined with the shattering of Napoleon's army in Russia reinvigorated French opposition in Europe.<sup>50</sup> Nearly every European country was at war with France in 1814 in what was to become known as the Sixth Coalition, and the first victorious Coalition of the French Wars.

Once the successes of the Peninsular War became clear to those in Parliament and London, British strategy was firmly continental. If France were to be thoroughly defeated, they would not pose a colonial threat regardless, which would enable Britain to be master of the seas and the dominant colonial power in Europe. The Peninsular War led to the liberation of Portugal and Spain, but the French Wars were disastrous for both countries, resulting in the eventual loss of their South American empires. Britain realized that the war was naturally eliminating imperial rivals, which allowed them to focus their resources on the issue at hand - defeating Napoleon and destroying the French Empire.

### **III. Commercial and Strategic Interests**

Great Britain's strategy during the French Wars can simply be defined as pragmatic. With limited resources to expend, primarily those of manpower, and massive colonial commitments that required most of the Royal Navy to defend, Britain could not afford to waste her armies. It was

50 Pope, 24.



for this reason that Britain preferred not to capture and occupy France's colonial possessions but rather to attack and open their markets by force.<sup>51</sup> This strategy was beneficial, especially during a time of war where Britain could not waste men guarding remote islands that tactically did nothing to defeat Napoleon. Britain's caution grew after the resumption of war in 1803, for the Coalitions that formed between 1803 and 1812 were less comprehensive; and often, Britain was alone in their war against France. During this period, Britain had few major allies: Austria in 1809, Prussia from 1806-1807, and Russia from 1805-1807.<sup>52</sup> If Britain were to launch an attack against France, it would be without support from allies. For most Britons, the risk of a failed assault far outweighed the benefits. France's empire at its height reached from Portugal to Poland and from Antwerp to the Aegean. In order to cover such a daring amphibious assault, Britain would have to momentarily abandon her colonial possessions and open the British Isles up to a potential invasion. If such an assault on Europe were to fail, Britain would be left with no choice to make peace with France, and it is unlikely that Napoleon would make peace with Britain if they were ripe for invasion.

The inability to fight every battle all the time severely restricted Britain's strategic options. Therefore, Great Britain only exerted her resources if there was a direct threat to strategic or commercial interests, or a great strategic or commercial benefit could be gained by doing so. When continental allies accused Britain of being selfish in their strategy, they were partly correct. However, had Britain not pursued this pragmatic and cautious strategy, it is unlikely they would have been able to wage war almost continuously from 1793-1815. Prussia, Russia, and Austria did

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51 Duffy, 139.

52 Pope, 24.

not utilize such a strategy, and on numerous occasions were forced out of the war by French victory.

Great Britain's strategy of only engaging when her interests were threatened is exemplified in the French invasion of the Low Countries in 1792. The unexpected French incursion violated both strategic and commercial interests for Great Britain. Strategically, the Scheldt River delta and the city of Antwerp provided arguably the best location in northwest Europe to assemble an invasion force to attack Britain. French control of this area also cut off Britain from easily meeting up with Prussian and Austrian forces, making any coordinated moves in northwest or northern Europe difficult. Commercially, the Low Countries were a major trading partner for Britain and were part of the primary trade route from Britain into northern Europe. French possession or subjugation of the Low Countries also meant that France controlled the Dutch fleet, which could pose a threat to British commerce in the Baltic Sea, North Sea, and even as far away as the Indian Ocean. For all of these reasons, Britain was obliged to get involved. Britain attempted to wrest control of the area from France in the 1790s, but the expedition ended in failure.<sup>53</sup>

The Iberian revolt in 1807 provided Great Britain with an excellent opportunity to make substantial strategic and commercial gains. Commercially, Portugal and Spain owned vast empires in Central and South America that would make great markets for British goods. Portugal was a reluctant ally of France and had continually given safe harbor to British vessels en route to Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean. The primary advantage offered by British intervention in Spain and Portugal was strategic. First, both Spain and Portugal possessed considerable fleets. The Spanish navy had suffered heavily at the Battle of Trafalgar

53 Rose, 231.

in 1805 at the hands of Britain's most famous Admiral, Lord Horatio Nelson, but still had a capable fleet.<sup>54</sup> As was the case with the Dutch, the fewer ships the French had under their command, the easier the British Royal Navy's task of total blockade became.<sup>55</sup> Better still, if these fleets were allied with the British, more Royal Navy vessels were available for colonial aggrandizement that would fulfill Britain's desire to defeat France and conquer her colonies. The ferocity of the Iberian insurrection also guaranteed Britain of strong allied ground forces in Portugal and Spain. The Spanish *guerillas* proved especially effective, giving the British the critical advantage of knowing the terrain. Wellington maximized this advantage, expertly using topography to his defensive advantage. The large number of local soldiers fighting alongside the British army also made it easier to acquire provisions, lowered the cost of the entire operation, and increased troop morale. The largest strategic advantage provided by the Peninsular War was how it aided Britain's efforts to build the Coalitions. Britain had finally opened a permanent western front and convinced her allies that she was totally dedicated to a land war in Europe. The persistence and eventual success against French armies was an inspiration to all the oppressed peoples and defeated armies of Europe. The new western front tied down hundreds of thousands of French regulars, and combined with the destruction of France's Grand Army in the invasion of Russia, the French Empire's eastern frontiers were left exposed. It was not until this period in 1812 that the Coalition saw a total victory over France as realistic since the early 1790s.

### Conclusion

British strategy during the French Wars was the result of years

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<sup>54</sup> Lloyd, 65.

<sup>55</sup> Mackesy, 159.

of trial and error that eventually produced the winning combination of pragmatism, perseverance, and daring. The fact that Great Britain managed to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds in the 1790s speaks to the courage and persistence of her people and political system. Britain was reluctant to go to war with France, but once it began Britain would never surrender until victory had been achieved. The British may not have been totally united during these trying times, but it is through dissent and difference of opinion that many of the victorious strategies were devised. The British were willing to try anything: invasions into the Low Countries, support for French Royalists in Brittany, colonial conquests across the globe, and finally, liberation of the Iberian Peninsula. Many of these strategies failed, but British resilience kept the war effort going and pushed through until Napoleon had been defeated and peace once again fell over Europe.

Great Britain was undoubtedly the most crucial opponent of the French during the wars. Every other European nation had at some point been defeated, allied themselves with the French, or were content with French dominance. The British vowed from the beginning to never allow France to be the master of Europe, even under the guise of liberty and revolution. That veil soon fell with the rise of Napoleon and tyranny and oppression remained in its place. There is no doubt that Britain gained much from the French Wars – near unchallenged hegemony over Europe and the beginnings of what was to become the largest colonial empire in world history - but Britain had no interest in conquering the many nations of Europe. Great Britain, along with her allies, liberated Europe, just as she would twice more in the next one hundred and fifty years.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington and Vice Admiral

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Horatio Nelson, Viscount Nelson were the undisputed military heroes of the French Wars, but they were not the only reason Britain emerged victorious. Politics and diplomacy played a vital role in the war effort by crafting Coalitions and keeping the peace at home while Britain exerted all of her resources on war abroad. The French Wars provide a fascinating juxtaposition of a democracy waging war against an autocracy. The British parliamentary system was much messier and less efficient than the well-oiled war machine of France, but that did not prevent the British from achieving victory. The British were forced by their political system to accept failure and devise superior solutions; Napoleon never accepted failure. The British forged alliances by offering financial and tactical support, while the French created allies with coercion and military supremacy. In 1815, Britain was allied with most of Europe, while France was left friendless. The British strategy in the French Wars took nearly twenty years of evolution and revision to succeed, but when it did the victory was comprehensive and lasting. After nearly a millennium of warfare, the two nations would finally end their martial rivalry; 18 June 1815 was the last day that Great Britain and France would ever be at war with one another.

# UNITED STATES HISTORY

# From Benevolent Institution to Negotiated Space: A Historiographical Examination of Slave Christianity

Brandon Blaylock

Every single fact does indeed evolve, but only as an element, and the whole sum of historical existence is still not the completely adequate medium of the idea, since it is the idea's temporality and fragmentariness... that long for the backward-looking impulse emanating, face against face, from consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the perspective of academics regarding slave religion has, like so much else, mirrored their perspective on race. The focus of this essay will be on how the understanding of slave Christianity in the antebellum period has evolved over time. As historians began to take the experiences of slaves more seriously, they have also taken the actions of the slaves more seriously. Consequently, the understanding of the slaves' use of religion has evolved from an early view of religion as an outlet for primal frustrations, to a more recent view of religion as a tool used by slaves in establishing their own space and, consequently, their own humanity. Thus, while early polemical writers, such as Philip Alexander Bruce, would contend that slave religion was primarily a manifestation of frustration and boredom, modern historians, including Laurent Dubois, would take a more nuanced view. Dubois writes, "Religion was, in some sense, a space of freedom in the midst of a world of bondage."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony with Constant Reference to Socrates* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1966), 49.

2 Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 43.

Some of the earliest historical examinations of slavery came out of the South. Largely in response to the fear of a northern domination of southern history, many southern writers felt the need to present a southern perspective on the history of the South. Following the Civil War, a group of pseudo-academics sprung up in Virginia.<sup>3</sup> Thoroughly committed to the “Lost Cause,” these men sought to eulogize, memorialize, and idealize the South. Condescension and racism are dominant features of these early works. One of the most notable of these early historians is Philip Alexander Bruce.

Bruce was raised in the South and attended the University of Virginia and Harvard. He was a prolific writer and became an editor for the Virginia Historical Association.<sup>4</sup> In an article published in the *New York Times*, Bruce summarized his attitude and goals as a writer, “Those of us who are interested in the history of the South have often ground for disputing the claim of New England writers.”<sup>5</sup> Among his numerous books on the South is *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia* (1889). Although primarily concerned with the post-bellum situation of freed blacks, *The Plantation Negro as a Free Man* discusses the characteristics of slaves and establishes a comparative approach to the evaluation of southern blacks.

In his writing on slave religion, Bruce mirrors many of his contemporaries. His attitude and approach are dismissive and racist. Bruce writes that many slaves did not feel comfortable worshiping alongside

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3 For a discussion of the “Virginia Cult” see Tomas L. Connelly’s *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in Society* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977).

4 The University of Virginia, “A Guide to the Philip Alexander Bruce Papers 1871-1933,” Alderman Memorial Library, <http://vip.lib.virginia.edu:8080/cocoon/vivaead/published/uva-sc/viu03278.document> (accessed November 12, 2011).

5 Philip Alexander Bruce, “A PROTEST FROM THE SOUTH: New England Has No Monopoly of This Country’s Early Historical Events Burgesses Convened First. Elective System in Virginia,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1929.



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their masters. The reasons he gives for this are that the segregation in the churches reminds blacks of their “social inferiority” and further, the “average white clergyman speaks above the level of their intelligence.”<sup>6</sup> Comments like these are indicative of the tone throughout the work, and more broadly, throughout the genre of “Lost Cause” history.

Bruce concludes his writing of black religion by asserting that slave religious gatherings should not have been a tolerated norm. He writes, “Even the good that the latter accomplish is so largely mixed with evil that there can be little doubt that the negroes of most communities would be in a better condition if they had no separate churches of their own at all.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, in his conclusion, he maintains his dismissive racist attitude toward slave religious expression.

Given the tone of Bruce’s writing, it is not a surprise to find that he did not take slave religion very seriously. In his discussions of the way in which slaves used their religion, he was equally dismissive. He argues, “The religious emotions that sway the blacks... are merely a physical drunkenness.”<sup>8</sup> The expression of slave religion, according to Bruce, has no connection with proper religious expression. Further, the goal of slave religious expression is simplistic and adolescent. “Their eager and susceptible natures,” Bruce writes, “[are] overcome by a desire for change and amusement.”<sup>9</sup>

This view was dominant for a time. However, its dominance would not be sustained in the academic world. In 1918, Ulrich Bonell Phillips would publish *American Negro Slavery*. Thoroughly researched, meticulously detailed, and well received, *American Negro Slavery* forever

6 Philip Alexander Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1889), 106.

7 *Ibid.*, 110.

8 *Ibid.*, 97.

9 *Ibid.*, 98.

altered the course of Southern historiography. Where Bruce and the “Lost Cause” historians were often careless with facts, heavy on speculation, and placed analysis over facts, Phillips offered a different approach. David M. Potter stated that Phillips “never set pen to paper without expressing cogent ideas.”<sup>10</sup> Eugene Genovese went so far as to state that *American Negro Slavery* was “not the last word on its subject; merely the indispensable first.”<sup>11</sup> Phillips, more than anyone before him, legitimized the study of southern history. In spite of all of this progress over earlier polemical writings, Phillips still falls victim to his own racist attitudes. Thus, his perspective on race informs his perspective on the use of religion by slaves. Phillips draws few conclusions regarding religion. For the most part, he sees as his task collection of information rather than interpretation of that information. When he writes of the propensity of slaves to worship in any given manner, he does not, for the most part, attempt an evaluation of the behavior. Where he does attempt such an investigation, he is largely dismissive. Genovese stated, “Because he did not take the Negroes seriously as men and women he could not believe that in meaningful and even decisive ways they shaped the lives of their masters.”<sup>12</sup>

Phillips’s next major work on the subject was *Life and Labor in the Old South*. Published in 1929, *Life and Labor* showed some signs of a softening of Phillips’s overt racism. However, critics have contended that any softening in tone was not a shift in perspective, “merely one of emphasis.”<sup>13</sup> There is reason to believe that this is a bit of an exaggeration.

It seems clear on inspection of *Life and Labor* that Phillips was developing

10 David M. Potter, “A Biography of Printed Writings of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 28 (September 1934): 271.

11 Eugene Genovese, Introduction to *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (1918; repr., Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1966), xxi.

12 Ibid., xix.

13 Ibid., viii.

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a more nuanced evaluation of the slaves. Nonetheless, the work still fails to take seriously the slave as a person. Thus, any discussion of slave religion occurs from a top-down perspective. For example, in *Life and Labor*, Phillips discusses the passages from the Bible that were considered appropriate for slave religious functions. He also notes that often, when a black pastor was permitted to preach to slaves, the master would monitor the meetings. If the pastor dared to harp too much on the liberation of the Israelis from the Egyptians, he “risk[ed]... being lynched.” The preference of the planters was that the ministers only speak on such topics as “servants obey your masters’, ‘render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s’, and ‘well done, thou good and faithful servant.’”<sup>14</sup> Although Phillips never made the connection between slave religion and resistance, he hinted at a dynamic that would lead to this view. Foreshadowing the writing of Ira Berlin, Phillips noted that, “neither planters, nor slaves... were cast in one mold... Plantation life and industry had in the last analysis as many facets as there were periods, places and persons involved.” In spite of these variations, Phillips did see a unity in southern slavery. That unity was to be found in the “responsive adjustments between masters and men of the two races.”<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, Phillips failed to follow these points to their logical conclusion. He was blinded by his racism, and consequently, he was limited in his ability to analyze an institution that rests fundamentally on the concept of “race.” The result of Phillips’s work was an understanding of slavery as a “benevolent institution.”<sup>16</sup> The result of Phillips’s perspective is a vision of slave Christianity that is merely one example of the civilizing gift passed on to

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14 Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (1929; repr., Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 202.

15 Ibid., 304.

16 John David Smith, Introduction to *Life and Labor in the Old South*, xix.

the slaves from their more culturally civilized masters. It is a lesson in the “school” of slavery.<sup>17</sup>

Phillips experienced a great deal of criticism in the years following his death in 1934. Occasionally, as was the case with criticism he received from Richard Hofstadter, the criticism was directed against his research methodology and Phillips’s disproportionate focus on the large plantation.<sup>18</sup> Hofstadter does discuss Phillips’s racism, but it is certainly not central to Hofstadter’s critique of Phillips. The most substantive attack on Phillips’s *Benevolent School* view of slave religion would have to wait for the beginning of the Civil Rights Era, and it would come from Kenneth Stampp.

Following the death of Phillips, the academic mood relating to slave studies began to shift toward recognition of the horrors of the institution of slavery. However, a major work challenging the Phillips’s School would not be written until Kenneth Stampp published *The Peculiar Institution* in 1956. Stampp believed that there was a need for a history of slavery that was informed by modern anthropological methods and understanding.<sup>19</sup> He set out to write such a history that was in every way as comprehensive as Phillips’, but reflected the changes in developments and attitudes that had come about in the broader academic and social milieu.

With regard to slave religion, Stampp’s perspective was similar in some ways to that of Phillips. Stampp, like Phillips, asserted that religion was something bestowed upon the slave by the master. Also, like Phillips, Stampp acknowledged the version of Christianity that was preached to the

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, 328.

<sup>18</sup> See Richard Hofstadter, “U. B. Phillips and the Plantation Legend,” *The Journal of Negro History* 29, no. 2 (April 1944): 109-124.

<sup>19</sup> Kenneth Stampp, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” *The American Historical Review* 57, no. 3 (April 1952): 619.

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slaves was “carefully censored.”<sup>20</sup> However, unlike Phillips, religion was not a cultural gift intended for the growth and development of the slaves; it was a means of imposing control over the slaves. Physical domination was a fundamental part of slavery. Conversion of the slaves to Christianity gave the master, according to Stamp, a level of spiritual control that allowed the “master class” to shape the slave’s behavior in ways more conducive to the maintenance of peace and of the institution of slavery in general.<sup>21</sup> Stamp asserted that the ideal religion, according to the master class, “should underwrite the status quo.”<sup>22</sup>

As far as the way that slaves practiced Christianity, Stamp asserts, “The religion of the slaves was, in essence, strikingly similar to that of the poor, illiterate white men of the ante-bellum South.”<sup>23</sup> Stamp does not attempt to make much in the way of generalizations nor does he attempt to unearth slave motivation with regard to religion. The closest Stamp comes to either is when he states, “What the slave needs now was a spiritual life in which he could participate vigorously, which transported him from the dull routine of bondage and which promised him that a better time was within his reach.” He acknowledges further that the slaves “took their religion seriously.”<sup>24</sup> As much as Stamp explores the slave’s perspective on religion, he merely asserts a psychological need for escapism and offers no deeper analysis.

Stamp’s perspective on slave religion was also indicative of his larger perspective on the institution of slavery. The institution was dominated by the master class, and left virtually no room for the slaves

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20 Kenneth M. Stamp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (1956; repr., New York: Random House, Inc., 1984), 159.

21 *Ibid.*, 158-159.

22 *Ibid.*, 160.

23 *Ibid.*, 377.

24 *Ibid.*, 371.

to assert any level of control over their lives. The primary shift from the Phillips's paradigm is that of benevolence to domination. The focus was still on what was done *to* the slaves rather than what they were able to accomplish within the oppressive system.

*The Peculiar Institution* was generally well received by historians. To the credit of Stamppp, any work completed after *The Peculiar Institution* had to deal with the claims and tone present in Stamppp's work. For a time, Stamppp was able to, if not supplant Phillips, certainly supplement him, as the author of a very significant work on southern slavery.<sup>25</sup>

In discussing the currents in the historiography of slavery, it is vital that one mention a persistent counter-current that was only merged with the dominant matrix of slave studies after Stamppp. This group of scholars never accepted the *Benevolent School* of Phillips and they, in large measure, rejected certain subtleties within Stamppp's *Domination Paradigm*. This group was composed primarily of minority scholars, who understood race from a different perspective than white scholars examining the institution of slavery. In 1953, a sociologist, E. Franklin Frazier, gave a series of lectures discussing slave religion from the perspective of a black scholar. His work, unlike that of Phillips or even Stamppp, takes seriously the perspective and experiences of slaves as it relates to religion. Frazier

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25 A cursory examination of reviews of *The Peculiar Institution* reveals an almost universal belief that while Stamppp's work was vital, his polemical presentation prevented him from living up to the standard that he had called for in his *AHR* article "The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery." Consequently, Phillips was still important to a complete understanding of the slave system. For examples see Chase C. Mooney, review of *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, by Kenneth M. Stamppp, *The Journal of Southern History* 23, no. 1 (February 1957): 125-128; Ralph B. Flanders, review of *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, by Kenneth M. Stamppp, *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 43, no. 4 (March 1957): 679-680; and Keith Hopkins, review of *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, by Kenneth M. Stamppp, *Population Studies* 18, no. 2 (November 1964): 204-205. Although these represent the consensus, some reviews were far more positive. An example of an overwhelmingly positive review is W. M. Brewer's review of *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, by Kenneth M. Stamppp, *The Journal of Negro History* 42, no. 2 (April 1957): 142-144.

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represents something of a synthesis of certain standards of understanding related to slave Christianity. First, he states plainly that a carefully censored version of Christianity was used as a means of social control.<sup>26</sup> He adds that Christianity appealed to the slaves as it offered them a “message of hope and prospect of escape.”<sup>27</sup> However, he does not stop there; he posits that slaves used Christianity as a way to reconstitute a social cohesion that was destroyed by the institution of slavery.<sup>28</sup> This view of the agency of slaves in creating a social cohesion using the tools of oppression is a theme that would become dominant in the historiography of slavery sometime later. In a way, the major players of slave historiography were playing “catch up” to the currents long present in minority scholarship on the subject.

Other deviations, or at least additions, to the Stampf paradigm began to emerge soon after the release of *The Peculiar Institution*. One example of such a variation is found in the work of Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (1959). Elkins wrote with the same cultural understanding as Stampf. *Slavery* operated in the same paradigm of oppressive white domination as *The Peculiar Institution*, but Elkins attempts to go a step beyond Stampf. Elkins hypothesizes regarding the psychological effects of unmitigated oppression and constant dominance. The lack of slave resistance can be attributed to the “infantilizing” effects of white domination on the slaves.<sup>29</sup> Although Elkins attempts an understanding of the psychology of slaves, his interpretation is dismissive. He assumes that there was little resistance among the slaves,

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26 E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America* (1963; repr., New York: Schocken Books, 1974), 18.

27 *Ibid.*, 16.

28 *Ibid.*, 13-16.

29 Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 225.

and he subsequently attempts to explain why this was so. Thus, the focus is still on the domination of the master, and not on the activity of the slave.

The Stamp paradigm began to lose its primacy among slavery research as a result of two books published in the early 1970s: John W. Blassingame's *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* and Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. Both books altered the method of evaluating the slave community and both attempted to place the slave in the foreground of slave studies. Although Blassingame's book was published just prior to Genovese's, it was Genovese that would have the greater historiographical impact based on a better circulation of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*.<sup>30</sup> After the release of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, *The Slave Community* would garner much attention as a work contributing to the emerging paradigm.<sup>31</sup>

Blassingame's contribution to the understanding of the way in which slaves used religion is fundamental. He stated, "In this test of wills the slave asserted that his master could inflict pain on his body, but he could not harm his soul... Clearly, religion was more powerful than the master, engendering more love and fear in the slave than he could."<sup>32</sup> Blassingame agreed with Frazier that Christianity helped to foster a "sense of group solidarity."<sup>33</sup> He emphatically rejected Elkins's "Sambo" conception. He also rejected Stamp's one-sided oppressive model.

Although Blassingame discussed slave religion, it was Eugene Genovese who took the lead in shaping the historical understanding of slave religion. In *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, first published in 1974, Genovese

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30 See Al-Tony Gilmore, ed., *Revisiting Blassingame's The Slave Community: The Scholars Respond* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978).

31 Ibid.

32 John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 147.

33 Ibid.



puts to work his admirable research skills and his unmatched writing talent. One historian stated, "Those prone to dialectical generalization on such matters may well see a literal thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the Phillips-Stampp-Genovese sequence."<sup>34</sup> There is some truth to this assertion; however, the author fails to recognize the impact of Genovese's magnum opus. Genovese, although indebted to Phillips, does not swing the pendulum back in the direction of *American Negro Slavery*. He swings it further in the direction of a meaningful understanding of the slave experience. To Genovese, slaves are not passive entities to be acted upon, and they are the actors of their own history. They interact and manipulate the system. They take an active role in shaping their lives. This is fundamentally different than either Phillips's or Stampp's conception of the slave.

*Roll, Jordan, Roll* is, at its heart, about slave religion. Genovese uses slave religion to show the way that slaves coped with their existence. No longer was Christianity merely a tool used by planters for control, it also, in turn, was used by slaves to create a space of freedom. The slaves' world was "made" by the slaves themselves, not by their masters. The cornerstone of this new paradigm was Genovese's innovative understanding of paternalism. "Paternalism's insistence upon mutual obligations – duties, responsibilities, and ultimately even rights – implicitly recognized the slaves' humanity."<sup>35</sup> This assertion, that slaves were able to maintain some control over their lives, was completely revisionist. Genovese fundamentally shifts the paradigm of slavery studies by admitting the slave had a role in shaping his or her experience.

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34 Peter H. Wood, "Phillips Upside Down: Dialectic or Equivocation?" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6, no. 2 (Autumn 1975): 289–297.

35 Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Random House, 1974), 5.

This role was manifest most obviously, according to Genovese, through slave religion.

Genovese acknowledges that the master was instrumental in introducing Christianity to the slaves in an attempt to serve his own purposes. However, the introduction of Christianity by the master was not made to a passive people. Genovese writes, "For good reason the whites of the Old South tried to shape the religious life of their slaves, and the slaves overtly, covertly, and even intuitively fought to shape it themselves."<sup>36</sup>

Following the publication of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, literature that specifically focused on the religion of slaves proliferated. Given a new operational paradigm, scholars were able to explore further within, and test the limits of, the concept of "paternalism" as employed by Genovese. Scholars were also able to expand on Genovese's conception of slave agency and varying types of resistance.

The most notable and thorough examination of slave religion to appear following Genovese's work was Albert J. Raboteau's *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*. This book continues down the path beaten by Genovese and Blassingame. Raboteau examines in depth the concept of religion among slaves and the role it played for both the master and the slave. He takes a step further than Genovese and Blassingame by identifying the outward expression of the contending goals of slave religion. On one hand, there is the "visible institution" that represents black worship under the supervision of whites. This is a manifestation of white attempts at social control. Raboteau's argument implies that, although social control of the slaves was a primary motivation for the allowance and encouragement of slaves' participation in Christianity, it was not the overriding motivation of many of the white

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 162.

ministers. An example of this visible institution is Cotton Mather's Society of Negroes.<sup>37</sup> The other and more important portion of Raboteau's word is about the "invisible institution" of slave religion; the portion of their religious experience that the slaves carved out for themselves without regard to their masters. For example, when discussing the role of black preachers, he writes, "They acted as crucial mediators between Christian belief and the experiential world of the slaves."<sup>38</sup>

The slaves' Christian belief, Raboteau contends, had more significant implications than mere escapist sentiment. There was an element of futurist longings and desire for retribution amongst some slaves.<sup>39</sup> Yet, there was an often overlooked, revolutionary aspect of slave Christianity. It did not serve solely to uphold the established order as Stampff had asserted. Slaves often turned the moral precepts of their masters on their heads. They "stole" from the master, supposing that they had been stolen, thus they had a right to take from their master what they required. They often considered lying to a master a "religious duty."<sup>40</sup> Raboteau shows throughout his work how slaves used Christianity to suit their needs as an enslaved and oppressed people.

Since the publication of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, most of the historical literature regarding the antebellum slave's religion has focused to some degree on the "agency" of the slave. Following the example of Genovese, historians frequently seek to tell the history of the slave, with the slave as the central character. Further, they seek to show the ways in which slaves employed various means to achieve their own ends of creating some

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37 Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 107-109.

38 *Ibid.*, 137.

39 For an example of this see pages 290-292 where Raboteau writes of some slaves that believed that in the "life to come" there would be white slaves and black masters.

40 Raboteau, 297.

space of operation or a place of freedom within their bondage. This has been the dominant paradigm of slave religion. It is present in the works of Raboteau; it is also present in more recent works such as John Boles' edited work *Masters & Slaves in the House of the Lord* and in Mechel Sobel's *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith*. Boles operates in a manner similar to Raboteau; however, he points out that the dominant Christian expression in the Antebellum period was interracial fellowship.<sup>41</sup> Thus, his focus is less on the "invisible institution" than on the "visible institution." Nonetheless, it is still informed by, and operating within, the Genovesean paradigm.<sup>42</sup>

Sobel, like Genovese and Blassingame, writes of the world that was constructed by the slaves. Although much of her focus is on the way the slaves incorporated their African identities into their new social realities, her paradigm is fundamentally that of Blassingame and Genovese.<sup>43</sup> Sobel disagrees with Raboteau regarding the "visibility" of the southern antebellum black church. She asserts that the religious world that the slaves made was visible not invisible. She believes that the slaves used religion and the community it created to give coherence to their lives.<sup>44</sup>

In spite of the general consensus that developed around the need to see the institution of slavery as it was lived by the slaves, there has been a notable push back in the other direction. This has come primarily from the advocates of a position of "social death." One example of such a work

can be found in Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative*

41 John B. Boles, Introduction to *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, 1-18, edited by John B. Boles (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 1 & 10.

42 Elizabeth Fox Genovese, review of *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, edited by John B. Boles, *The Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, No. 3 (Spring 1991): 95-96.

43 Mechel Sobel, *Trabelin' On: The Slave Journey to an Afro-Baptist Faith* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979).

44 *Ibid.*, 100-101.

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*Study.* Patterson states that a slave, in any society, is essentially a “dead person.”<sup>45</sup> The religion of the slaves, according to Patterson, was not of their own construction, but rather did not differ from their master’s religion in any essential way.<sup>46</sup> Although some still cling to the idea of “social death” it never caught on as a primary means of understanding the slave system.<sup>47</sup> These “social death” advocates, though not defining the path of scholarship, still make important contributions to slave studies. Most notably, as scholars such as Genovese, Blassingame, and Sobel have focused on the social and cultural aspects of the lives of the slaves, the larger picture of an exploitative, brutal system can fade into the background. The “social death” historians make sure that this does not happen.

The study of slave Christianity in the South is one that has continued, and will continue, to flourish. There is no shortage of modern scholarship on the experience and lives of the slaves. The larger shift in the historical field of incorporating the histories of marginal or oppressed groups will no doubt continue into the foreseeable future. Current scholarship on slavery is led by academics such as Ira Berlin. Berlin has been leading slave studies in a different direction. While still acknowledging the “agency” of slaves, he has divided the study of American slavery into different geographic and temporal periods. Berlin argues that the slaves’ Christianity was supremely important to the slaves in the antebellum period. Not only did it offer them hope of deliverance, but it also gave them a strong sense of “place” within their enslavement.<sup>48</sup>

45 Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 5.

46 *Ibid.*, 74.

47 For a notable example of a current scholar that employs the idea of “social death,” see Stephanie E. Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

48 Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America* (New York: Penguin Group, 2010), 128.

This concept of “place” is one that is taking hold within the study of slavery. The scholarship is increasing, and it is shining a light on new ways of understanding the way that slaves reacted to, and understood, their environment. One recent work on this topic is Anthony Kaye’s *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South*. Published in 2007, Kaye is leading the way in this understanding of place by showing how slaves constructed “neighborhoods” as areas of operation. He is operating within the context of “agency.” However, this well-trodden ground is complicated by the lack of intentionality in constructing neighborhoods.<sup>49</sup> This is indicative of a drift toward a more nuanced view of “agency” that incorporates unintended consequences and social realities outside of the direct control of the slaves. This unintentional space does not deny the slaves’ role in negotiating their existence; it simply adds another facet to scholarly understanding of the slaves’ world. Slave religion then operates as an intentional activity that leads to often unintended results, such as space and place. In discussing the place of Christianity in the creation of neighborhoods, Kaye writes, “[Slaves] conceived their place in the world in terms of the particular relations within the neighborhood ambit, especially kinship and Christianity.”<sup>50</sup>

If historians are looking for a “completely objective study of the institution which is based upon no assumptions whose validity cannot be thoroughly proved,” as recommended by Stampff in 1952, the search will be indefinite and in vain.<sup>51</sup> The goal should be, as it has been of late, to seek to flesh out the world of the slaves. If scholars cannot understand everything perfectly, they can certainly understand specifics better.

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49 Anthony Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 50.

50 *Ibid.*, 44.

51 Kenneth Stampff, “The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery,” 613.

Moving forward, the study of slave religion should focus on two vital components. The first is the system of belief itself. The Christianity of the slaves should be studied and appreciated on its own merits. This system is vital as it illuminates an important *chosen* lens through which the slave viewed his or her existence. Although the dominant method of “doing” history is through the prism of the three lenses, these are, to the individual, immutable realities of existence.<sup>52</sup> Although they are important to the understanding of history, one cannot choose his race or gender, and the slave in particular had virtually no input regarding his class. The system is inherently deterministic and thus it makes the agency of the slave less relevant to his environment. Viewing religion as a vital lens affirms the slave’s agency and emphasizes the role the slave played in shaping his own existence. The second focus of slave religious studies should include how religion informed the social relationships and constructs of the slave. This has been manifest of late in the work of Kaye and others. Throughout the historiography of slave studies, it is important to remember that the development of historical understanding regarding slave religion parallels one’s idea of race.

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52 The three lenses referenced here are race, class, and gender.

# Anti-Communism Reshapes American Citizenry

Berkan A. Ciger

The anti-communist sentiment swept the nation and engulfed most of what Americans were hearing, reading, or watching; it had gotten a hold of the media. Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer series was wildly popular selling nearly three million copies of the first six books. Mike Hammer was an all American private eye with a niche for sniffing out danger, "They were Commies...They were real sons of bitches who should of died a long time ago...They never thought there were people like me in this country." Mike was exemplifying what all good Americans should be, a hard working commie killer. An editor that Spillane went to with his work noted that Mike Hammer was not in the best taste but the climate of the time made it a good sell.<sup>1</sup> There were countless films 'educating' people about Communism and how to destroy it. These films were clearly anti-communist propaganda but would always end with a phrase similar to, "what you have seen is not entirely fiction," fostering the idea that Communists were the evil spirits they were portrayed as in American media.

Anti-communism also leaked into actually the Hollywood movie industry with John "Joker" Jackson explaining a "great way to live. Keep your mouth shut until the day you die."<sup>2</sup> People were being brought up in a time where silence was valued over expression because to most

there were only two modes of expression: pointing out a Communist

1 David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 1993), 59-60.

2 *The Defiant Ones*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kramer (1958; New York: Curtleigh Productions).



or implementing Communism. The national best seller *Witness* by Whittaker Chambers preached that Communism, along with liberalism, was the enemy.<sup>3</sup> The popular reverend Billy Graham wrote “the only way for America to combat Communism was through faith, prayer, and religious revival. America without the Bible could not survive.”<sup>4</sup> America was being taught to live a certain way and to hate a certain way with journalists only furthering the problem. A journalist from the Chicago Tribune labeled anti-communism as “...a dream story, I wasn’t off page one for four years.” These journalists rarely asked for any evidence because they were enjoying the ride on the gravy train that was false accusations of Communism and by doing so were only leading Americans down a path of hate, suspicion, and ignorance.<sup>5</sup>

The choice of either Americanism or Communism was critical and there would be no compromise between the two.<sup>6</sup> Harding College tried to make the choice as easy as possible with its own line of propaganda. In one of their films, the speaker points out that “all of us can feel gratitude and pride toward American capitalism. Its record at improving human welfare is unmatched in all history.”<sup>7</sup> Americans were taught that the economic abundance in America was made possible by our incentives for progress and that we were far better off than the rest of the world.<sup>8</sup> Russia, according to an Iowa farmer who visited the country, has much lower production capability and much lower wages, not to mention

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3 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 16.

4 Billy Graham, “A Christian America,” *American Mercury* (1955): 69-72.

5 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 55.

6 Thomas Aiello, “Constructing ‘Godless Communism’: Religion, Politics, And Popular Culture, 1954-1960,” *Americana* 4 (2005).

7 *A Look At Capitalism*, DVD, directed by the National Education Program (1955; Searcy: Fotovox Inc).

8 *The Responsibilities of American Citizenship*, DVD, directed by the National Education Program (1955; Searcy: Fotovox Inc).

the lack of freedoms to work, dream, compete, advance, and invest.<sup>9</sup> *A Look At Capitalism* taught Americans about the three pillars of American capitalism: ownership of private property, the profit motive, and the open market. While another film, *In Our Hands*, taught that money is vital to the American freedoms of producing, buying, selling, saving, and investing. Americans were being conditioned to love our capitalist system and everything that made up the system. They learned that under a Communist regime they would lose those freedoms due to the freezing of bank accounts, suspension of markets, government run insurance, and a redistributed labor force. They believed that a Communist government would forcefully take their savings for investment. Americans were learning to love their consumer society through an increased standard of living and through propaganda. To take away Capitalism was to take away a great American pastime, a love shared by all full-blooded Americans. Average Americans new found love of Capitalism would aid in the battle against Communism as the Communist were in complete opposition to the “American Way” and set out to destroy it.

Americans were learning (read: being fed) that to be a citizen of their great nation was one of the most precious gifts on Earth. They were also learning that their freedom was a privilege and to maintain that privilege they were to take on the responsibilities that came along with it. “One man stands between freedom and Communism, that man is you.”<sup>10</sup> To be that brave American that stands in the way of “evil” one must first understand Capitalism, become active in government by being constantly vocal on the issue of preserving our great system, and make

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9 *The Secret of American Production*, DVD, directed by the national Education Program (1955; Searcy: Fotovox Inc).

10 *Red Nightmare*, DVD, directed by George Waggner (1962; Hollywood: Warner Bros Studios).

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sure to dedicate a part of everyday to the fight for freedom. "If every citizen, young and old, will accept the challenge of his citizenship then the Socialists, the Communists, and their followers will not prevail and America will go on toward the fulfillment of her great world destiny."<sup>11</sup>

Americans were told that their nation's power was limited because of the sinister forces pitted against them.<sup>12</sup> To combat these forces Americans must understand the tactics of the Communists, their godless philosophy, their goal for world conquest, and to not be duped by Communist propaganda techniques. Returning to the "American Way" is the only way to fight the domestic dangers of Communism and Socialism.<sup>13</sup> "Unless we understand and work effectively for the principles upon which our American way of life is founded the structure will crumble and our heritage of freedom will parish."<sup>14</sup> One of the ways to get back to the American way of living was to strive for spiritual growth by applying the principles of God's truth to the American political and economic systems. During these Cold War times a belief in America equated to a belief in God, which pushed an atheistic minority out of full citizenship because true Americans were loyal believers.<sup>15</sup>

Many American's were beginning to put more emphasis on their Christian beliefs. So much so that they were beginning to see their free market system as fundamentally Christian and most wanted the Communist regimes of the world to be replaced with upstanding Christian nations.<sup>16</sup> The Cold War became an allegory for good versus

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11 *The Responsibilities of American Citizenship.*

12 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 53.

13 *Ibid.*, 9.

14 *The Responsibilities of American Citizenship.*

15 Aiello, "Constructing Godless Communism."

16 John Harold Redekop, *The American Far Right* (Grand Rapids: William B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1968).

evil and reawakened the idea of American divine right.<sup>17</sup> Americans were identifying themselves as God's chosen people who were sent to rid the world of evil which took the form of Communism. Christianity became a major tool to fight Communism because, as Americans were told, Communists were all godless, and therefore, evil people. The reverend Billy Graham saw the Cold War as "igniting a virtual revival and an increasing resort to the Bible for battle with the Communist foe."<sup>18</sup>

Parents began to take their kids to Sunday School not only to fight Communism, but to ensure a proper American upbringing. The Cold War boosted church attendance in America from forty-nine percent of the population to sixty-five percent. As church membership rose anti-communism and Christianity became more intertwined. William Howard Melish, a Brooklyn clergyman in 1954, was branded a Communist after advocating for a world in which Christianity and Communism could coexist. The atheism that was associated with Communism was seen as an animalistic feature by these newly fanatic Christian Americans. They could not understand how some people could buy into collectivist ideas and still call themselves Christian.

Manifest Destiny had made its way back into America and the claim to superiority and godliness engaged the U.S. in a religious battle with the Soviet Union who had their claim to superiority and godlessness. American Christians saw themselves as Communism's biggest victim as well as its most worthy adversary. President Truman was a believer in this epic battle telling a reporter that "Communism is the deadly foe of belief in God and of all organized religion."<sup>19</sup> Reverend Billy Graham

<sup>17</sup> Cedric Belfrage, *The American Inquisition, 1945-1960* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1973).

<sup>18</sup> Billy Graham, "Satan's Religion," *American Mercury* (1954): 42.

<sup>19</sup> "Text of Truman Talk Decrying 'Hysteria' in Fighting Communists," *New York Times*, Nov. 11, 1953, 20.

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wrote that the Cold War was the battle between Christ and the anti-Christ and that one of them, Christianity or Communism, must die. The federal government was becoming heavily involved with fighting Communism by way of religion. Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota 1959 said that the spiritual treasure established in the United States gave it an overwhelming advantage in the fight. Representative Louis Rabaut of Michigan 1959 spoke on the House floor about the Christian foundation that America was built upon and that our fundamental belief in God pitted us against the godless and despicable Communists. Many in the nation were beginning to draw a connection between their country and its constitution to Christianity and its Bible.

The American political system was set up perfectly to deal with situations like these, the majority would be satisfied. Truth took a backseat to outlandish public opinion and the government happily obliged. The people wanted Communism out of their country and it started with the government. Each branch of the federal government had its own investigative body to sniff out the godless among them: the House had the Un-American Activities Committee, the Senate had the Government Operations Committee, and the White House had the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. In 1954, the Communist Control Bill had passed through Congress with an overwhelming endorsement and was put into action immediately. The Bill stripped all Communist party members of their rights and had written guidelines for identifying a Communist:

8. Has written, spoken, or in any way communicated by signal, semaphore, sign, or in any other form of communication, orders, directions, or plans of the organization...
12. Has indicated by word, action, conduct, writing or in any other way a willingness to carry out in any manner and to any degree

the plans, designs, objectives, or purposes of the organization;  
 13. Has in any other way participated in the activities, planning, actions, objectives, or purposes of the organization.<sup>20</sup>

It was made so that if anyone even uttered the word, they would be labeled a dirty commie and dealt with accordingly. Of course this would mean disaster for some politicians' careers.

With the Democrats having held the presidency for five terms the Republicans had finally found their ace in the hole and the high road in American politics would be barren for much of this time. It was a rare free shot in politics but the Republicans would use it against the Democrats trying to prove that they were soft on Communism and the Democrats would spend the next thirty years trying to refute it.<sup>21</sup> When MacArthur was fired by Truman, Bill Jenner of Ohio said "this country is in the hands of a secret inner coterie which is directed by Agents of the Soviet Union." Hugh Butler of Nebraska declared that "if the New Deal is still in control of Congress after the election it will owe that control to the Communist Party." Anti-communism was no longer sitting in the holster of Republicans' belts as they were attempting to shoot down every Democrat in office. George Smathers beat out incumbent Claude Pepper of Florida by claiming that "Joe (Stalin) likes him and he likes Joe." Everett Dirksen beat out incumbent Scott Lucas of Illinois by declaring he would clean house of any Communist and their sympathizers. Although the well-respected Republican Senator Robert Taft thought the Cold War would transform America from a democracy into an imperial power by throwing it into the position of world police for which it was ill-suited he encouraged McCarthy to keep making noise and keep picking up as many

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20 "Communist Control Act (1954)," last modified May 31, 2007, <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/50s/comm-control-act.html>.

21 Halberstam, *The Fifties*, 53.

cases as he could. Taft went as far as to call McCarthy “a fighting marine who risked his life to preserve the liberties of the U.S.” When Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland spoke out against McCarthy and the anti-communist wave that was making its way through Congress by calling it a “hoax and a fraud...an attempt to inflame the American people with a wave of hysteria and fear on an unbelievable scale,” he lost his seat in the next election.<sup>22</sup>

Americans were taught that Communism was an evil, godless, and vile philosophy so they would vote to keep out the scoundrels that were determined to destroy their American way of life. Propaganda films were being produced faster than entertainment films and most were showing what America would be like under a Communist regime. The film *In Our Hands* was telling Americans that under Communist rule their rights would be whatever the government decides and that those rights are subject to change pending certain circumstances. In the movie *Red Nightmare*, produced by the Department of Defense, the protagonist is sentenced to be shot because “he challenged the supreme authority of the State, he has questioned its practices and its decisions. By these actions he has proved himself to be a dangerous enemy to the proletariat.” Americans are made to believe that all Communism is the same and that under Communism people are slaves to the State. In the Defense Department’s movie the citizens are required to have a permit number to make phone calls with no personal calls are allowed, soldiers could barge into your home unannounced and without a warrant, at work there are quotas that must be met even if that means working through lunch or unpaid overtime. The protagonist’s daughter leaves to work on a farm because she was convinced to free herself of family life and his two

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 56-58.

younger children are leaving for state school because “home life does not encourage the collective character of which the party wishes to develop in its young people.”<sup>23</sup> When the father goes to court he is guilty until he proves his innocence and, to make matters worse, his wife testifies against him. Private property was a thing of the past and people were moved to new locations to work at new jobs, neither of their choosing.

Through the various propaganda films that were in circulation Americans were “learning” that life as a Communist was not a life worth living. This horrid life that is Communism is able to survive due to the evil that runs through its doctrine. Fredrick Brown Harris, chaplain of the Senate 1954, referred to Communism as the “most monstrous mass of organized evil that history has ever known,” describing the philosophy as being “lower in its practice than primitive, cannibalistic tribes.”<sup>24</sup> Former President Herbert Hoover identified Communism as human slavery and a prominent Tennessee minister, in 1957, asserted that he “would rather see (his) nation die cleanly under the H-bomb than rot away under Socialism.”<sup>25</sup>

Communism was an evil unmatched by any other in the gullible eyes of mainstream America. All Americans ever heard were nasty, dirty things about Communism, its followers, and any philosophy that resembled it. The propaganda film *What Is Communism* taught its viewers just exactly what it takes to be a Communist and the character traits that came along with it. According to the film Communists are taking orders from another government to do everything possible to destroy the American government. In the process of carrying out these venomous deeds Communists show their true colors of being a lying, dirty, shrewd,

<sup>23</sup> *Red Nightmare*.

<sup>24</sup> 83rd Cong. Rec. 100 (1954).

<sup>25</sup> Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare In Red* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990).



godless, murderous, and determined group of dastardly people. They lie because to a Communist the truth is anything that will abolish their ideals, so Americans were conditioned to believe that every word coming out of a Communist's mouth is a bold face lie, and a subversive one at that. They are dirty because they do not recognize human dignity or individual rights unlike the tolerant Americans who never struck their fellow man down no matter their conviction, as long as they were not Communist (or anything other than a wealthy white person). They are shrewd because they take over American organizations through infiltration and agitation. When that happens you only need one successful Communist to wreck hopes, slaughter soldiers, and weaken the nation. They are godless and set out to destroy the Church. They are murderous because they casually shoot anyone in their way. They are determined and America is their number one goal. "The Socialists and Communists would like to see the American spirit extinguished."<sup>26</sup> They are challenging every aspect of American life which constituted, many believed, the greatest crisis in the short history of their nation.

Anti-communism spread quickly and sunk deep into the idea of what it meant to be an American. At this time fighting was all Americans knew. The citizens of the time saw both World Wars, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. The Cold War was a way to fight without being enlisted. The anti-communism that was flowing freely through America was forcing its people to conform to a certain way of life and to act in a certain way, be it for fighting back Communism, limiting suspicion, or seeking out Communists to destroy. This new life style was very different from the life styles most Americans were leading but they would follow suit as to not seem unpatriotic. These new Americans were to love

<sup>26</sup> *Responsibilities of American Citizenship*.

Capitalism, hate Communism, and carry out new American duties that would demonstrate both of those feelings. American pop culture became tailored to the anti-communist attitude and trained people how to feel and act. The government caught hold of this mind-set too and never let it die. Christianity had its revival in the States to combat the godless philosophy. American citizenship drastically changed from exemplifying freedom, to a uniform set of rules expectations. The ultimate freedom that was lost in this hysteria turned America into a state closely resembling the ones in the propaganda that filled the heads of its masses. Anti-communism changed America by making it forfeit some freedoms and adhere to some strict guidelines. American's had lost their sense of what it meant to be citizen of their great nation and filled it with a fabricated mess of intolerance and ignorance.

# Franklin's Failures: How Benjamin Franklin Hindered British-Colonial Relations

Kerrie Holloway

While many Americans look to Benjamin Franklin and his years in London as monumental in the fight for American Independence, Franklin's work reconciling Britain and the colonies did more harm than good. Prior to the American Revolution, Franklin spent fifteen years in London as a colonial agent advocating the position of the colonies. However, this paper will argue that his many propaganda articles in London newspapers after the implementation of the Stamp Act, particularly those in response to an anonymous Englishman writing under the pseudonym "Vindex Patriae" -- Latin for "avenger of his country" -- as well as his examination before the House of Commons in which he shared the colonists' viewpoints did nothing to improve British opinion or policy. Furthermore, his erroneous views on the colonists' interpretation of a British taxation plan that he initially accepted led to even more friction between the colonies and Britain. Instead of helping the British understand the colonies, his distinction between internal and external taxes culminated in a series of acts including the Declaratory Act, the Townshend duties, the Tea Act of 1773, the Coercive Acts, and the Quebec Act that angered the colonists and eventually led to their rebellion.

Benjamin Franklin traveled to Britain as an agent of Pennsylvania in 1757 to argue before the Privy Council the necessity of the colonial proprietors, the Penn family, paying taxes on their land holdings. Franklin's first stint in London was unsuccessful in replacing

Pennsylvania's proprietary government with a royal charter, but during these five years, he grew to love London and the British Empire. Decades before the start of the rebellion, Franklin was completely loyal to the crown and Parliament, and he saw America as an integral part of the empire.<sup>1</sup> But an integral part did not mean not autonomous. Franklin argued that while it was up to the colonies to make their own laws, the king could either approve or veto and Parliament existed to protect colonial interests.<sup>2</sup> At the end of Franklin's first sojourn, he succeeded in forcing the Penns to pay some taxes, but Franklin lost the theoretical argument as the Privy Council ruled that the colonial assembly and the governor were not enough to make a law -- a ruling that effectively stripped the colonies of the autonomy for which Franklin argued.<sup>3</sup> The Privy Council's decision set the stage for the growing tensions between Britain and the colonies.

After two years in America, Franklin returned to London as a colonial agent just months before the passage of the Stamp Act in March 1765; and he stayed until the eve of the Revolution, not arriving back in the colonies until the first shots had already been fired at Lexington and Concord. During this trip, Franklin attempted to maintain his grasp on the attitudes of a people living 5,000 miles away, and his struggle began immediately. At the Stamp Act's implementation, Franklin rationalized Parliament's decision because he was an imperialist first and foremost, knew that empires cost money, and thought other colonists would feel likewise.<sup>4</sup> Franklin showed his acceptance of the Stamp Act in appointing

1 Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 183.

2 H. W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 281.

3 *Ibid.*, 315.

4 Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 106.

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of his friend, John Hughes, as a stamp officer -- a move that the colonies would later view as collaboration and later biographers would call "one of Franklin's worst political misjudgments."<sup>5</sup> Franklin's oversight led to Hughes' removal from office by an angry mob before he even sold the first stamp, although his house was spared from being torched like other officers'.

After learning the colonies abhorred the Stamp Act, Franklin relinquished his position and turned to the press to advocate the opinions of his fellow colonists through a series of Stamp Act essays. During the mid-eighteenth century, newspapers could not print what happened in Parliament and did not publish editorials, but otherwise censorship was virtually nonexistent.<sup>6</sup> Printers vied with one another for provocative, controversial, and wildly popular letters to the press, "the most widely read part of each issue -- the mainstay of circulation."<sup>7</sup> These letters were almost always anonymous or signed with a pseudonym or initials rather than the author's real name, and Franklin was no exception. While in London writing for the London press, Franklin used forty-two different pseudonyms to write approximately ninety letters to the press.<sup>8</sup>

The Stamp Act essays shed light on Franklin's complicated, and rather tardy, adjustment of his own ideas about the empire and American rights as he tried to align himself with the prevailing views of the colonists.<sup>9</sup> Six of the essays were written in reply to *Vindex Patriae* with the first appearing in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 28 December 1765. *Vindex Patriae's* initial article five days earlier focused on

5 Don Cook, *The Long Fuse: How England Lost the American Colonies, 1760-1785* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1995), 72; Isaacson, 223.

6 Verner W. Crane, ed., *Benjamin Franklin's Letters to the Press, 1758-1775* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950), xix.

7 Cook, 43.

8 Wood, 14.

9 Crane, xxv-xxvi.

the idea of colonial representation in Parliament. *Vindex Patriae* argued the colonies were represented virtually in Parliament giving Parliament the authority to impose taxes such as the Stamp Act. The article went on to say that even if the colonies did boycott British goods, it would not make a difference because of the breadth and scope of the British Empire. Franklin, writing as "N.N.,"<sup>10</sup> replied,

Do they expect to convince the Americans, and reduce them to submission, by their flimsy arguments of *virtual representation*, and of *Englishmen by fiction of law only*, mixed with insolence, contempt, and abuse? Can it be supposed that such treatment will make them rest satisfied with the unlimited claim set up, of a power of tax them *ad libitum*, without their consent; while they are to work only for us, and our profit; restrained in their foreign trade by our laws, however profitable it might be to them; forbidden to manufacture their own produce, and obliged to purchase the work of our artificers at our own prices?<sup>11</sup>

In his response, Franklin was attacking the very heart of Britain's mercantilist economic system that Thomas Whately laid out in his 1765 pamphlet entitled *The Regulations Lately Made concerning the Colonies, and the Taxes Imposed upon Them, considered*. In all mercantilist economies, the mother country sets up colonies to provide raw materials while retaining most, if not all, manufacturing rights for the entire empire. Whately explained the role of the colonies saying, "From them we are to expect the Multiplication of Subjects; the Consumption of our Manufactures; the Supply of those Commodities which we want; and the encrease [*sic*] of our Navigation: To encourage their Population and their Culture; [and] to regulate their Commerce."<sup>12</sup> Whatley also stated all imperial commerce should be controlled by the Mother Country in the interests of the empire

10 N.N. stood for *non nominates*, Latin for "anonymous".

11 N. N. [Benjamin Franklin], "First Reply to *Vindex Patriae*," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 28 December 1765, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 12, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968), 414.

12 Thomas Whately, *The Regulations Lately Made concerning the Colonies, and the Taxes Imposed upon Them, considered* (London: St. Paul's Church Yard, 1765), 3-4.

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as a whole, but really, the interests of Britain and British merchants and manufacturers drove British interests while the desires of the rest of the empire went ignored.<sup>13</sup> Franklin's reply addressed these issues by reminding his readers of the value of the colonies to the mother country.

Franklin's first reply to *Vindex Patriae* continued as he warned *Vindex Patriae* and the rest of Britain not to push the colonists to their breaking point. Franklin wrote,

These people, however, are not, never were, nor ever will be our slaves. The first settlers of New England particularly, were English gentlemen of fortune, who, being Puritans, left this country with their families and followers, in times of persecution, for the sake of enjoying, though in a wilderness, the blessings of civil and religious liberty; of which they retain to this day, as high a sense as any Briton whatsoever; and possess as much virtue, humanity, civility, and let me add, *loyalty to their Prince*, as is to be found among the like number of people in any part of the world.<sup>14</sup>

By reminding the readers of the colonists' true backgrounds, Franklin targeted the emerging sense of English nationalism -- a growing sense of "Englishness" and, consequently, arrogance that would not be matched until the European nationalism of the mid-nineteenth century.

In the mid-eighteenth century, English "men and women of all social classes began to express a sentiment that might be described variously as a dramatic surge of national consciousness, a rise of aggressive patriotism, or a greatly heightened articulation of national identity."<sup>15</sup> With the growth of the British Empire, Britons began to feel dominant in all areas of life. The expanding empire and growing mercantilist economy led to relegation in the status of the colonists as they came to be regarded less as fellow Britons living across the Atlantic and

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13 John Derry, "Government Policy and the American Crisis, 1760-1776," in *Britain and the American Revolution*, ed. H. T. Dickinson (London: Longman, 1998), 47.

14 N.N., "First Reply to *Vindex Patriae*."

15 T. H. Breen, "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising," *The Journal of American History* 84 (June 1997): 19.

more as another people to rule -- even though the Americans descended from British immigrants whereas natives predominantly populated the rest of the Empire.<sup>16</sup> Most Britons at the time viewed the Americans as separate, distinct, and most importantly, inferior rather than as fellow nationals.<sup>17</sup> The colonies' distance from London led to their portrayal as "unpolished and lacking refinement."<sup>18</sup> As early as 1759 Franklin noted, in a letter to Isaac Norris, that appealing directly to Parliament may be tricky as "tho' there are many Members in both Houses who are Friends to Liberty and of noble Spirits, yet a good deal of Prejudice still prevails against the Colonies."<sup>19</sup> Franklin spent the next several years striving, and failing, to correct this prejudice while writing essays for papers in London.

Before *Vindex Patriae* had even replied to N.N.'s criticisms, Franklin replied again less than a week later under another pseudonym, "Homespun." On 2 January 1766 he responded to *Vindex Patriae*'s assertion that Americans would not be able to continue the boycott of British tea in aftermath of the Stamp Act because Indian corn was not as easily digestible for breakfast. As Homespun, Franklin wrote,

But if Indian corn were as *disagreeable* and *indigestible* as the Stamp Act, does he imagine we can get nothing else for breakfast?... Let the gentleman do us the honour of a visit in America, and I will engage to breakfast him every day in the month with a fresh variety, without offering him either tea or Indian corn.<sup>20</sup>

Franklin's second reply was much more of a light-hearted satire than his first reply as N.N., but he continued to attack British opinion of the

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16 Wood, 113.

17 Stephen Conway, "From Fellow-Nationals to Foreigners: British Perceptions of the Americans, circa 1739-1783," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59 (January 2002): 68.

18 *Ibid.*, 69.

19 Benjamin Franklin to Isaac Norris, London, 19 Mar 1759, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 8, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965), 295.

20 Homespun [Benjamin Franklin], "Second Reply to *Vindex Patriae*," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 2 January 1766, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 13, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 7-8.



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colonies as unrefined and backward. For years British political cartoons portrayed the colonists as Native Americans as they had yet to take on any recognizable physical identity of their own; but the Indian carried a savage, uncultured connotation with its limited clothing and dark skin.<sup>21</sup> While the British resorted to the Native American as an easy identifier for the colonies, the image only perpetuated the myth of the colonists as foreigners; and it was this myth that Franklin challenged by referring to colonial breakfast habits.

The controversy with *Vindex Patriae* continued as Franklin returned to the pseudonym N.N. for his third response in an article entitled "On the Tenure of the Manor of East Greenwich" in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 11 January 1766. Since *Homespun's* second reply, *Vindex Patriae* had written again, devoting most of his letter to the idea of virtual representation of colonial charters and the absurd idea of New England being part of the county seat of Kent. On 6 January, Franklin wrote,

I still doubt the argument of your correspondent, proving, or attempting to prove, "that they are represented in parliament, because the manor of East Greenwich in Kent is represented there, and they all live in that manor;" will hardly appear so intelligible, so clear, so satisfactory, and so convincing to the Americans, as it seems it does to himself...

In considering these questions, perhaps, it may be of use to recollect; that the colonies were planted in times when the powers of parliament were not supposed so extensive... That, excepting the yet infant colonies of Georgia and Nova Scotia, *none of them* were settled at the expence of *any money* granted by parliament.<sup>22</sup>

Using *Vindex Patriae's* erroneous interpretation of virtual representation,

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21 Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd ed. (2005; repr., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 134.

22 N. N. [Benjamin Franklin], "On the Tenure of the Manor of East Greenwich," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 11 January 1766 in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 13, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 20-22.

Franklin again reminded the readers that the colonists were Britons who immigrated to America under the pretense of much different living conditions than the rest of the empire that was conquered and then ruled by the British. The first colonists migrated because of disagreements with Parliament, and therefore, they were unlikely to approve of Parliamentary intervention any more than they had when they lived in Britain. Since the majority of colonies were set up through royal charters rather than Parliamentary acts, these colonies depended on the crown alone.

At the time, however, Britons did not understand the colonists' separation between the king and Parliament. By the 1760s, kings had long since ceased to function without Parliamentary approval.<sup>23</sup> George III was not the king but the king-in-parliament. The behavior of British politicians during the years leading up to the American Revolution relied on the belief in Parliamentary sovereignty over the colonies.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, "it was beyond British upper-class comprehension how colonials could claim the same rights as Englishmen or could declare that the English Parliament had no right to impose taxes on them from London."<sup>25</sup> Perhaps it was this incomprehension that led *Vindex Patriae* to fabricate the idea of virtual representation.

Homespun's second reply, and Franklin's fourth overall, appeared in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 15 January 1766 under the title "Further Defense of Indian Corn." In this letter, Franklin refuted the prevailing portrayal of Americans as Native Americans by again lashing out at those who used the idea of "Indian Corn" versus traditional English food as a distinction between the English and the colonists. Franklin

wrote,

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<sup>23</sup> Colley, 136.

<sup>24</sup> Derry, 45.

<sup>25</sup> Cook, 6.

If I should not *dare* to say, that we do prefer it to a place at our tables, then you demonstrate, that we must come to England for tea, or go without our breakfasts: and if I do *dare* to say it, you fix upon me and my countrymen for ever, the indelible disgrace of being *Indian corn-eaters*.

I am afraid, Mr. Printer, that you will think this too trifling a dispute to deserve a place in your paper: but pray, good Sir, consider, as you are yourself an Englishman, that we Americans, who are allowed even by Mr. Vindex to have some English blood in our veins, may think it a very serious thing to have the honour of our eating impeached in any particular whatsoever.<sup>26</sup>

Franklin's articles, including this reply by Homespun, showed the increasing acceptance of the colonists to use the term American. Britons began using the word "American" to describe the colonists several years earlier, a term often invoking "images of unrefined, if not barbarous, persons, degenerate and racially debased, who lived in close proximity to African slaves and Indian savages thousands of miles from civilization."<sup>27</sup> By the mid-1770s, the term "American" conjured up positive notions of independent men proud to fight for their freedoms and defend their rights. In the mid-1760s, however, colonists were more interested in asserting their Britishness than their independence or crafting a separate identity.<sup>28</sup> The British, not the colonists, began using the term in a humiliating and debasing context consistently after 1763, a full decade before the colonists began use the label themselves.<sup>29</sup> Only in response to this attitude in the late 1760s did the colonists reluctantly embrace their new identity as Americans, after they were refused all of the rights of Britons.<sup>30</sup>

In his response to Franklin on 17 January, Vindex Patriae blamed

26 Homespun [Benjamin Franklin], "Further Defense of Indian Corn," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 15 January 1766, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 13, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 45.

27 Wood, 114.

28 Breen, 30.

29 *Ibid.*, 30-31.

30 Conway, 65.

all the colonists for the Stamp Act riots because they either participated or did not prevent; and he denied that manufacturing in America was restrained by British laws. Franklin's final reply to *Vindex Patriae*, again writing as N.N., appeared in *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* on 29 January 1766. Franklin disputed the claims by saying,

I would only remark another instance of his unacquaintedness with facts. He denies, that the people of New England are restrained (as I heard they were) in "working their own beaver into hats, their wool into cloth, or their iron into steel:" Let him but consult the statutes under the several heads, and he will see how much those operations are fettered in America, and perhaps be sensible of his mistake.<sup>31</sup>

*Vindex Patriae*, and most likely many other Britons, would not have been aware of the technicalities of the laws affecting colonial manufacturing; and Franklin, as N.N., wrote to explain the difficulties already faced by the colonists. In a mercantilist economic system, colonies were seen as the source of raw materials while the mother country manufactured the raw materials into consumer goods. Mercantilism was typically much more beneficial for the mother country than the colonies, and under these constraints, the colonists could not make enough money to pay for both consumer goods and the high rate of taxes imposed by Britain.

Although Britain had been taxing the colonies for decades through duties regulating trade, Parliament implemented the Stamp Act, unlike the previous year's Sugar Act, for the sole purpose of raising revenue.<sup>32</sup> Based on European standards, the Stamp Act was a mild piece of legislation because it came on the heels of the large and expensive Seven Years' War, and Britons saw the tax as the least the colonies could do since the war

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31 N. N. [Benjamin Franklin], "Reply to *Vindex Patriae* on American Representation in Parliament," *The Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, 29 January 1766, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 13, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 64.

32 Cook, 53.

was for their protection.<sup>33</sup> The colonists, however, could only see the heavy burden placed on them by Parliament.

After the papers printed Franklin's Stamp Act essays replying to *Vindex Patriae*, Parliament called Franklin before the House of Commons on 13 February 1766 to give an account of the Stamp Act and its reception in the colonies. Adhering to the colonists' sentiment rather than his original feelings, Franklin's main argument rested on the difference between external taxes that regulated trade and would be tolerated by the colonists and internal taxes that raised revenue and would not be tolerated unless implemented by the colonies' own legislative assemblies. Richard Jackson, a Member of Parliament for Weymouth and secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, first made the distinction between internal and external taxes as early as 26 January 1764. In his letter to Franklin, Jackson wrote, "I am most averse to an Internal Tax, God knows how far such a precedent may be extended, and I have frequently asked, what internal Tax they will not lay."<sup>34</sup> Franklin used this distinction in his examination before the House of Commons, explaining,

An external tax is a duty laid on commodities imported; that duty is added to the first cost, and other charges on the commodity, and when it is offered to sale, makes a part of the price. If the people do not like it at that price, they refuse it; they are not obliged to pay it. But an internal tax is forced from people without their consent, if not laid by their own representatives. The stamp-act says, we shall have no commerce, make no exchange of property with each other, neither purchase nor grant, nor recover debts; we shall neither marry nor make our wills, unless we pay such and such sums, and thus it is intended to exhort money from us, or ruin us by the consequences of refusing to pay it.<sup>35</sup>

33 Trevor Lloyd, *Empire: A History of the British Empire* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2001), 46.

34 Richard Jackson to Benjamin Franklin, London, 26 January 1764, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 11, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 35.

35 Benjamin Franklin, "Examination before the Committee of the Whole of the House of Commons," in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 13, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 139.

Franklin believed the colonists would pay their share of the empire's expenses if asked rather than forced.<sup>36</sup> However, later in the testimony Franklin admitted, "It is hard to answer questions of what people at such a distance will think," although that was exactly what he was attempting to do.<sup>37</sup>

While *Vindex Patriae* never refuted Franklin's last reply in January 1766, that is not to say that Franklin had successfully swayed opinion. In fact, British opinion remained the same right up to the start of the American Revolution. Furthermore, British economic policy and the system of mercantilism continued along the same lines of increasing rather than lessening taxes to reduce the burden on the colonists. When Parliament repealed taxes, as it did the Stamp Act in March 1766, it was strictly due to the detrimental effects on Britain's mercantilist system and the outcry of British merchants rather than American colonists. In fact, at this point, the British view of colonists as foreigners was so cemented that even a Member of Parliament in 1766 complained about the repeal of the Stamp Act in order "please these foreigners."<sup>38</sup> Franklin himself commented on this attitude the next year when he wrote in a letter to Lord Kames, "Every Man in England seems to consider himself as a Piece of a Sovereign over America; seems to jostle himself into the Throne with the King, and talks of *OUR Subjects in the Colonies*."<sup>39</sup> Subsequent legislation passed by Parliament would only further increase tensions between Britain and the colonies.

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36 David T. Morgan, *The Devious Dr. Franklin, Colonial Agent: Benjamin Franklin's Years in London* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 110.

37 Franklin, Benjamin, "Examination before the Committee of the Whole of the House of Commons," 148.

38 Quoted in P. J. Marshall, "Presidential Address: Britain and the World in the Eighteenth Century: II, Britons and Americans," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1999): 11.

39 Franklin to Lord Henry Kames, London, 25 Feb 1767, in *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, vol. 14, ed. Leonard W. Labaree (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 65.

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On the same day Parliament repealed the Stamp Act, they passed the Declaratory Act. The colonies seemingly overlooked this act in their delight in the Stamp Act's repeal and the Declaratory Act's passive nature. This act, however, exerted Parliamentary authority over all colonies in all instances to safeguard to British colonial interests worldwide and Parliament's answer to the colonies' constitutional argument against the Stamp Act.<sup>40</sup> It made Franklin and *Vindex Patriae's* argument over virtual representation null and void as it championed the mercantilist economic system and firmly placed colonial interests under those of Britain. Franklin's further articles satirizing the Declaratory Act went apparently unnoticed as this act was never repealed.

The next year, the Declaratory Act, as well as Franklin's interpretation of internal versus external taxes as expression before the House of Commons, was put to test by the Townshend Duties, years after the colonies had dropped the internal versus external tax distinction from their official statements.<sup>41</sup> After Charles Townshend was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, he proposed a new revenue-raising program in early 1767. Townshend based his program on Franklin's definition of external taxes -- duties on goods considered luxuries that could be avoided by those who did not want to pay the tax such as glass, paper, paint, and tea. Rather than out of spite, the view commonly held in the colonies, "perhaps Townshend, like many in London believed that Franklin represented American opinion."<sup>42</sup> Regardless, while Townshend said these external taxes would be imposed to regulate trade, he also made it clear that his taxation program would raise revenue within

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40 Ian R. Christie, "British Politics and the American Revolution," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 9 (Autumn 1977): 209.

41 Crane, xli.

42 Wood, 130.

the colonies.<sup>43</sup> Like internal versus external tax, the difference between regulating trade and raising revenue became the new, important distinction in the colonies well before Franklin noticed.

As with the Stamp Act, Franklin originally accepted Parliamentary authority to levy the Townshend duties because he still viewed them as external taxes.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately for Franklin, “the Townshend duties -- which were just the kind of external taxes he said the Americans preferred -- were immediately rejected in America as illegitimate.”<sup>45</sup> Once rejected, Franklin aimed first to quiet the colonists and appease the English rather than argue the constitutionality of the taxes.<sup>46</sup> His strategy did not go over well with the colonists, and Franklin finally turned on Parliament while still remaining loyal to the crown and the idea of the empire. As an officer employed by the crown, “Franklin seemed to think the king could do no wrong...Franklin could not help being an enthusiast for the monarch against the tyrannical Parliament that had passed the Stamp Act, and he assumed his fellow Americans were with him.”<sup>47</sup> By the next year, 1768, Franklin began to question the right of Parliament to pass any legislation regardless of the purpose, but “he still considered the colonies firmly attached to Britain through the Crown.”<sup>48</sup> Several more years and several more bad decisions elapsed before Franklin turned on the king and supported American independence completely.

After the Townshend duties passed, “the British government was once more taken aback by the vehemence of American opposition” that manifested itself through boycotts and nonimportation agreements.<sup>49</sup>

43 Lloyd, 47.

44 Wood, 130.

45 Brands, 398.

46 Wood, 130.

47 Ibid., 122.

48 Morgan, 149.

49 Derry, 56.



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Three years later Parliament repealed the Townshend duties with the exception of the tax on tea, again because of the economic impact the duties were having on English merchants rather than due to the grumblings of the colonists. Parliament kept the tax on tea because it raised the most revenue but also so as not to surrender completely to the demands of the colonies.<sup>50</sup> While Franklin had hoped for a complete repeal of all the Townshend duties, the colonists relinquished nonimportation after the partial repeal; and he did not press the issue.<sup>51</sup> Even if Franklin had returned to the press or the House of Commons, the tea tax was likely to remain as George III supported keeping one duty imposed on the colonies in order to keep them in their place.<sup>52</sup>

From 1770 to 1773, a deceptive feeling of calm prevailed throughout the British Empire as Parliament lay low and the colonists waited suspiciously for the next colonial policy.<sup>53</sup> They did not have to wait long. Parliament, “with the clumsiness that had become characteristic of its American policy,” passed another Tea Act in 1773 that left the Townshend duty on tea unchanged but created a monopoly for the East India Company through a system of duty rebates and by removing the middlemen.<sup>54</sup> The clumsiness was evident in Lord North’s refusal to repeal the Townshend tea duty even though he was advised that it would be “the best means of assisting the company and conciliating the Americans.”<sup>55</sup> By refusing to repeal the last duty and creating the tea monopoly, Parliament again showed their apathy for Franklin’s previous arguments against mercantilism. Colonial merchants acting as

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50 Dickinson, 83.

51 Brands, 464-465.

52 Dickinson, 83.

53 Derry, 57.

54 Brands, 464-465.

55 Derry, 58.

the middlemen would be hurt the most by this new legislation while the company set to profit was the well-connected East India Company.

Characteristically, the colonists reacted badly to the new colonial economic policy. The Tea Act of 1773 led to the colonists' dumping of £10,000 of British tea into Boston harbor and led to the British Coercive Acts, known as the Intolerable Acts in the colonies. Parliament passed the Coercive Acts to isolate the radical element in Massachusetts before it spread throughout the colonies. North felt a severe punishment would force other colonies to remain loyal to the crown rather than Massachusetts.<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately for North, instead of "dividing the colonists from each other the Intolerable Acts drove them more closely together, united by a common sense of outrage at what the British had done."<sup>57</sup> After the Boston Tea party, Franklin "lobbied desperately against the passage in 1774 of the Coercive Acts, which closed the port of Boston and altered the Massachusetts charter, and he sought by a variety of avenues to convey the American position to the British government."<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately for Franklin, just as with the Declaratory Act, his efforts went either unnoticed or ineffective as the Coercive Acts were never repealed.

Along with the Coercive Acts, in 1774 Britain passed the Quebec Act that made concessions to French Canadians in terms of their Catholic faith and politics. Religiously, the Act reworded the oath of allegiance to omit the Protestant faith and guaranteed the free practice of Catholicism. Politically, the Canadians were given the right of French civil law though English common law remained. In light of the circumstances, the colonists saw the act "as part of a plan for giving the British government arbitrary

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>58</sup> Wood, 148.

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power in North America."<sup>59</sup> They viewed the concessions as British liberality toward Canadian Catholics while personally experiencing British restraint as New England Protestants.<sup>60</sup> The Quebec Act, like the Stamp Act, reminded them of their inferior position in the empire, and possibly even more so this time since they now felt even more insignificant than the French Canadians.

By the next year, 1775, the colonists' status as foreigners had been cemented. The ninety or so articles Franklin had written in the London papers failed to change British opinion or sway British policy. On 26 October of that year, King George III gave a speech in which he invoked the high "Spirit of the *British Nation*" -- a British nation that almost certainly did not include the Americans.<sup>61</sup> The Prohibitory Act that accompanied the King's speech declared "American ships and trade were 'the Ships and Effects of open Enemies' [and] put the colonies out of the nation beyond any conceivable doubt."<sup>62</sup> Soon afterward, the colonists, now Britain's "enemies," wrote the Declaration and fired the first shots.

While Franklin did not succeed in changing British opinion, it is important to remember that neither British opinion nor colonial opinion was unanimous during any point in the run up to the American Revolution. The Revolution was above all a civil war – a war fought within one country with split attitudes on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>63</sup> Civil wars are inherently fraught with shades of grey, and any effort to color the Revolution in black and white leads to "assumptions that the British were either very ignorant, or very corrupt, or very sinful, or all three, to fail to grasp the rectitude of the colonists' position" rather than

59 Lloyd, 50.

60 Derry, 60.

61 Marshall, 13.

62 Ibid., 13.

63 Colley, 137.

seeing the complexities on both sides of the story.<sup>64</sup> Another disconnect existed between what the British meant through their policies and how the colonies perceived those policies. The British were not guilty of a “premeditated conspiracy against American liberties,” but they failed to understand that the colonies would view their taxation policies and later restrictive acts on the city of Boston as tyranny and a repression of their rights.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, while Franklin bumbled his way through his stint as colonial agent and did not succeed in changing opinions on either side of the Atlantic, in such an explosive situation even the most eloquent and perceptive mediator would have most likely failed to resolve matters completely.

Franklin’s sojourn in London, particularly his second sojourn that began in 1764, failed because reconciliation between the British and the colonies failed. The Pennsylvania Assembly sent Franklin to London twice, in 1757 and 1764, without knowing that “its decision to send the creator of ‘Poor Richard’ to London would play a part in launching the American Revolution.”<sup>66</sup> Franklin’s biggest mistakes lay in poor timing. His miscalculations during the Stamp Act “very nearly ruined him politically throughout America.”<sup>67</sup> At that point, he lagged behind colonial opinion in terms of revolutionary thought. Years later, he jumped ahead of the colonists and his “concept was too farsighted for King George III and his government.”<sup>68</sup> These untimely disparities between Franklin’s advocacy and colonial opinion ultimately resulted in a failed mission of reconciling colonial-British relations.

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64 Christie, 206.

65 Derry, 62.

66 Morgan, 1.

67 *Ibid.*, 101.

68 Cook, 159.

# Deconstructing Mythic Triumph: The Battle of New Orleans

Catherine James

During the War of 1812, the Battle of New Orleans was a conclusive American victory in what was an otherwise militarily inconclusive war. In the nineteenth century, Americans celebrated January 8, 1815 as a patriotic holiday equivalent to the Fourth of July. Most American historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth century asserted that the battle was extremely important because had the British captured New Orleans, they would have probably repudiated the Treaty of Ghent and tried to hem in the United States east of the Mississippi River. These historians also focused on American military tactics, particularly the long odds that the outnumbered Americans overcame to beat the British. All American historians chronicling the Battle of New Orleans in the nineteenth and early twentieth century placed Andrew Jackson at the center of their works. They believed the battle was important because America had been humiliated by the British in the war up until that point, then Jackson took charge and annihilated the British to become the “Hero of America” and the “Symbol of the Age,” going on to capture the presidency on the basis of that popularity. With the advent of social and cultural history in the mid-twentieth century, American historians’ views of the Battle of New Orleans changed significantly, from a defining moment to a minor incident that America won due to a lack of British coordination.<sup>1</sup> The role of African-Americans, Indian tribes such as the Choctaws, Creoles, and pirates under Jean Lafitte have all been explored by historians in recent

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1 Robert V. Remini, *The Battle of New Orleans* (New York: Viking, 1999), 217-220.

years. Moreover, the heroism of Andrew Jackson in the battle has been questioned, with several historians branding him a military despot instead of national savior. Finally, the historiography of the Battle of New Orleans is even broadening to include women and music.

Within the domain of Battle of New Orleans historiography, the most basic category is that of military strategy. *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands* by Frank Owsley, Jr. ranks as the standard work on American tactics, drawing on Jackson's papers, Department of War records, and Creole Major André Latour's memoir. Owsley cites figures of 5,000 American troops versus 10,000 British soldiers and stresses Jackson's strong defensive line within a swamp and wooded area.<sup>2</sup> Yet, Owsley argues that Jackson's best tactic was his "ability to drive himself and his army through almost any kind of hardship, to maintain good discipline..., and never to lose confidence that he would win in the end."<sup>3</sup> While agreeing with Owsley's flattering assessment of Jackson's leadership, historian Charles Brooks' *The Siege of New Orleans* emphasizes the tactical value of a mud breastwork Jackson's troops and conscripted slaves constructed along his defensive line, which forced the British to attack head-on across unprotected, flat terrain and thus doomed them to suffer massive casualties against an inexperienced American army.<sup>4</sup> In 1969, Wilbur Brown offered a new view of the battle's strategy, evaluating British Admiralty Office records and concluding that the American navy under direction of Commandant Patterson played a crucial role in supporting Jackson and demoralized British troops by steady bombardment.<sup>5</sup> Finally, a provocatively revisionist thesis proposed by military

2 Frank Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans 1812-1815* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1981), 157-162.

3 *Ibid.*, 5.

4 Charles B. Brooks, *The Siege of New Orleans* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1961), 227-252.

5 Wilbur S. Brown, *The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815: A Critical Review of Strategy and Tactics at New Orleans* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,

historian John Mahon harshly criticizes Jackson for his negligence in defending his right flank, a mistake that Mahon claims could have altered the eventual outcome of the battle and, at the least, posed a serious threat.<sup>6</sup>

After works on American battle tactics and strategy, the next major category of Battle of New Orleans historiography analyzes the consequences of the American victory. The traditional reading of the battle as a defining moment, indeed as justification of American national identity, remains the view of most American historians today. For example, Donald Hickey's benchmark recent history of the War of 1812 confirms that the Battle of New Orleans "promoted national self-confidence and encouraged the heady expansionism that lay at the heart of American foreign policy for the rest of the century."<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Robert Remini's monograph *The Battle of New Orleans* describes the American victory as a pivot because in "one glorious moment the nation had demonstrated that it had the strength, will, and ability to defend its freedom and proved to the world that it was here to stay, that its sovereignty and rights were to be respected by all."<sup>8</sup> In recent decades, however, some historians have questioned the nationalistic implications of the battle. Because New Orleans was the overall war's only victory and won by a Southerner, Frank Owsley, Jr.'s *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands* argues that the battle disproportionately aided the South and led to the ascendance of that section's political power.<sup>9</sup> Daniel Walker Howe, author of the definitive history of the early American Republic, also suggests a reinterpretation of the battle's consequences. He asserts that the Battle of New Orleans definitively ended fear of foreign domination, but concurrently manifested a

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1969), 169, 175-179.

6 John K. Mahon, *The War of 1812* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1972), 368.

7 Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 3.

8 Remini, *Battle of New Orleans*, 195.

9 Owsley, Jr., 194-195.

tension within American society over national destiny – a future of urban, industrial progress, as evidenced by mass-produced artillery at the battle, or a future of westward expansion and individual frontiersmen, epitomized by Jackson.<sup>10</sup>

Any history of the Battle of New Orleans necessarily involves Andrew Jackson, who took charge and annihilated the British to become an American hero. This historiographical category is traditional, but it has many present-day adherents, who believe that the Battle of New Orleans launched Jackson's political career on the basis of his personal popularity as a victorious general and eventually secured him the presidency. John W. Ward's aptly named 1955 work, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age*, stands as the best example of the hagiography surrounding Jackson and his New Orleans victory. Ward declares that "[i]n the victory at New Orleans, Jackson was explicitly and directly connected with God."<sup>11</sup> Currently, Robert Remini, Jackson's chief modern scholarly biographer, continues the "Great Man" history of Jackson and New Orleans. Remini's monograph, *The Battle of New Orleans*, affirms that, due to "his victory at New Orleans, General Jackson became a hero such as the people of America had never enjoyed before."<sup>12</sup> He concludes that the American public elected Jackson to the presidency, despite his lack of education and few political credentials, as a reward for his fundamental role in upholding American independence at New Orleans.<sup>13</sup>

Controversy over American involvement in the Vietnam War convinced some historians to reassess the glory enveloping previous

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10 Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 17-18.

11 John W. Ward, *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), 108.

12 Remini, *Battle of New Orleans*, 197.

13 *Ibid.*, 198.



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American military engagements, including the Battle of New Orleans. From a defining moment that catapulted Andrew Jackson to the White House, the battle plunged to a minor incident that America won due to sheer luck, not superior strategy. Writing in 1969, historian Carson Ritchie was an early skeptic of the defining moment category of historiography. In fact, Ritchie acerbically describes the battle as “won and lost in a matter of minutes.”<sup>14</sup> He also contends that British military blunders, such as lack of guns and equipment as well as general panic among troops, handed victory to the Americans, thus rejecting prevailing historiographic accounts of strong American defenses.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, J. C. A. Stagg, author of *Mr. Madison’s War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830*, argues that America emerged victorious at the Battle of New Orleans because of adequacy rather than tactical supremacy.<sup>16</sup> Stagg asserts the battle was no defining moment, but an episode when “the United States had done little more than survive.”<sup>17</sup> More recently, Daniel Walker Howe has reinterpreted the American victory as unnecessary, “a particularly tragic result of the slowness of communication at the start of the nineteenth century.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, the battle was avoidable since a peace treaty between the United States and Britain had already been signed in December 1814, hence invalidating the reason for the battle in January 1815; ironically, news of the Treaty of Ghent did not arrive in the United States until February 1815, subsequent to the battle.

Historians have also reconsidered the generic white male

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14 Carson Ritchie, “The Guns of New Orleans,” *The History Teacher* 2, no. 4 (May 1969): 13.

15 *Ibid.*, 10-12.

16 J. C. A. Stagg, *Mr. Madison’s War: Politics, Diplomacy, and Warfare in the Early American Republic, 1783-1830* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 498.

17 *Ibid.*, 501.

18 Howe, 15-16.

characterization of the Battle of New Orleans, looking anew at primary sources to discover what role many diverse peoples had in the battle. Prompted by the Civil Rights Movement, African-American historian Donald E. Everett asserted in a groundbreaking 1955 journal article that a battalion composed of free black New Orleans residents played an important role in Jackson's victory. According to Everett, the free black troops provided Jackson much-needed manpower and showed more skill and courage in battle than white soldiers. Everett views the Battle of New Orleans as a very early example of racial equality because Jackson granted free black troops the same pay and provisions as white soldiers, as well as promising respect for their service within his ranks.<sup>19</sup> However, writing a few decades after Everett, historian Robert Remini called attention to another aspect of the African-American experience in his book *Andrew Jackson and The Course of American Empire*. Remini argues that free black troops played only a minor role in the Battle of New Orleans and instead states that the unpaid, forced labor of black slaves who built fortifications for Jackson decided the American victory. Indeed, Remini equates the role of slaves in the Battle of New Orleans to the South's rise on the basis of slave labor and thereby infers unwillingness among Americans to acknowledge the wrongs that coexist with past national triumphs.<sup>20</sup>

Another facet of the historiography of the Battle of New Orleans involves the question of whether the Creole population, with only two years experience of statehood, was dedicated to the American cause and, by extension, Jackson's leadership. The dominant interpretation presumes that while Creoles may not have openly engaged in treason, they did not

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19 Donald E. Everett, "Emigres and Militiamen: Free Persons of Color in New Orleans, 1803-1815," *Journal of Negro History* 38, no. 4 (October 1953): 395-398.

20 Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767-1821* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 273.

enthusiastically support Jackson's efforts to defend their city. As Charles Brooks observes in *The Siege of New Orleans*, Jackson "carried from New Orleans more than the memory of a great military victory; he carried the experience of trying to govern a strong-willed people."<sup>21</sup> Even Donald Hickey, author of the preeminent modern account of the War of 1812, concludes that Creoles "radiated disloyalty and defeatism."<sup>22</sup> In contrast, Paul Gelpi, Jr. poses a challenge to the prevailing consensus about the non-Anglo-American population's allegiance. He asserts that the Battle of New Orleans served as the climax of a "process of Americanization that Louisiana's Creole community underwent."<sup>23</sup> Examining the Battalion d'Orleans, an all-volunteer militia unit composed solely of New Orleans Creoles, Gelpi determined that, although many contemporary Americans identified Creoles as a security threat, the battalion demonstrated Creole patriotism, defending the city itself and hence enabling Jackson to concentrate on the vital periphery.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, Joseph Tregle reinterprets the question of Creole loyalty into a question of Jackson's own paranoia; in effect, Tregle argues the battle was a cross-cultural clash within American society.<sup>25</sup> He states that "New Orleans was entirely outside the general's experience...and he was convinced that from these exotic people, native and foreign alike, one could only expect difficulty and most likely treachery."<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps the most colorful category of Battle of New Orleans historiography is that of the Baratarian pirates' role in defeating the British.

21 Brooks, 270.

22 Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, 206.

23 Paul D. Gelpi, Jr., "Mr. Jefferson's Creoles: The Battalion d'Orléans and the Americanization of Creole Louisiana, 1803-1815," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 48, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 297.

24 *Ibid.*, 297-312.

25 Joseph G. Tregle, "Andrew Jackson and the Continuing Battle of New Orleans," *Journal of the Early Republic* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1981): 373-378.

26 *Ibid.*, 375.

In recent decades, the view of the majority of historians has been that Jean Laffite and his pirate crew were second only to Jackson in saving the nation from British subjugation. This interpretation was first advanced by Jane Lucas De Grummond in her 1961 monograph, *The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans*. Drawing on a journal supposedly written by Lafitte, De Grummond declared that the pirates provided vital arms, men, and information to Jackson, which afforded him a strategic edge over the British.<sup>27</sup> In assent with De Grummond, military historian Wilburt Brown confirms that “it is possible that Jackson might have defended the city successfully without the aid of the Baratarians, but it is probable that he could not have done so if Lafitte and his men had accepted British offers.”<sup>28</sup> A decidedly positive assessment of the pirates’ contribution is found in Donald Hickey’s *The War of 1812*, in which he verifies their invaluable artillery skill and familiarity with local topography and concludes that “Jean Lafitte the Baratarian leader, got along so well with Jackson that he became the general’s unofficial aide-de-camp.”<sup>29</sup> Recently, however, Robert Vogel has offered a revisionist concept of the pirates’ pivotal role. First, Vogel maintains that Jackson grudgingly accepted the pirates’ help, actually referring to them as “hellish banditti.” Upon critical review of primary documents, namely district court case files and military disbursement records, Vogel found that the Baratarians did not give large quantities of either guns or ammunition; in addition, only about fifty pirates – not hundreds as formerly alleged – fought with Jackson on January 8, 1815.<sup>30</sup> Lastly, Vogel objects to claims of the pirates’ patriotic motivation in joining Jackson. He insists that “a more rational explana-

27 Jane Lucas De Grummond, *The Baratarians and the Battle of New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), 18-21.

28 Brown, 31.

29 Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict*, 207.

30 Robert C. Vogel, “Jean Laffite, the Baratarians, and the Battle of New Orleans: A Reappraisal,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 41, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 264-271.

tion would be that the Bartarians came to the aid of Jackson because they concluded it was to their advantage to do so as underworld businessmen" who were deterred by British and Spanish naval surveillance of the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>31</sup>

Currently, the historiography of the Battle of New Orleans is experiencing a renewal of interest and challenging the status quo of military history, male history, and glorified history. In fact, one of the foremost trends in this historiography today has been to question the heroism of Andrew Jackson in the battle, with several historians branding him a military despot instead of national savior. Typical of earlier historians, Robert Remini admitted Jackson's implementation of martial law prior to the battle and his continuation of it weeks after the battle ended was not justified. Remini states that "Jackson established a police state with no other authority but his own. He clearly overreached himself."<sup>32</sup> Yet, Remini also excuses Jackson's martial law, arguing that his "total sense of duty" compelled him to continue martial law.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, Matthew Warshauer conclusively labels Jackson a military despot. He stresses that Jackson's "cancellation of the civil government touched on one of the most fundamental notions of American freedom: that the military shall remain subordinate to civil authority. Martial law in New Orleans was a classic republican battle between liberty and power."<sup>34</sup> Warshauer emphasizes the absence of a precedent in America for suspending habeas corpus and contends that Jackson's implementation of martial law in New Orleans had long-term consequences, instilling

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31 Ibid., 275.

32 Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire*, 311.

33 Ibid., 312.

34 Matthew Warshauer, "The Battle of New Orleans Reconsidered: Andrew Jackson and Martial Law," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 39, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 262.

in Jackson a “sense of unlimited authority. Indeed, such attributes were exceedingly apparent in later episodes, such as Jackson’s invasion of Florida in 1819 and his later war on the Bank of the United States.”<sup>35</sup>

Like Warshaeur, Joseph Tregle condemns Jackson’s martial law in New Orleans, but claims that the greatest impact of Jackson’s unjustified actions was seen in the presidential election of 1828. In the campaign, Tregle says, Jackson’s opponents’ most powerful weapon was the image of him as disrespectful of constitutional and legal precedents with New Orleans as proof positive.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Battle of New Orleans historiography has recently developed cultural and female perspectives, though not prolifically. For example, music historian Charles Kinzer explores the role played by free blacks who composed the First Battalion of Free Men of Color’s unit band. He finds that, during the battle itself, the band played to sustain troop morale and performed such patriotic songs as “Yankee Doodle” and, for Creole troops, “The Marseillaise.” Kinzer believes that members of the free black battalion’s band should not only be recognized as the originators of a tradition of American military music, but also as the founders of New Orleans’ own distinct musical heritage.<sup>37</sup> On the other hand, historians Catherine Allgor and Robert Remini investigate American women’s primary function in commemorating the Battle of New Orleans. Within the larger framework of evaluating women’s political roles in the newly established national capital, Allgor relates that in 1828 Louisa Catherine Adams, wife of presidential candidate John Quincy Adams, commemorated the victory of her husband’s arch-rival at New

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35 Ibid., 291.

36 Tregle, 383.

37 Charles E. Kinzer, “The Band of Music of the First Battalion of Free Men of Color and the Siege of New Orleans, 1814-1815,” *American Music* 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 348-362.

Orleans by means of a grand ball. Allgor asserts that by honoring Jackson, John Quincy Adams would “appear to rise above personal interest in celebrating a national hero.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, since it was thought unseemly to actively campaign for the presidency, Louisa Catherine Adams would actually be the center of attention, “the representative of the house, her husband, her family, and all the political freight associated with the event.”<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Robert Remini establishes the key role of New Orleans women in celebrating Jackson’s victory in the days after the battle, describing a scene of young women dressed as “Liberty” and all of the current states and territories at a thanksgiving mass.<sup>40</sup>

In summary, despite revisionist works, the significance of the Battle of New Orleans as a defining moment of national self-confidence remains as the prevailing consensus among today’s American historians. While consensus exists as to the broad meaning of the battle, much debate is focused on the future direction of history about this topic. Author of the standard work on the War of 1812, historian Donald Hickey argues that since the 1980s the Battle of New Orleans has been better served by historians, but their attention has still been disproportionately directed toward military and political history rather than the homefront, which contains greater potential for new knowledge.<sup>41</sup> Future analysis of the battle should step beyond traditional constraints and take an in-depth look at the human dimension within the topic. A thorough survey of women’s role in the war, akin to Drew Gilpin Faust’s equivalent Civil War study, is needed, especially in order to answer the question of Creole

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38 Catherine Allgor, *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 177.

39 *Ibid.*, 180.

40 Remini, *Battle of New Orleans*, 187-188.

41 Donald R. Hickey, “The War of 1812: Still A Forgotten Conflict?,” *Journal of Military History* 65, no. 3 (July 2001): 757, 765.

women's unique experience. Likewise, analysis of Native Americans' role in the battle is incomplete, failing to examine how their participation was later denied in order to disqualify their citizenship and property rights. Moreover, analogous to the marring of Jackson's legacy by his presidential policy of Indian removal, it is foreseeable that the Battle of New Orleans will assume the same myth-busting role in connection to him. Ultimately, future research should consider New Orleans itself. In January 1815, the city had a brief history as part of the United States and contained a heterogeneous ethnic citizenry – Americans, English, Spanish, French, Haitians, slaves, and free blacks. The process by which such different and often competing factions were reconciled and united, both physically in arms and psychologically in common patriotic cause, is truly what makes the Battle of New Orleans distinctive.



# Communists on the Brain: U.S. Intervention in the Dominican Republic

William Jarrod Smitherman

## I

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*With the free Republics of Latin America, I have always felt—and my country has always felt—very special ties of interest and affection... Together we share and shape the destiny of the new world.*<sup>1</sup>

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On April 24, 1965, violence erupted in the Dominican Republic. This small Caribbean nation was no stranger to violence or political upheaval. Only four years before, it had witnessed the assassination of Raphael Trujillo, leader of the oppressive regime in power since 1930. Juan Bosch, who was elected President in 1962, lasted only seven months in office before being overthrown himself. In the wake of Bosch's departure, a military triumvirate became the ruling authority in the Dominican Republic. That governing body also soon lost support, and in April 1965, various groups opposed to Donald Reid Cabral, head of the Triumvirate, staged a revolt, ostensibly to restore the deposed Juan Bosch to power.

The Dominican Republic is located approximately eight hundred miles from the coast of the United States. Partly because of this proximity, America has had a long history of intervening in Dominican affairs. However, after the adoption of the Good Neighbor Policy by the Franklin Roosevelt administration, the U.S. had avoided direct intervention in Dominican affairs. But only three days after the revolt began, President

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<sup>1</sup> Lyndon Johnson, "State of the Union Address, January 4, 1965." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*. (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1966), 3.

Lyndon Johnson ordered U.S. troops to land there. At first, the number of American soldiers was small. On April 28, 1965, there were only about 500 U.S. troops on the island under the guise of a rescue mission to evacuate American citizens, embassy officials, and other foreign nationals from what the administration called a “grave situation.”<sup>2</sup> Less than a week later, however, there were twenty-three thousand U.S. soldiers stationed there, and Johnson had decided intervention was necessary to prevent a communist takeover.

The Dominican Revolt of 1965 created a crisis of American policy by revealing the incompatibility of the Good Neighbor Policy with the Monroe Doctrine and the Containment Policy in Latin America. In practice, the U.S. had abandoned the Good Neighbor Policy, but continued to proclaim its adherence. To save face and preserve some semblance of following its own policies, the administration was forced to play a verbal shell game to justify its decisions. The situation in the Dominican Republic was not a total failure of policy as some have suggested.<sup>3</sup> Nor was it the fault of the embassy.<sup>4</sup> American policy in the Dominican Republic was at a crossroads created by the Cold War climate, not because the administration did not know what to do, but because it needed to carry out actions that could be justified by contradictory policies—America needed to intervene without being regarded as interventionists.

The Monroe Doctrine has served as a cornerstone of American foreign policy in Latin America since it was first adopted in 1823. It rejects the legitimacy of European influence in Latin American nations. As

2 Lyndon Johnson, “The President’s News Conference of April 27, 1965,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, Book I, 451.

3 Theodore Draper, *The Dominican Revolt: A Case Study in American Policy*. (New York: Commentary, 1968), 5; Piero Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis: The 1965 Constitutionalist Revolt and American Intervention*, trans. Lawrence Lipson, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 177-178.

4 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 5.

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originally constructed, the policy was meant to prevent former European colonial masters from reasserting control over Latin American countries that had gained independence and to prevent foreign nations from “gain[ing] a foothold in adjoining territories.”<sup>5</sup> Of course, the Monroe Doctrine appealed to U.S. self-interest. Ignoring the autonomy of Latin American countries, the doctrine “presumes that Latin American and Caribbean people neither have the right, nor...the critical faculties to opt rationally and intelligently for an economic or political system not molded on that of the United States.”<sup>6</sup> Rather, America has considered this side of the Atlantic to be its domain, and thus the doctrine has provided the justification for U.S. intervention in Latin America throughout history.<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy superseded this activism, and non-intervention became the preferred policy for a brief period. Post-World War II conditions, however, intensified international tensions and occasioned a new general foreign policy. Initially created to prevent the spread of communism in Europe, the policy of containment became the guiding principle of Cold War foreign policy. The Cold War policy of containing communism, however, contradicted the Good Neighbor Policy being employed in Latin America. It is through this Cold War Containment lens that the U.S. response to events in the Dominican Republic must be viewed.

The primary failure of U.S. policy was that a clear and specific policy toward the Dominican Republic and the particular conditions which existed within it was nonexistent. The U.S. lacked a policy that could rectify the incompatibility of broad U.S. policy objectives. Embassy

5 James L. Dietz, “Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Latin American Perspectives* 11, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 3.

6 Dietz, “Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean,” 5; William Kamman, “U.S.-Latin American Relations.” *OAH Magazine of History* 7, no. 2 (Fall 1992): 21.

7 Dietz, “Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean,” 4.

officials had warned of the dangers of these shortcomings well before the 1965 revolt. In 1964, the embassy warned the State Department that, "it is time we sat down to map out a program for the Dominican Republic which is geared to developments that are occurring there."<sup>8</sup> The report further stated that events in the Dominican Republic could lead to "deterioration in political and economic conditions which could lead to a Castro-type takeover." It was important that the United States "not simply react to the situation as it develops," but rather have a plan in place to prevent such an occurrence or limit its success.<sup>9</sup> The warning went unheeded, and when the situation fell apart, America's response seemed reactionary, frenzied, and inconsistent. The administration was constantly changing the direction of public discourse to keep up with changing events and justify policy decisions.

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## II

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*The American nations cannot, must not, and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere. This was the unanimous view of all the American nations when, in January 1962, they declared, and I quote: "The principles of communism are incompatible with the principles of the inter-American system." That is what our beloved President John F. Kennedy meant when, less than a week before his death, he told us: "We in this hemisphere must also use every resource at our command to prevent the establishment of another Cuba in this hemisphere."*<sup>10</sup>

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The biggest influence on America's policy toward the Dominican Republic was an event that had occurred elsewhere in the Caribbean six years earlier. America's primary focus in policy toward the Dominican

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8 "Memorandum from the Presidents Special Assistant (Dungan) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mann), February 6, 1964," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005), XXXII: 7.

9 *Ibid.*, 8.

10 Lyndon Johnson, "Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in the Dominican Republic, May 2, 1965," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*, 472.

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Republic was in the context of preventing a “second Cuba,” a fear that was somewhat exaggerated but not entirely fallacious.<sup>11</sup> Theodore Draper states that from the beginning “the U.S., on the basis of ambiguous evidence, assumed...that the revolution was communist dominated, or would certainly become so.”<sup>12</sup> Actually, U.S. assumptions about communism in the Dominican Republic were in existence long before the beginning of the revolt. Upon taking office, President Johnson proclaimed that “The communists are hard at work to dominate the less developed nations of...Latin America,” and numerous reports indicated an inclination for policy makers to be suspicious of a communist plot.<sup>13</sup>

This assumption was part of a long term Cold War mentality, and fears of communist expansion dominated foreign policy decisions. Long before the 1965 revolt, intelligence officials warned that “Castro will probably supply [subversive leftist leaders] clandestinely with small amounts of material aid, and they may attract the support of other Dominican elements, including erstwhile moderates.” While evidence at that time was deficient, the report stated that “over the longer run, the present limited threat of insurgency could increase sharply.”<sup>14</sup> Conditions in the Dominican Republic did little to alleviate these concerns. The Dominican people “are seething with unrest and frustration...The poor and unemployed ... appear to be steadily drifting leftward in their

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11 Abraham Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 26, 153; Jerome Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation: The United States and Dominican Intervention* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), x; Jonathan Hartlyn, “The Dominican Republic: The Legacy of Intermittent Engagement,” in *Exporting Democracy*, ed. Abraham Lowenthal (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 76. Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965: Background to Intervention.” *Caribbean Studies* 10, no. 2 (July 1970): 49-50.

12 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 65.

13 Lyndon Johnson, “Special Message to Congress on Foreign Aid, January 14, 1965.” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*, 44.

14 “Special National Intelligence Estimate 86.2-64, January 17, 1964,” *FRUS, 1964-1968, XXXII*: 1, 5-7.

sympathies. They are, of course, on [the] receiving end of [a] heavy stream of radio and word of mouth propaganda from [the] extreme left."<sup>15</sup> Even when not germane to the issue at hand, officials were so focused on preventing a second Cuba that they saw communism everywhere. "Point is, rumors, whether or not based on fact, have caused [a] split in armed forces unity—a very effective Communist [strategy]," stated one report on the discord in the Dominican armed forces.<sup>16</sup> When the revolt began, and it appeared that some of the opposition factions had ties to the extreme left, conditions seemed to fit into the American policy paradigm perfectly.

James Dietz states:

The post-Second World War foreign power obsession has been, of course, the need to contain the spread of communism and socialism—systems that, in this view, expand only under the direction of Moscow or Peking, or Havana...and that do so only by infiltrating other governments either through hard line agents under international party discipline, or through the more dangers avenue of fellow travelers and innocent and naive liberals [i.e. Bosch] who unwittingly serve the international communist conspiracy by favoring communist goals like agrarian reform, anti-poverty programs, rights of unions to organize, political and human rights, income redistribution, and the like.<sup>17</sup>

Since the ascension of the Triumvirate, the "basic thrust of U.S. policy toward the Dominican Republic ... remained the same: to prevent any threat to U.S. security by promoting immediate stability and guarding against 'Castro-Communist' gains."<sup>18</sup> The failure to prevent a communist takeover in Cuba was a huge black eye for America. With that defeat at the forefront of their minds, administration officials' perceptions of reality became skewed to the point of paranoia. Every situation was

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15 "Telegram from the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State, May 21, 1964," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 12-13.

16 "Telegram from the Joint Army/Navy/Air Force Attaches to the Chief of Naval Operations (McDonald), August 26, 1964," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 36.

17 Dietz, "Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean," 4-5.

18 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 30.

seen through “red” glasses, and officials read much communism into the situation. Bruises from the Cuban Revolution not only influenced America’s approach to the Dominican Republic, it also shaped how the U.S. would intervene. The failure of the Bay of Pigs incident weighed heavily on Johnson and his advisors as they considered the direct role of American forces in the Dominican Republic.<sup>19</sup> Officials were very cautious about how the military should be involved. Certainly there would need to be evidence to justify intervention, and intervention should not have appeared unilateral. Regardless, officials recognized that, whatever action was taken, “we shall be misunderstood, and we shall be attacked by those who want revolution immediately and by those who want no changes at all.”<sup>20</sup>

Critics of intervention have been outspoken in their assertion that the administration’s painting of the rebels as communistic was “one of the most cynical deceptions of our time.”<sup>21</sup> The communist threat, they argued, was invented by those seeking to retain power, as a means to enlist the United States to prop up their crumbling regime.<sup>22</sup> Theodore Draper argues that to interpret events as being orchestrated by Castro was inane. Castroites, “flushed with a lightning victory over the entire Dominican military” would not have missed the “golden opportunity to wage a holy war of ‘national liberation’ against direct U.S. military intervention.”<sup>23</sup> The assertion, however, “that the whole affair was a hoax or cover up is...incorrect.” There was sufficient evidence to warrant

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19 Ibid., 107.

20 “Telegram from the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State, May 21, 1964,” *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 18.

21 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 28. See also Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Weiner, 1998).

22 Piero Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 179.

23 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 112-113.

U.S. suspicions of communist involvement.<sup>24</sup> Although the extent of communist infiltration could not be ascertained, American officials had no doubt that “a modest number of hard-core Communist leaders in Santo Domingo [had] managed by superior training and tactics to win for themselves a position of considerable influence in the revolt.”<sup>25</sup> One month after American soldiers arrived, Johnson affirmed that “a well-trained, disciplined band of Communists was prevented from destroying the hopes of Dominican democracy.”<sup>26</sup> He conveniently ignored that the only democratically elected leader of the Dominican Republic was prevented from returning to power by the U.S. intervention.

Reports from intelligence agents, embassy officials, and other observers confirmed the presence of communist operatives. Consistent with the idea that the “high motives [of the initial revolt had] been misused by a small band of conspirators who receive their directions from abroad,” former ambassador John Bartlow Martin reported that rebels had distributed weapons to the populace, including a large number of communists.<sup>27</sup> Intelligence agents witnessed known communist operatives participating in the rebel movement.<sup>28</sup> Administration officials reported that armed bands of communists were roaming the streets at night and terrorizing citizens, even firing on the American Embassy while the Ambassador was contacting Washington via telephone from under a desk.<sup>29</sup> These statements served a number of purposes. First, they provided

24 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 35-36.

25 Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, May 7, 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 139.

26 “Commencement Address at Baylor University, May 28, 1965,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*, 594.

27 “Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965,” 472.

28 John Bartlow Martin, *Overtaken by Events: The Dominican Crisis from the Fall of Trujillo to the Civil War*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 647, 650, 673.

29 Telephone Conversation Between the Undersecretary of State of Economic Affairs (Mann) and President Johnson, April 27, 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 63; Lyndon Johnson, “The Presidents News Conference of June 1, 1965.” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*,



the necessary justification for sending troops. Second, the frightening and bloody tales helped sway American public opinion to support further U.S. actions. Finally, these stories motivated Congress to loosen its purse strings and fund these and other military operations intended to prevent the spread of communism around the world. Johnson told Congress that “each Member...who supports this request [for additional military appropriations in Vietnam and the Dominican Republic] is voting to continue our effort to try to halt Communist aggression.”<sup>30</sup>

Continued intelligence operations and observations after the initial American deployment yielded further evidence of communist involvement, and the embassy increasingly emphasized the signs of communist influence. Even writers critical of intervention admit that there was communist involvement in the revolt.<sup>31</sup> While communist operatives may have been participating, even constituting an important element in the Constitutionalist camp, there was very little evidence “linking any Communist country to the planning, organization, or direction of the movement.”<sup>32</sup> Ambassador Martin had no doubt that there was a danger of communist takeover. His reports paint a much more violent picture than reported in historical accounts of journalists. He corroborated reports that many men with known communist ties were active at rebel strong points and also reported that communist operatives knew that they would not succeed if the American military intervened and discussed withdrawing from overt participation to obscure their involvement.<sup>33</sup>

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*Book II* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1966), 617.

30 Lyndon Johnson, “Remarks to Committee Members on the Need for Additional Appropriations for Military Purposes in Viet-Nam and the Dominican Republic, May 4, 1965,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*: 485.

31 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 78, 87, 97; Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 229-230; Draper, *The Dominican Crisis*, 66-67.

32 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 38-39.

33 Martin, *Overtaken by Events*, 673-676, 686, 705; Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 129.

At the very least, what started out as a legitimate attempt to establish democracy was “superseded by...evil forces.” Johnson maintained that “Communist leaders, many of them trained in Cuba, seeing a chance to increase disorder, to gain a foothold, [had] joined the revolution.”<sup>34</sup> American intentions in the Dominican Republic were “in keeping with the principles of the inter-American system...to prevent another Communist state in this hemisphere.”<sup>35</sup> Of course, as time progressed, further evidence of communist involvement was scarce, putting Johnson on the defensive, yet again. The President was forced to back away from some of the bold pronouncements.<sup>36</sup> Responding to reporters’ inquiries, President Johnson said:

I will say that the threat was greater before 21,000 Americans arrived there. It always is. The Communists did not, in our judgment, originate this revolution, but they joined it and they participated in it. They were active in it, and in a good many places they were in charge of it...We think that following the action that this nation took—it served a very good purpose and some of the men who had originally participated in the revolution, and had to take asylum, retuned and more moderate forces took leadership—the Communist elements have not been so active, although their presence is still noted hour by hour.<sup>37</sup>

Historian Abraham Lowenthal agrees that as long as U.S. troops were present, the danger of communist takeover was dramatically reduced.<sup>38</sup>

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34 “Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965,” 471.

35 *Ibid.*, 473.

36 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 138.

37 “The President’s News Conference of June 1, 1965,” 613-614.

38 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 129.

## III

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*We are going to have to really set up that government down there, run it, and stabilize it some way or another. This Bosch is no good.*<sup>39</sup>

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To complicate matters, America was somewhat unsure about which side to support. From one perspective, the U.S. should have supported the return of the legitimately elected Juan Bosch. They chose not to do so, however. Thus America once again found itself at the crossroads of two incompatible policies—protecting and promoting democracy throughout Latin America and preventing the spread of communism there as well. Much of the U.S. response stemmed from a distrust of former President Juan Bosch.<sup>40</sup> Bosch was elected President of the Dominican Republic in 1962, but Americans interpreted his ascension as bringing “into office a Dominican regime ... eager to assert its sovereignty.”<sup>41</sup> Bosch, they felt, would be less likely to succumb to American influence. While the U.S. had supported the Bosch regime during its brief tenure, it did so cautiously, suspicious of Bosch’s ties to leftists. Before his overthrow, American officials expressed concerns about Bosch’s commitment to American principles. Ambassador Bennett stated that, “my own feeling is that Bosch is basically anti-American.”<sup>42</sup>

Despite his legitimacy, America failed to support Bosch in 1963. Instead, America allowed a regime with a much stronger anti-communist stance to seize control.<sup>43</sup> As early as January of 1964 intelligence officials pointed to Bosch’s reluctance to stand up to communist intrusions. In

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39 “Telephone Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann) and President Johnson, April 26, 1965,” *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 62.

40 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 25.

41 Abraham Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965,” 38.

42 “Letter from the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic (Bennett) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Mann), February 2, 1965,” *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 54.

43 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 8.

their view, “Bosch reacted vigorously against Communists and Castroists only when he thought they posed direct challenges to his own position.”<sup>44</sup> Abraham Lowenthal states, “Since the fundamental American objective in the Dominican Republic was never really to help Bosch or even rule his country, but rather to prevent a ‘second Cuba,’ the U.S. government’s reaction when Bosch was overthrown was not surprising.”<sup>45</sup>

The 1965 revolt began as an attempt to restore Bosch to power and was supported by a number of groups—many with communist inclinations—who banded together to oppose Reid.<sup>46</sup> Already weary of Bosch and fearful of the spread of communism in Latin America, the U.S. was reluctant to support his return to power, and some officials intentionally cast aspersions that he and the communists were indistinguishable.<sup>47</sup> Reported communist involvement in the revolt only served to increase American concern about Bosch. There was some question as to whether Bosch had “sold out to the Communists before the revolt...[or whether] the revolt was co-opted by communist agents.”<sup>48</sup> Though he was living under American protection in Puerto Rico, “America came to treat Bosch’s party as if it had a permanent burden of proof that it was not seeking or even accepting Castro-Communist support.”<sup>49</sup>

Whether Bosch was directly involved with a communist plot was undetermined, but American officials still expressed doubts about him. Even if he wasn’t privy to communist plots, American officials did not “think that [he] understands the Communist danger ... [W]e are afraid... that if he gets back in, he will have so many [communists] around him;

44 “Special National Intelligence Estimate 86.2-64, January 17, 1964,” *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXII: 2.

45 Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965,” 52.

46 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 19-20.

47 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 86-88.

48 *Ibid.*, 133.

49 Lowenthal, “The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965,” 54.

and they are so much smarter than he is, that before you know it, they'd begin to take over."<sup>50</sup> As far as America was concerned, Bosch would be used and discarded by the Communist operatives once the revolt successfully overthrew the Triumvirate.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, despite America's inclination to support Reid Cabral, it was clear that he would not come out on top of the revolt. Officially, the United States made a "strong effort to avoid tying ourselves too directly to ... any one group," all-the-while working behind the scenes to support a military junta.<sup>52</sup>

## IV

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*In those early terrible hours, we did what we had to do. Remembering Simon Bolivar's admonition that "to hesitate is destruction," as your President I did what I had to do.*<sup>53</sup>

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From the beginning, the administration had been sensitive to the principle of non-intervention. The official line of American policy had to be expressed in such a way as to simultaneously meet multiple goals without revealing their incompatibilities. Johnson needed to intervene in the Dominican Republic without having the appearance of meddling in the nation's affairs. In truth, however, the United States had abandoned the principle of non-intervention long before 1965.<sup>54</sup> America had intervened in Latin American affairs a number of times since the adoption of the Good Neighbor Policy—the policy of containment trumped non-intervention every time.<sup>55</sup> Statements made by the administration

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50 "Telephone Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann) and President Johnson, April 27, 1965," 65.

51 "Transcript of Teleconference Between the Department of State and the Embassy in the Dominican Republic, April 29, 1965," *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXII: 95.

52 "Telegram from the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State, May 21, 1964," *FRUS, 1964-1968*, XXXII: 14.

53 "Commencement Address at Baylor University, May 28, 1965," 593.

54 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 24.

55 Hartlyn, "The Dominican Republic," 69-70.

and U.S. actions elsewhere in the world gave clues as to the nature of American behavior toward the Dominican Republic had any crisis developed. President Johnson left little doubt as to American intentions four months before the revolt in his State of the Union Address: "We are prepared to live as good neighbors with all, but we cannot be indifferent to acts deigned to injure our interest, our citizens, or our establishments abroad."<sup>56</sup>

Despite claims to the contrary, behind closed doors U.S. officials made no effort to deceive themselves. They were "quite open on the phone about their right to promote military, diplomatic, and political victories... while pretending to be neutral on all of these fronts."<sup>57</sup> America had, and would continue to, exert influence over the situation. Carefully watching the situation, officials hoped that a military junta would emerge to put down any communist elements, but expressed concerns that "there are only a few Dominicans qualified to help run the government. When you are that thin it does not take much to upset everything."<sup>58</sup> Embassy officials evaluated the potential victors in the dispute, deciding which one would be in America's best interest: "If we are to influence Dominicans... and counter leftist efforts to poison the popular mind, we must lose not time."<sup>59</sup> When Under Secretary of State Mann suggested that the U.S. support Balaguer, a former cohort of Trujillo, President Johnson replied, "Well, try to do it. Try to do it some way."<sup>60</sup> Of course, this ran counter to

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56 "State of the Union Address, January 4, 1965," 1.

57 Alan McPherson, "Misled by Himself: What the Johnson Tapes Reveal About the Dominican Intervention of 1965." *Latin American Research Review* 38, no. 2, (2003), 136.

58 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 82; "Memorandum from Robert M. Sayre of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant (Dungan), October 15, 1964," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 42.

59 "Telegram from the Embassy in the Dominican Republic to the Department of State, May 21, 1964," *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 13-16.

60 Telephone Conversation Between the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs (Mann) and President Johnson, April 26, 1965, 63.

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Johnson's public pronouncement that "We support no single man or any single group of men in the Dominican Republic."<sup>61</sup>

There is evidence that the U.S. even orchestrated the Dominican request for assistance. While American officials strongly suspected communist involvement, evidence was insufficient to warrant an invasion. When Dominican Air Force Colonel Pedro Benoit emphasized the communist flavor of the revolt, perhaps playing to U.S. concerns that the Dominican Republic could become the next Cuba, he was "instructed what to say in order to get the U.S. troops that he wanted."<sup>62</sup> Instead of emphasizing communist gains, American officials requested that the colonel rephrase his request to stress that American lives were in danger. By the time the appropriately worded request made it to American officials, U.S. troops were already ashore.<sup>63</sup>

None of these facts mean that the U.S. abandoned the concept of or appearance of non-intervention. Even when planning intervention, officials were sensitive to the façade of non-intervention, and worked hard to portray the response as positively as possible. After news of the revolt, Johnson stated that, "We profoundly deplore the violence and disorder in the Dominican Republic. The situation is grave and we are following it closely. It is our hope that order can be promptly restored and that a peaceful settlement of the internal problems can be found."<sup>64</sup> Early statements such as these recognized the need not to appear meddlesome and denied aspirations to send an occupying force, but cautiously tested the waters. Once the decision had been made to intervene, official

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61 "Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965," 473.

62 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 84-85, 102; Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 120.

63 Dietz, "Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America," 6; Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 104; Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, April 28, 1965, *FRUS*, 1964-1968, XXXII: 75-76.

64 "The Presidents News Conference of April 27, 1965," 451.

statements were preemptively defensive. When addressing the American people, Johnson assured them that “even though we are deeply saddened by bloodshed and violence..., we had no desire to interfere in the affairs of a sister republic ... On Wednesday afternoon, there was no longer any choice for the man who is your President.”<sup>65</sup>

To justify intervention, Johnson needed a valid cause. At first, the U.S. simply called for a cease fire and ordered the evacuation American citizens.<sup>66</sup> The first wave of troops was necessary to protect Americans and facilitate evacuations. As proof of the necessity for U.S. troop presence, President Johnson affirmed to the American people that there was an immediate danger.<sup>67</sup> Dominican officials had informed the American Embassy that “the governmental authorities could no longer protect us...Only an immediate landing of American forces could safeguard and protect the lives of thousands of Americans and thousands of other citizens of some 30 other countries.”<sup>68</sup> If the U.S. were truly committed to non-intervention, however, the active involvement of American troops would be unnecessary following the evacuations of over 6,500 people from forty-six countries.<sup>69</sup> To justify U.S. presence, American statements took a new direction, justifying U.S. occupation on the basis of preventing the spread of Communism. However, these statements only cautiously moved away from non-interventionism: “Neither we nor any other nation in this hemisphere can or should take it upon itself to ever interfere with

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65 “Radio and Television Report to the American People on the Situation in the Dominican Republic, May 2, 1965,” 470.

66 “The President’s News Conference of April 27, 1965,” 451; Lyndon Johnson, “Statement of the President Upon Ordering Troops into the Dominican Republic, April 28, 1965,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*, 461.

67 “Statement of the President Upon Ordering Troops in the Dominican Republic, April 28, 1965,” 461.

68 “Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965,” 470.

69 “Commencement Address at Baylor University, May 28, 1965,” 593.



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the affairs of [the Dominican Republic] or any other country.”<sup>70</sup> Despite this admonition, Johnson asserted that intervention could become necessary, “only—repeat—only when the object is the establishment of a communistic dictatorship ... So ... it is our mutual responsibility to help the people of the Dominican Republic toward the day when they can freely choose the path of liberty and justice and progress.”<sup>71</sup>

Ever on the defensive, President Johnson constantly denied that American actions were imperialist or aggressive: “We are not the aggressor in the Dominican Republic. Forces came in there and overthrew that government and became aligned with evil persons who had been trained in overthrowing governments and...establishing Communist control and we have resisted that control and we have sought to protect our citizens against what would have taken place.”<sup>72</sup> Not only were American interests at stake, but so was the future of “our sister Republics...and the values of all the American Republics.”<sup>73</sup> In response to reporters’ questions during the subsequent occupation of the Dominican Republic, Johnson stated, “We didn’t start that. We didn’t intervene ... We were not the perpetrators. But ... we ...took the necessary precautions.”<sup>74</sup>

A central element in this stance was to iterate that intervention had the sanction of numerous Latin American nations. The Organization of American States (OAS) was critical in this effort: “Prior to our intervention, we consulted and discussed the gravity of the situation there with 14 Latin American nations.”<sup>75</sup> In truth, the OAS was a virtual puppet organization completely dominated by the United States, but its sanction

70 “Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965,” 472-473.

71 *Ibid.*, 473.

72 “Remarks to Committee Members on the Need for Additional Appropriations,” 491.

73 “Commencement Address at Baylor University, May 28, 1965,” 593.

74 Lyndon Johnson, “The President’s News Conference of June 17, 1965,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book II*, 678-679.

75 “The President’s News Conference of June 1, 1965,” 612.

at least gave the appearance of multilateral support.<sup>76</sup> The administration constantly drew upon language that suggested the operations had the sanction of the region at large. "For the first time in history," President Johnson told students at Baylor University, "the Organization of American States has created and sent to the soil of an American nation an international peace-keeping military force."<sup>77</sup> The purpose of this force was to fend off forces that threatened "the principles of the inter-American system."<sup>78</sup> America was not intervening in Dominican affairs so much as it was fulfilling its commitment to preserve "the right of all of the free people of this hemisphere to choose their own course without falling prey to international conspiracy from any quarter."<sup>79</sup>

The administration itself seemed unsure about why the United States was in the Dominican Republic. At times, President Johnson insisted that "99 percent of our reason for going in there was to... provide protections for these American lives"<sup>80</sup> But at the same news conference, the President also stated that "the principles of communism are incompatible with the principles of our inter-American system," suggesting that containment was the motive.<sup>81</sup> Were American troops in the Dominican Republic to prevent the spread of communism or to protect American citizens? It depends upon which policy was being called upon. Preventing the spread of communism was compatible with the Monroe Doctrine and Containment, but contrary to non-interventionism. Using American troops to protect American lives and facilitate the evacuation

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76 Dietz, "Destabilization and Intervention in Latin America and the Caribbean," 6; Lowenthal, "The United States and the Dominican Republic to 1965", 49.

77 "Commencement Address at Baylor University, May 28, 1965," 594.

78 Lyndon Johnson, "Statement by the President on the Situation in the Dominican Republic, April 20, 1965," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Book I*, 465.

79 *Ibid.*, 466.

80 "The President's News Conference of June 1, 1965," 616.

81 *Ibid.*, 615.

would be permissible under the Good Neighbor Policy, but could not explain why soldiers were there after evacuations were complete. This awkward stance created an environment where President Johnson felt it necessary to make outrageous statements and would draw criticism from contemporary observers and modern historians who believe he deliberately misled the American people. Johnson reported that a number of “prime leaders in the rebel forces were men with a long history of communistic association... [and] had been trained by Communist forces.” Additionally, the President reported that there was widespread violence in the streets and severe damage to several embassies.<sup>82</sup> Intervention was necessary “to stop the wholesale killing of hundreds and even thousands of Dominicans.”<sup>83</sup>

When Theodore Draper states that, “There is no doubt that the threat of Communism rather than danger to American lives was [Johnson’s] primary reason for recommending military intervention,” he intends the statement to be a criticism—Johnson deliberately misled the American people by exaggerating the influence of communists as an excuse to intervene.<sup>84</sup> But intervention based on the expansion of communism was justifiable in and of its own right. Draper fails to recognize that, although the administration did make exaggerated claims, there was significant, albeit circumstantial, evidence of communist involvement. America had committed many more troops in Korea and Vietnam—two nations much farther from American borders—based upon the policy of containment, and intervention was all the more necessary given the Dominican Republic’s proximity to the United States.

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82 “Remarks to Committee Members on the Need for Additional Appropriations,” 490.

83 “The President’s News Conference of June 1, 1965,” 611.

84 Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 122, 159-169.

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*In the dark mist of conflict and violence, revolution and confusion, it is not easy to find clear and unclouded truth.*<sup>85</sup>

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Historical interpretations of U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 can be grouped into two categories. The first are stalwart supporters of U.S. actions as a justified measure to contain the spread of communism. The second group can be considered outspoken critics of a neo-imperialistic attempt by the U.S. to influence a tiny nation on its periphery which it deemed incapable of self-government.<sup>86</sup> Neither of these viewpoints provides an accurate and unbiased evaluation of the events. Each side assumes a conspiratorial element, either carried out by the U.S. government or by communist operatives. Evidence of either is scant.

Ultimately, Dominican intervention was “the natural consequence of the attitudes and assumptions with which American officials generally approached the Dominican Republic.”<sup>87</sup> In the climate of the Cold War, American concerns about the spread of communism were in a heightened state. Conditions in the Dominican Republic were ripe for a communist uprising, and movements that smacked of socialism were not unknown there. When the revolt began, numerous organizations joined, many of which had expressed socialist ideas. The very leader whom the rebels wanted to reinstate had been suspected of being soft on communism. Under these circumstances, the slightest evidence of communist plot was taken as undeniable proof. This “gap between Dominican realities and American perceptions” determined the path that the U.S. would take.<sup>88</sup>

85 “Radio and Television Report to the American People...,” May 2, 1965,” 470.

86 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 191; Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 132-135.

87 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 150.

88 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 34.

American actions were coherent, logical, and consistent with the policy of containment and the Monroe Doctrine.<sup>89</sup> The U.S. could not risk delay. To quote President Johnson out of context, "In this situation delay itself would be decision—the decision to risk and lose the lives of thousands of Americans and thousands of innocent people from all lands."<sup>90</sup>

But sending troops into an independent "sister Republic" based on such flimsy evidence was unacceptable. Such behavior was discordant with the principles of the Good Neighbor Policy. To rectify this, U.S. officials orchestrated a statement to the effect that American lives were in danger from Dominican officials whose status as true representatives of the Dominican government was questionable at best. This statement provided justification for the initial deployment, putting American resources in position for further operations and buying time for the administration to jump through the verbal hurdles created by incompatible policy statements.

Intervention in 1965 should not have been surprising to anyone familiar with the long-term diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Dominican Republic.<sup>91</sup> In the long history of U.S.-Dominican relations, intervention was the rule rather than the exception. "Throughout almost two centuries of United States-Latin American relations, one must conclude that the U.S. has exercised political and economic dominance... Latin American states usually have been in a subordinate and dependent role. Cold War years have seen strong reaction to real and alleged communist penetration."<sup>92</sup> The absurd attempt to maintain the image of adherence to the Good Neighbor Policy complicated matters, and the

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89 Gleijeses, *The Dominican Revolt*, 182.

90 "Radio and Television Report to the American People..., May 2, 1965," 471.

91 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 7, 15.

92 Kamman, "U.S.-Latin American Relations," 25.

inaccuracies of President Johnson's public pronouncements have served as fodder for his critics. In the attempt to *appear* to be a Good Neighbor, the administration was forced to make bold and, at times, inaccurate statements.

Despite efforts to spin the information to fit into policy molds, the U.S. decision to intervene stemmed directly from a fear of communist takeover. Ultimately, anti-communist stability was more important than democracy or non-interventionism in the Dominican Republic.<sup>93</sup> The men responsible for the United States' response to the Dominican crisis "believed themselves [to be] engaged in an international struggle against Communism, and...had just committed themselves to an expanded war in Asia [on that basis.]"<sup>94</sup>

One rebel participant downplayed America's concern about communist elements in the Dominican revolt. American diplomats, said General Caamaño, "have Communists on the brain."<sup>95</sup> It is true that many of the reports of communist activities were exaggerated by the administration at the time, but these embellishments have had the effect of discrediting communist involvement altogether. Since it is known that the administration overstated the facts, it has been assumed that the existence of communist operatives was fabricated. This is a misinterpretation. The exaggerations were not totally fictitious. The facts were embellished because the evidence at hand was circumstantial. The CIA, in a document that is still predominantly classified, asserted that "the prospect at the time of U.S. intervention clearly was one in which a movement increasingly under the influence of Castroites and other Communists was threatening

93 Slater, *Intervention and Negotiation*, 31; Gleijeses, *The Dominican Crisis*, 284.

94 Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, 152.

95 General Francisco Caamaño, quoted in Draper, *The Dominican Revolt*, 90. Caamaño's dismissal of the idea that communists were involved in the revolt should be subject to some scrutiny, as Caamaño later fled to Cuba to lead a guerilla group.

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to gain the ascendancy in the Dominican Republic.”<sup>96</sup> Of the writers who have commentated on the matter, those who generally distrust this assertion are either journalists or rebel participants. The journalists lacked access to internal information and based much of their interpretation on interviews conducted with rebels. Rebel participants seething with discontent, whose efforts were thwarted by the U.S. intervention, have been reluctant to admit the extent of communist involvement, as that might mar the noble effort to restore a constitutional leader that they portrayed.<sup>97</sup> American officials who have written on the subject, such as Ambassador Martin, on the other hand, had access to documentary evidence that has since been declared confidential, but have much to lose by admitting any transgressions on the part of the United States. Perhaps the truth can only be ascertained when all documents have been released, but until then, historians must make do with the evidence available.

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<sup>96</sup> “Memorandum Prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, May 7, 1965,” 139.

<sup>97</sup> See Pons, *The Dominican Republic*.

## BOOK REVIEWS



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Mary Beth Norton. *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002).

*In the Devil's Snare* explores the realm of the late 17th Century in which New England was turned upside down from accusations of witchcraft, Indian wars, and strange phenomenon. Mary Beth Norton draws from primary documents to expound on typical New England society, the conflicts among the masses, the examination of accused witches, and their resolves.

Norton places importance on attitudes towards women and how Salem politics eventually led to bewitchment of women and men. What is noted is the first-reported witchcraft activity from Samuel Parris, a reverend of Salem Village, Massachusetts, whose daughters began to experience fits of unusual behavior in 1691-1692. This behavior was said to have been illustrated by Parris's slave Tituba who had recited stories of voodoo and witchcraft to the young girls. After this scores of women and girls were being accused of afflicting harm on innocent citizens and witnessing apparitions of witches (3). Word spread throughout Salem Village through friends and neighbors, as there were no newspapers in circulation at the time. To aid understanding of the trials, inference is used for thoughts or perceived actions throughout the book (6).

The females accused resided in Salem Village and Andover and ranged "in age from eleven to twenty, several of them servants" (4). They performed tasks such as cooking and doing laundry, but there was a drawback. The domestic work of 17th century women gave men an outlet for blame if something went wrong on a family's property. For instance, if livestock or children suddenly became ill, women were automatically at fault but would not be silent with their cries of innocence (6). Thus women could be "more malicious...and full of revenge," enabling them to "fit instruments of the Divell [sic]" (32). The story of Eve demonstrates why women were deemed more susceptible to Satan's constraints and forced the afflicted to torture victims by sometimes violent means. While these theologies and events took place in other parts of New England, what set Massachusetts apart is the Indian wars that took place and English responses to these conflicts that influenced the witchcraft crisis.

Norton's main theme is presented chronologically beginning with King Phillip's War (1675-1678). The struggle for land and missionizing Christians set off repercussions for Wabanaki peoples that led to bloodshed from both Native Americans and English settlers (83). The Wabanakis attacked villages in populous areas of New England, thus their actions and behavior did not go unnoticed.

The mention in confessions of accused witches of a "black man" ties witchcraft to the appearance of an Indian. "On numerous occasions seventeenth-century colonists employed the word 'black' to mean 'Indian.'" During Sarah Osborn's trial, a Massachusetts colonist, an apparition of "a thing like an indian [sic] all black" came to her (58).

Fear had risen “of the devil’s impending war against New England” (59). “The fear of Indians that pervaded the region thus included not just apprehensions of death or captivity but also of torture and dismemberment. In light of the perceived alliance between Satan and the Wabanakis, such suffused dread could easily have been vocalized in what became the commonplace description of the devil’s threats to ‘tear [the afflicted] to pieces’ if they do not comply with the demands” (136).

A second Indian war erupted in 1688, again caused by land disputes (94). What stunned New Englanders was the fall of heavily fortified Falmouth, which led residents to flee to other settlements and ultimately fight a war of attrition against the Wabanakis (110). Three years later, Wabanakis sacked York, Maine right after Parris’s daughters began having fits.

A larger portion of *In the Devil’s Snare* concentrates on the Native American influence on trials that ultimately executed 14 women and 5 men and heard 54 confessions (4). The interrogations “had a single purpose: to elicit a confession of guilt” (25). One magistrate, John Hathorne, asked the first accused witch, Sarah Good, “What evil spirit have you familiarity with?” His next question was, “Have you made no contract with the devil?” Sarah Good denied both of the questions, but confessions proved how intense and painful torture was on the victims (26). Bridget Bishop, a New England resident, was accused of witchcraft and afflicted women by striking them down and they mimicked the movements of her body which caused great pain (206).

Bishop also confessed to making victims sign their names to Satan’s book. The allusion to Satan’s book originated from Tituba’s tales and became “an object that, in many guises, was eventually to appear in numerous statements by both accusers and confessors” (52). One can assume Satan’s book symbolizes a score card Satan can use to keep track of whom to afflict and have afflicted, as well as prove the cunning power to Christians that Satan can override the graciousness of God.

Norton analyzes the role George Burroughs played in the entire affair. Burroughs was born in Virginia and settled as the minister for the church of Salem Village in 1680, making his occupation one for which people respected and followed him (123-5). He also preached in “Bla[ck] Poynt” in 1686 (129). Burroughs was “being Suspected for a confederacy with the devil in oppressing [sic] of Sundry about Salem.” Burroughs tormented a young woman named Ann Putnam Jr. and murdered his two wives along with some of his children. He appeared to Ann after he “grevously” [sic] tormented her by “futilely pressing her to write in his book” (149). This encounter parallels others’ accounts from women who Burroughs appeared to. During his trial, Abigail and Deliverance Hobbs, Sarah Churchwell, Mary Warren, and Bridget Bishop confessed to receiving threats from him and experienced physical harm (195).

Mary Warren’s testimony against Burroughs helped hammer the nail in the coffin. “After chocking her ‘almost to death,’ she revealed, Burroughs’s apparition ‘sound[ed] a Trumpett [sic] and Immediately I saw

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severall [sic] com [sic] to him.” They had “readily responded to Burroughs’s signal, making it absolutely clear that he was their leader” (245-6). In addition, Burroughs “produced nothing but ‘*Tergiversations, Contradictions, and Falshoods*’ in his attempt to defend himself” (250). The judge sentenced Burroughs to hang, and he died ironically declaring himself innocent (256).

The last woman to be accused was in 1693 when Margaret Rule “described the devil as ‘*a short and Black Man,*’” and “suffered from pinches and pinpricks that left her black and blue, and contorted her body into strange shapes.” Her pastor claimed the spirits soon left her, saying, “*Go and the Devil go with you, we can do no more.*” There were then no more afflictions in New England (293).

The purpose of this book is to give readers a history of the Salem Witchcraft Trials and the explain factors that may have influenced the afflictions and confessions. Norton achieves this objective brilliantly and legitimately through many cited examples and gives readers the opportunity to reach into the minds of the people who survived (or did not survive) the conflict. In addition, Norton explores politics, religious aspects, and social aspects of the crisis. The religious aspects are interesting because each accused witch was asked to recite the Lord’s Prayer as a standing of innocence, and if they were not able to, they were pegged as guilty and claimed they were overcome by “these wicked ones” (171).

The organization makes the book easily legible, and the subject matter allows for clarity of arguments from intelligent research. The amount of research compliments the arguments and gives a wonderful overall picture of the witchcraft crisis.

*In the Devil’s Snare* is an important contribution to the field of women’s studies as well as 17th Century New England culture for future studies. This is the most complete and thorough account of the witchcraft crisis and is a highly recommended read, though mainly for adult audiences.

Tess Evans

Norman Tyler. *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its, History, Principals, and Practice: Second Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).

Norman Tyler provides the reader with a wide range of topics related to the preservation of historic sites in *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to its, History, Principals, and Practice*. The book follows a basic pattern and can essentially be divided up by topics. The first three chapters give an introduction to the field of preservation. Chapters four through nine give a detailed account of the process of designation which includes chapters on the economics and legalities related to the field. Finally, Tyler discusses ways to work with conservationists and efforts to link preservation with tourism. The book operates as a primer on historic issues. It is an informative reference book that provides vital information for students and historic district commissioners as well as local officials and leaders. Though the scope of the book can be overwhelming to the novice, the book is also an effective textbook for introductory preservation courses.

The first section of Tyler's work covers basic preservation philosophies, a history of the movement in the United States, and a discussion on architectural styles. Tyler gives a good analogy to explain his view of what the focus of preservation should be. He argues that sites should be looked at as verbs rather than nouns. Sites cannot be viewed as static and stuck in the time that they are meant to commemorate. Instead they should tell dynamic stories by illustrating the historic context of the site. Although he becomes repetitious in his passionate argument of this point, his "nouns and verbs" analogy is easy to understand and apt.

Tyler also provides a good overview of the philosophies that govern the attitudes toward preservation in America. He discusses not only the views of Viollet-le-Duc and Ruskin but also those of other societies. While he gives an introduction to these ideas, I felt that he just stopped at the end of the chapter. I would have like to have read how these philosophies affected the preservation movement in America. He does return to these ideas later in the book but I was left wanting on this topic.

Tyler discusses the history of the preservation movement in great detail throughout chapter two. He provides a great deal of information about the institutions, legislation, and processes involved in preservation. This chapter is a great introduction to the preservation movement but becomes bogged down in detail. This topic could have filled an entire book on its own. Tyler does a good job of providing an overview and the lack of depth on the subject encourages me to learn more on my own. Perhaps in that way he was successful.

Chapter three traces the evolution of architectural styles in America. Tyler also provides a very important discussion about Contextualism. As a novice in the field of architecture, I feel that I profited from reading this catalog of architectural styles. I have found myself looking at every home and trying to figure out which styles it incorporates. Equally important is the discussion

about the importance of maintaining the context of a site. For a beginner like me, this chapter is the most informative and important one of the entire book.

The second section, which covers chapters four through nine, encompasses the bulk of this book. The reader is given a detailed glimpse of the entire preservation process. Every aspect of creating a historic district, from the history of several districts to the process of setting one up and the philosophies governing them, is meticulously discussed. I feel that this section provides the novice with a true sense of the daunting task that awaits a preservationist. Honestly, I found myself feeling overwhelmed while reading this section, particularly the chapters on the economic and legal issues.

This section moves from the theoretical to the practical seamlessly. I came away not only knowing why preservation is important, but also with an idea of how the process works. This section is a resource that can be useful throughout my career. I can envision having this book on the shelf and reaching for it over and over again. Tyler gives the novice preservationist several case studies that provide real-world examples and an honest view of the issues that we will face. It is too much information to swallow in one reading. While the detail is necessary and beneficial, I feel that it is only useful as a reference. The section requires the reader to revisit it many times to gain all of the knowledge that it contains.

Sadly, by the time that the reader makes it to chapter ten, they may feel exhausted. Again, this chapter is best suited to be reference material. It is a section that one would come back to if they were involved in something that was relatable or if they were writing a paper or proposal. Tyler rallies the reader to keep up with trends in sustainable technologies and procedures. This is an important aspect of this chapter. We as preservationists have to have an understanding of green technologies that limit wasted resources. These technologies should be incorporated into restoration efforts because they not only save the environment but also money. Tyler uses case studies that show how this partnership can be mutually beneficial to conservationists and preservationists. He gives the reader practical examples that will be beneficial throughout their careers.

Chapter eleven discusses a topic that I am growingly passionate about. Tyler describes the important link between preservation and tourism. As Tyler states, preservation efforts can be an important form of tourism that draws money and visitors to the site and community. I feel that too many sites fail to realize that in order to be sustainable they must find sources of revenue that rise above fifty cent donations and mailers to "friends of." Heritage corridors and areas can be vital tools that focus the efforts and financial power of several different historic sites and municipalities. Rather than working independently, communities in a region can work together to create these areas. These corridors and areas can provide struggling regions with an important and sustainable industry. Many historically significant areas, such as the Rust-Belt states and urban areas like Detroit would benefit immensely from growing these kinds of

attractive sites. This chapter not only raises these philosophical issues but also provides examples of where they have been put into practice. I wish that more time would have been spent on this topic, but again, Tyler raised my interest in the subject and has caused me to want to work to learn more.

*Historic Preservation* as a textbook and introduction to historic preservation is an overwhelming success. It provides the reader with everything that they need to be aware of before embarking on a career in this field. It also succeeds in the fact that it makes you want to learn more. The only issues that arise come from the scope of the book. It is a great deal of information to digest in one reading. However, when used as a reference it shines. I would have liked to have had more of a sense of Tyler's own feelings about the issues that he raised but that would have been a different book entirely. I would recommend this book to every novice preservationist and to instructors teaching an introductory course in preservation.

Wesley Garmon

Joseph Crespino. *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

In 1967, Samuel Hill published his provocative work, *Southern Churches in Crisis*, with its intriguing argument for Southern religious exceptionalism. In the book, Hill posits that the central theme of popular Southern religion was a focus on fundamentalism and revivalism while eschewing the concern over social issues that pervaded national Christian institutions. Historians have since dismantled much of Hill's argument, but the central thesis has recently seen a revival of sorts from the most unlikely of places. Joseph Crespino, along with fellow scholar Matthew Lassiter, has recently called for an end to Southern exceptionalism as an analytical framework in their work *The Myth of Southern Exceptionalism*. Overall, Crespino's *In Search of Another Country* makes an anti-exceptionalist argument, but the author's work includes elements that are surprisingly similar to Hill's decades old narrative.

Crespino challenges several notions about white reaction to the civil rights movement, as well as the creation of modern conservatism in the United States. The author argues that the Southern strategy thesis, best exemplified by Dan T. Carter's *The Politics of Rage*, oversimplifies the profound shifts taking place in the South. While white racism did play a role in the formation of the neo-conservative coalition, for Crespino, it is only part of a far more complicated story. Religious beliefs and anti-statism became entangled with racist backlash to civil rights, and

this binding together of separate conservative phenomena brought Mississippi and the rest of the South into national political prominence.

Crespino analyzes the growing national importance of Mississippi in a number of areas. First, the author is most interested in the subtle ways race affected later political developments in the South. By analyzing Mississippi's political positioning in Presidential races, Crespino demonstrates how Mississippi transformed from a state that voted overwhelmingly for one of the biggest losers in modern Presidential elections, Barry Goldwater, to a state fully in step with the conservative tide that swept Ronald Reagan into office. In Presidential politics, Mississippians tapped into a broader, nationwide conservatism by deemphasizing race and further articulating other aspects of conservative ideology, namely anti-communism and anti-statism. Crespino argues that the first sign that things were shifting significantly occurred during the Presidential election of 1964. The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) made inroads at the national Democratic convention to seat African American delegates. Many segregationist Democrats were already thinking of supporting conservative GOP candidate Barry Goldwater because he opposed the 1964 Civil Rights Act that Lyndon Johnson had signed into law. The fledgling Mississippi Republicans saw their opportunity to make huge strides in the state, and the work of the MFDP finally pushed the Democratic segregationists to the other side. In the election of 1964, with the rest of the nation voting overwhelmingly for Lyndon Johnson, Mississippi, the staunchest of Democratic states, voted for Republican Barry Goldwater because of his racial conservatism. But Mississippians and other Southerners would not remain isolated politically for long. Once ignored by Presidential candidates, Mississippians would soon find new recognition as their conservative ideals, especially limited government intervention, met a growing conservative trend across the nation. Furthermore, Crespino argues that the culmination of the South's rise to national political prominence came not as the foundation for Nixon's Southern strategy but during Reagan's Presidential campaign.

Second, Crespino reviews the importance of conservative Christianity to Mississippians and their interaction with the rest of the United States. While Christian reaction to the civil rights movement of the 1960s was mixed, one thing white Mississippi Christians began agreeing on was that liberal Christianity threatened many of their fundamentalist beliefs. Religious adherents and clerics from many different traditions descended upon Mississippi to bring about racial change, both in their churches and the state's society at large. Mississippi Christians, influenced by their fundamentalist ideology, believed that these ministers and lay people were fostering a new Christian liberalism that deemphasized one's spiritual state while refocusing on social issues. While Mississippians reacted against specific Christian organizations at times, such as the National Council of Churches, more often they responded by aiming

their ire in a different direction: education. Crespino argues that Christian Mississippians created private Christian academies, at least in part, to offset the influence of liberal Christianity on their children. Because the federal government viewed these schools, labeled “segregation academies,” as an attempt to stymie school desegregation, a battle developed between the IRS and the academies over the schools’ tax-exempt status. Through the 1970s, Mississippi schools had to prove that they did not racially discriminate in order to receive a tax exemption, which many failed to do. By the 1980s, however, Mississippians had succeeded in turning national sentiment their way by making the issue a matter of separation of church and state rather than a racial issue. Reagan returned the Christian segregation academies’ tax-exempt status by eliminating the IRS rule.

Other reviewers have compared this work to Kevin Kruse’s *White Flight*, a book that looks at the development of segregation in Atlanta’s suburbs. There are significant differences, however, between the two. Crespino presents a more even-handed view of those whites that practiced strategic accommodation. Kruse’s historical agents are ardent, even violent, segregationists who learn that putting on a submissive face could be the best tool to maintain power. Kruse is far more skeptical, believing that the rhetoric of religious freedom and anti-statism was a mere façade covering white moderates’ true goal of continued racial segregation. Crespino’s analysis is more accepting of white moderates’ own beliefs, especially religious beliefs. In Crespino’s view, some whites truly did set up Christian schools because of concerns over liberal Christianity rather than race.

While Crespino’s book is certainly an important study of more recent developments in the South, it does have some flaws. The author largely favors analysis on the national level rather than the local. Crespino never considers the development of Christian schools through the lens of boards of education or local teachers. The same is true of politics. While Mississippians are busy casting ballots for Goldwater and Reagan, one is left wondering what is the state of local politics? Is the GOP making inroads on the state or county level? But perhaps the book’s biggest flaw reveals why the author does not often peer into the complexities of local matters.

Ultimately, the author wants to place Mississippi at the center of the neo-conservatives’ rise to power in the 80s. The strategy was simple: deemphasize radical racial hatred in favor of an accommodationist, anti-statist conservatism. Southerners jettisoned explicitly racial politics for the subtle, de facto racism of general white America. In this way, Crespino’s work fits neatly into the growing body of historiography calling for the end of Southern exceptionalism. In light of this overarching attack on Southern distinctiveness, Crespino’s choice of private Christian academies as one of the battlegrounds for the meaning of American and Christian conservatism is peculiar, mainly because it reflects one of the most staunchly exceptionalist theses in American religious history: Sam Hill’s central theme of Southern religion. Crespino agrees that Mississippi’s



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private Christian schools were in some ways deserving of the label "segregation academies," but he also wants the reader to take seriously the parents' argument that their children were attending such schools in order to combat the influence of a secularizing society and liberal Christianity without reference to racial conflict. In other words, Crespino argues that one of the main ideological thrusts of the South's inclusion in the conservative coalition, a backlash against liberalism, was contingent upon the peculiar nature of Southern religious belief. Reduced to its simplest formulation, Southern exceptionalism died because of Southern religious exceptionalism. Herein lies the problem with the Crespino/Lassiter argument. It is easy to see the destruction of Southern exceptionalism on the surface of general nationwide developments, but once one delves into more specific local events, the exceptional nature of Southern society and culture reveals itself.

Though Crespino may miss the mark when it comes to explaining specific causalities by ignoring local interests, his book is still significant for shedding light on the growing national importance of the South. Mississippians did construct a strategy of strategic accommodation to recruit non-Southerners to their side as well as binding racism in subtle ways with other conservative values. Crespino tells a complicated story. One cannot simply say that Southerners found a way to circumvent the system and adhere to their racist beliefs. While this is true for some, others had religious or anti-statist ideologies that superseded issues of race. Crespino shows that the ways in which these ideas became linked have had a lasting impact on modern politics that exists to this day.

Garrett Spivey

**INSTITUTIONAL  
CONTRIBUTION**

**“This wanton laceration of an affectionate heart:”  
A Glimpse into Courtship and Courtship Advice Literature in the Early Republic**

On a spring day in June of 1795 Charles Porter Phelps traveled to church in Newburyport, Massachusetts to see the ordination of a new minister. Beside Charles in his chaise sat Jane Greenleaf. Charles and Jane joined friends and family at the church to celebrate the ordination. After the ceremony concluded Charles took Jane home instead of joining the rest of the group who departed for the residence of the High Sheriff of the County for a celebration. According to Charles’ autobiography, as soon as he left Jane at her home he experienced a rush of emotions, dejection and anguish being two of the most prominent of his feelings. Later that evening, with a heavy heart and an even heavier conscience, Charles set out for the house of another young woman. He was admitted into the home of Theophilus Parsons (the man with whom Charles had read law) by Parsons’ niece, Sarah. Sarah was Charles’ betrothed and the cousin of Jane Greenleaf. While Sarah had seen first-hand the events that had transpired earlier in the day at the ordination, which she attended with her uncle’s family, she met Charles with a placid countenance. Remembering the event many years later, Charles recorded the reception he received: “There was no crimination – not a complaint even – not an unkind or hasty word escaped from her lips – not a feature of her face betrayed the slightest tinge of angry emotion.”<sup>1</sup> However, Sarah’s calm

1 Charles Porter Phelps autobiography, *Porter Phelps Huntington Family Papers* (Box 10, Folder 21), Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library, 18.

exterior hid a deeply hurt heart. As a result of Charles' indiscretion Sarah ended the relationship. He left Newburyport the next day to return to Boston and his law practice. In his autobiography, Charles described his emotional state during this time of pain and confusion:

No pen can describe the feelings, I endured for several succeeding days, - the World was all a blank – and changing only a word in the stanza of a then favorite song, I adopted entirely its sentiment and fully recognized its force...The next day I returned to Boston, but with little relish either for love or law. What was the cause or motive for this wanton laceration of an affectionate heart, this cruel attack upon the peace and happiness of her, whom I best loved, or the gratuitous self-infliction of unmitigated evil on myself, did at the time and for more than a half a century since has surpassed all my reasoning to explain or fully even comprehend.<sup>2</sup>

He had hurt the woman whom he had courted and loved for many years without understanding his own reasons for doing so.

Charles Porter Phelps was born as Moses Porter Phelps in Hadley, Massachusetts in 1772 to Elizabeth and Charles Phelps. Raised alongside his sister Elizabeth on Forty Acres, the family farm in Hadley, Charles displayed little desire to become a farmer. Instead, from a very young age, Charles demonstrated a desire study law as his father had done. Charles Phelps Senior was a prosperous attorney and politician. As a young man, Charles received instruction from Reverend Joseph Lyman of the neighboring community of Hatfield, Massachusetts to prepare him for university. In 1787, at the age of 15, Charles moved to Cambridge to attend Harvard. Upon the completion of his degree in 1791 Charles moved to the town of Newburyport, 40 miles to the north of Boston. In Newburyport Charles studied law with Theophilus Parsons, a very well known and respected attorney who would sit as the Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court from 1806 to 1813. It was while living with the Parson

<sup>2</sup> Charles Porter Phelps autobiography, 18-19.

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family that Charles had met Sarah, Theophilus' niece, who resided with Theophilus' family. The two began courting in 1792, three years before Charles made his fatal (or so he thought) mistake.<sup>3</sup>

For many months after his last visit with Sarah Charles struggled to move on with his life in Boston. He half-heartedly practiced law, which he had belatedly discovered he rather disliked after years of training for his career. He tried to forget Sarah, but to no avail. Finally rumors began to circulate around Boston to forced him to seriously consider his future. With an ever increasingly jealous heart, Charles heard stories of Sarah and the various men who pursued her affections. These rumors finally prodded Charles into action and he decided to find an excuse to return to Newburyport to make a last ditch effort to regain the heart and affections of Sarah Parsons.

In 1796 Charles found away to return to Newburyport without raising too many questions about his motives. He traveled with his mother who wished to visit some of her friends. While there, Charles requested an "interview" with Sarah so that he could try to sway her affections back in his direction. Sarah agreed to hear Charles' petition. He returned to the house that had last been the site of his rejection and laid his heart bare to Sarah with great success:

The interview was less brief than our last one, tho it seemed to me but a fleeting moment, - yet it was long enough to restore and confirm the confidence which I had foolishly forfeited, and to obliterate many unwelcome memories of a sad and sorrowful year.<sup>4</sup>

The love Charles had for Sarah was unwavering after the regrettable incident involving Jane Greenleaf and his joy at being welcomed back into

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3 Porter Phelps Huntington Papers, 1698-1968: "Description of Collection," Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

4 Charles Porter Phelps autobiography, 22.

Sarah's heart is one of clearest emotions in his autobiography. The couple reunited, once again pledging fidelity to one another.

The saga of Sarah and Charles, as recorded in Charles' autobiography, reveals much about courtship among the emerging middle class during the period of the Early Republic.<sup>5</sup> As part of the provincial middle class of New England, Sarah and Charles both had certain standards that they were expected to adhere to, particularly when it came to their behaviors both publically and privately. In New England especially, where literacy had long been prized as a means to salvation, men and women of the emerging middle class often turned to a growing body of advice literature to help them along the road to civility.<sup>6</sup> This literature, originally imported from England, was increasingly authored by Americans in the post-Revolutionary period, covered everything from how to speak properly, to how to cut meat properly, from how to write formal letters, to how one should greet friends and acquaintances in formal settings. One of the most popular subgenres of conduct literature instructed men and women in the art of courtship. Authors of courtship advice literature dissected gaffes like those Charles committed during his and Sarah's eight-year courtship and instructed their readers in methods to remedy situations like the one Charles found himself enmeshed in during 1795 and 1796. The rise in the numbers and availability of courtship manuals coincided with a loosening of parental controls over courtship and an increase in social mobility, which to authors of advice literature could spell disaster for those unaware of the implications of these serious shifts. Advice literature in the Early Republic also reflected a slowly growing recognition of the power women could wield during

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5 Catherine E. Kelly, *In the New England Fashion*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 6.

6 Gordon Wood, *Revolutionary Characters* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 13.

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courtship. Additionally, this literature encouraged the open and honest expression of emotions on the part of male suitors, whom authors felt sometimes revealed too little about their motives during courtship.

Charles knew that when he had taken Jane Greenleaf to church he had committed “an unprovoked outrage...against the common courtesies of social life,” the lessons of which were recorded in the pages of eighteenth and nineteenth century courtship manuals.<sup>7</sup>

Sarah Davenport Parsons lived in a time when women appeared, at least on the surface, to have little control over their destinies. They rarely received an education equal to that of a man like Charles Porter Phelps and they had very few opportunities to create a life economically independent from some level of male control. Women could neither pursue men without seeming unladylike (to put it mildly), nor could they make a proposal of marriage. Advice literature and societal conventions encouraged women to hold back from expressing their true emotions during courtship in order to preserve their reputations should the courtship end without marriage. However, the case of Sarah and Charles revealed an important gap in the power structure of the late 1700s and early 1800s, one that authors of courtship advice literature more frequently drew attention to in the years following the Revolution. When Charles violated Sarah’s trust, she chose to end the relationship for almost a year. When Charles could not stand the separation any longer and approached her to plead his case one last time, it was Sarah again who made the decision about the fate of their relationship, not Charles. In a very serious way Sarah actually controlled the future of her relationship with Charles – a power that justifiably made many men nervous, especially who were used to controlling their own affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Porter Phelps autobiography, 19.

Authors of courtship advice literature understood that many middling women in the Early Republic possessed this power and they sought to illustrate the ways in which it might be appropriately used and contained. In the following set of letters from John Trumbull's 1796 manual *The Lover's Instructor*, the future of the fictional couple was threatened by a breach of proper behavior. The young woman wrote to her suitor, asking for an explanation of why he had ignored her presence at a gathering, paying attention to a Miss Peacock instead. Unlike Sarah, this fictional woman gave her suitor a chance to justify his behavior, but like Sarah, this young woman could have chosen to end the relationship based on her discovery of an infidelity, real or imagined:

Sir,

The sincerity and freedom with which I have at all times laid open my heart to you, ought to have some weight in my claim to have a return of the same confidence. But I have reason to fear that the best men do not always act as they ought: I write to you what it would be impossible to speak; but before I see you, I desire you will either explain your conduct last night or confess that you have used me not as I have deserved of you.

It is in vain to deny you took pains to recommend yourself to Miss Peacock; your earnestness of discourse also shewed me that you were no stranger. I desire to know, Sir, what sort of acquaintance you can wish to have with another person of character, who made me believe that you wish to be married to me? I write very plainly to you, because I expect a plain answer. I am not apt to be suspicious, but this was too particular; and I must be either blind or indifferent to overlook it. Sir, I am neither, tho' perhaps it would be better for me if I were one or the other.

The gentleman in question responded with the following thoughts on the event in question:

My dearest Nanny,

I CANNOT conceive what can have put it in your thoughts to be suspicious of me, while heart and soul you know are truly yours, and whose whole thoughts and wishes are but on you. Sweet quarreler, you know this: what afternoon have I spent from you? Or, who did you ever see me speak to without distaste, when it



prevents my talking with you?

You know how very often you have cautioned me not to speak to you before your uncle; and you know he was there. But you do well to abuse me for being too obedient to your commands; for I promise you, you shall never get any other cause. I thought it most prudent to be seen talking with another, when it was my business not so much as to look at you. Miss Peacock is a very old acquaintance. She knows my perfect devotion to you, and she very well knew all that civility and earnestness of discourse about nothing, was pretended. I write to you before I come, because you command me; but I will make you ask my pardon in a few minutes for robbing me but of those few which might have been spent with you, and which it has taken to write this letter...

Here the suitor argues he was not at fault in talking with Miss Peacock, claiming was only the circumstances that drove him to pay more attention to Miss Peacock than his dearest Nanny. If Nanny had not chosen to believe his story then the courtship would have ended under a cloud of suspicion, as did that of Charles and Sarah.

The main goal of authors in writing pieces like the above was to instruct women on how to defend themselves from potential ruin at the hands of a man who clearly would not make a good match for life. Authors recognized that “it is extremely difficult, to detect malevolence amidst the assiduities of courtship, and to distinguish the man under than almost inscrutable disguise the lover” and that giving women tools to protect themselves was essential.<sup>8</sup> While Charles felt that the “the most plausible – tho still perhaps not entirely satisfactory explanation of the affair may possibly been found in a somewhat peculiar trait of [his] mind and character,” stemming from “a morbid and depressing sensitiveness” that had always been a part of his psyche, as well as “a strong, tho somewhat singular, proclivity to self-depreciation, and a

<sup>8</sup> “Adventurer No. 30” in *The London Magazine and Monthly Chronologer*, (February 17, 1753), 697. The piece also appeared in *The Matrimonial Preceptor* in London in 1765 and in the 1829 American edition.

tendency, at least, to magnify, if not multiply [his] deficiencies”, other men may have had darker motives when they courted and abandoned women.<sup>9</sup> Authors of advice literature advised women to move slowly and cautiously through the ritual of courtship, not revealing too much of their innermost emotions as particular groups of men might take advantage of a woman whose emotions were so evident and easily manipulated. British and American seduction novels like *The Coquette* (1797) and *Charlotte Temple* (1791), both popular around the time Charles broke Sarah’s heart, demonstrate what could happen to women whose affections were bestowed in an open and unrestrained way on an undeserving man. At least Charles had not tried to unwontedly seduce Sarah but he had gained her affections and then broken her trust as the rakish men did in these novels. In the end Sarah does not die a fallen woman in a roadside tavern like Eliza Wharton, the main character in *The Coquette* because Charles is no Major Sanford. Nor does she die friendless, the mother of a small child, alone in a foreign country like Charlotte Temple. But like both of these women, she risked her future if she placed her trust in the hands of the wrong man. Charles’ infidelity suggested to Sarah that he was indeed the wrong man for her, and unlike the doomed heroines of the two novels, she took steps to protect herself from a potentially unhappy and uncertain future.

Authors of advice literature found many ways to encourage women to protect themselves from over-exuberant (and perhaps false) suitors. In the following conversation taken from *The Lover’s Instructor*, the man’s plea for affection calls to mind Charles’ appeal to Sarah after his disastrous error. Like Sarah, the woman in the imaginary conversation keeps a “placid countenance,” refusing to rise to the bait of the suitor’s

<sup>9</sup> Charles Porter Phelps autobiography, 19.

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seductive words:

Man:...I have long been broiling on the flames or ardent affection towards your dear self, and never had the opportunity of happiness to discover my loves before this time...it would absolutely break my heart [if she rejected him]

Maid: Men's hearts are not so soon broke.

Man: Have you never heard of any that died for love?

Maid: Some of my own sex.<sup>10</sup>

The imagined conversation continues along this same line, the man telling the woman not to doubt that he loves her deeply and truly, to which she replies cuttingly, "I cannot but doubt it" and that men always prove faithless. She holds herself distant from his flattery, compliments, and pleas to turn over her heart to his care. Like Sarah, this fictional character recognized the risks inherent in letting a man control her heart until she understood his true intentions. Once Sarah was convinced of Charles' remorse and his true devotion to her, she allowed him back into her heart and life. But until that point, she held him at a distance, protecting herself from any further heartache.

The courtship of Sarah and Charles illustrates another theme evident in courtship advice literature that helped women protect themselves and their reputations during courtship. While parental power over courtship in some American circles had been on the decline since before the American Revolution, authors of advice literature recognized that family and friends still played an enormous role in making matches. While parents were cautioned that exerting too strong of a hand during courtship could ruin their relationship with their children, few authors imagined a world where courtship occurred in a vacuum. Rational Enlightenment philosophies may have led Benjamin Franklin to argue that "no parental Authority, that is repugnant to the Dictates of Reason  
10 B. Gomez, *A New Academy of Compliments* (New York, 1799), 37. Early American imprints. 1st series; no. 48941.

and Virtue or (which is the same Thing) the moral Happiness of our Natures, is any ways binding on Children” well before the philosophers of the American Revolution associated too much parental power during courtship with the tyranny of a king over his subjects.<sup>11</sup> However, despite this growing freedom from parental control, both men and women still relied on friends and family for support and advice during the often-tumultuous period of courtship. Family and friends also had the power to influence the courtships of those close to them. Letters exchanged between Sarah and Charles’ sister Elizabeth Phelps show how friends could try to sway one another towards choosing a favored suitor. Even when Charles and Sarah reunited after their falling out, Elizabeth continued to push and prod Sarah to marry Charles. At the close of every letter she wrote to Sarah, Elizabeth said something to the effect of “My friend, I look forward to the time when I may call you by a more endearing title”.<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth also urged her brother to seal his relationships with Sarah, including comments like “I should like to know if you ever intend to get married – for I shall want to come to Boston again – in the course of a few years perhaps – and I had almost determined not to go till you had given me a home there – which I shall take advantage of” at the conclusion of her letters to him.<sup>13</sup>

The story of Charles and Sarah, with its attendant highs and lows, is just one of thousands of similar tales of love and heartbreak recorded in diaries and letters in the Early Republic. Coupled with the ever-growing

11 Benjamin Franklin, *Reflections on Courtship and Marriage in Two Letters to a Friend. Wherein a Practible Plan is laid down for Obtaining and Securing Conjugal Felicity* (Philadelphia: Printed and Sold by B. Franklin, 1746), 28. Early American imprints. First series; no. 25501.

12 Elizabeth Whiting Phelps Huntington to Sarah Parsons, October 18, 1797, *Porter Phelps Huntington Papers* (Box 12, Folder 17), Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

13 Elizabeth Whiting Phelps Huntington to Sarah Parsons, March 19, 1798, *Porter Phelps Huntington Papers* (Box 12, Folder 14), Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.

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amount of courtship advice literature, it is clear that authors tried to make readers aware of just how much was at stake during the tumultuous time of courtship. Had Charles truly thought through his actions as purveyors of advice suggested, he would have never taken Jane Greenleaf to church, he would have never broken Sarah's heart and he would not have spent a year alone and miserable in Boston. Authors of advice literature warned their readers through letter templates, imaginary conversations, essays and novels just how treacherous this time could be. A woman could find herself cast out from polite society if a suitor succeeded in corrupting her morals. A man could find himself denied access to she whom he most loved for a violation of the strict code of conduct surrounding courtship. The story of Charles and Sarah also underscores the slowly changing notions of female power in post-Revolutionary society. While women were denied equal standing as citizens, both politically and economically, they were given an increasingly large role in policing virtue and in controlling their own moral destinies, especially when it came to marriage, which created a bit of tension as men struggled to comprehend this changing power. These changes did not occur overnight, nor were all women allowed to participate in this newly defined role (especially poor women and women of color)

The story of Charles and Sarah, then, is not only a love story, but a brief snapshot of slow changes to a highly gendered world. Change did not come quickly (as change rarely does) as the popularity of pieces of advice from courtship literature well past its prime demonstrates. For example "On Choosing a Husband" was first published in London in 1766, but the editor of the American magazine *Ladies Port Folio* thought the advice remained pertinent to readers in 1820. The advice is also apropos to

our own discussion as it instructed young women to avoid the attentions of inappropriate young men:

The chief things to be regarded in the choice of a husband, are a virtuous disposition, a good understanding, an even temper, an easy fortune, and an agreeable person. Ask any lady, if she would either receive, or recommend to her friend's acquaintance, a husband without these accomplishments, and her answer will be – None but a fool, or a mad woman would; yet, how many of the fair sex throw themselves away, upon what the speculative world calls PRETTY FELLOWS, who want courage, honour, sincerity, and every amiable virtue? How many are sacrificed to the riches of an illiterate drone, or an old debauchee?<sup>14</sup>

In addition, the long-popular advice of James Fordyce, the British theologian, also demonstrates change to courtship advice, when it came, came slowly and advice remained relevant for decades. Fordyce first published his *Sermons to Young Women* in England in 1766, but American printings in 1787, 1796, 1809, and 1818, suggest the lasting power of his advice (and the reluctance to break ties with Britain in the wake of the Revolution). Like the author of "On Choosing a Husband" Fordyce's advice warned young women that seeking the true character of a suitor was the fundamental goal of courtship and that all women should be sure to avoid being trapped in a marriage to a rake:

That he who has been formerly a rake may, after all, prove a very tolerable husband, as the world goes, I have said already, that I do not dispute. But, I would ask in the next place, is this commonly to be expected? Is there no danger that such a man will be tempted by the power of long habit to return to his old ways; or that the insatiable love of variety, which he has indulged so freely, will some time or other, lead him astray, from the finest woman in the world? Will not the very idea of a restraint, which he could never brook while single, make him only the more impatient of it when married? Will he have the better opinion of his wife's virtue, that he has conversed, chiefly, with women who had none, and with men amongst whom it was a favorite system, that the sex are all alike? But it is a painful topic. Let the women who are so

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<sup>14</sup> Anonymous, "On Choosing a Husband," in *The Ladies Portfolio*, Vol. 1, Issue 7 (February 12, 1820), 50.

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connected make the best of their condition...<sup>15</sup>

Many publishers felt that the advice Fordyce shared with young women about the dangers of marrying a rake was just as relevant in 1818 as it was in 1766. Countless other examples of advice literature, including *Reflections on Courtship and Marriage*, by Benjamin Franklin, were published over and over again, clearly demonstrating that when change to courtship and advice literature came, it did not come quickly, nor did it come without attendant anxiety about women's growing power.

In the end, Charles and Sarah made it through the tumultuous time of their courtship. In 1799, on the eve of his marriage to Sarah, Charles left Boston and the practice of law because he could not generate enough profits to cover his expenses and that of his soon-to-be wife. He returned to the family farm in Hadley and worked on alterations to the farmhouse to make it large enough for two families, as he planned to bring Sarah to Hadley after they were married. This was not to be; Charles and Sarah moved to Boston some months after their marriage where Charles formed a business partnership with Edward Rand. The mercantile business partnership was cut short, however, when Rand was killed in a duel. Charles continued to run the business until 1816. During this time he also began his political career as a member of the State Legislature. In 1815 Charles decided he would build a house on his tract of land on the family farm in Hadley. Unfortunately, Sarah never saw the house, as she fell ill with typhus during the families move to Hadley, and died. Charles married her cousin Charlotte who had assisted with the five Phelps children after Sarah's death in 1820. Many of the Phelps children died young, only two living to adulthood out of nine from his first two

<sup>15</sup> James Fordyce, D.D., *Sermons to Young Women*, First Boston Edition (Boston, printed by Thomas Hall for S. Hall, Thomas and Andrews, J. White, D. West, E. Larkin, W.P. Blake, J. West, and J. Nancrede, 1796), 67. Early American imprints. 1st series; no. 30435.

marriages. During this period, Charles continued to be elected to the State Legislature, and he returned to the practice of law. Charlotte died in 1830, and Charles married for the third and final time in 1833, to Elizabeth Judkins.<sup>16</sup> His second and third marriages do not figure largely into the story Charles told in his autobiography – Sarah clearly remained his one true love well after her death.

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16 Porter Phelps Huntington Papers, 1698-1968: "Description of Collection," Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College Library.