THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE OF AMERICAN HISTORY

AP US History Reader

An Introduction

FROM THE EDITOR, CAROL BERKIN

The Gilder Lehrman Institute announces the launch of "History by Era," an innovative and exciting new approach to our national history and one of the richest resources for the study and the teaching of American history we believe you will ever encounter. It has been designed for teachers who want to create their own effective and stimulating history curricula; for students who want to do independent research on a topic; and for lovers of history everywhere who believe that understanding our national past is the obligation and right of all citizens.

We believe that "History by Era" is a unique web resource. The web is filled with useful material for the historian and the history lover, but the sites that offer this material often present it randomly, without a coherent narrative or an interpretive overview. "History by Era," however, has been carefully designed to provide the reader with a framework that organizes the rich resources it offers. It does this by providing coherent coverage of the full sweep of American history, bibliographies, a wealth of primary sources, and, most importantly, highly readable interpretive essays by the most renowned scholars in the country.

"History by Era" is *not* an online textbook. From the beginning, we set ourselves the task of providing the reader with a far richer texture than a textbook can offer. At its core, "History by Era" is a collection of fifty individual essays written by some of the most distinguished scholars of our day. It thus speaks to the reader not in one voice, but in fifty different, unique voices as each of these renowned scholars interprets the important developments, people, events, and ideas of a particular era.

"History by Era" takes its structure from the most basic building blocks of American history: chronology and periodization. We have chosen ten chronological eras: The Americas to 1620; Colonization and Settlement, 1585–1763; American Revolution, 1763–1783; The New Nation, 1783–1815; National Expansion and Reform, 1815–1860; Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–1877; Rise of Industrial America, 1877–1900; Progressive Era to New Era, 1900–1929; Great Depression and World War II, 1929–1945; and 1945 to the Present. We recognize that these ten divisions of our national history, like all historical divisions, are convenient constructs rather than rigid historical realities. They were selected because they are familiar signposts for most school history courses. We hope that you will see these eras as large containers, spacious enough to hold topics in political, social, economic, technological, diplomatic, and cultural history, yet compact enough to allow you to explore subjects in depth. Realizing

that many key developments in our national history span several eras, we have added a final or eleventh "era" which we have called "Themes." "Themes" allows the reader to follow a subject such as African American History, Women's History, or Immigration and Migration across the decades or centuries.

Each era follows the same pattern or template so that a reader can move easily from one era to another. An era begins with an overview essay by a distinguished historian. Next, there are sub-era essays that elaborate specific topics. For example, in Era I, The Americas to 1620, you will find an overview essay, followed by three sub-eras: American Indians, Imperial Rivalries, and Exploration. Under each of the sub-eras, you will find a historian's introduction to that topic followed by a set of featured documents, or primary sources, including letters, government or legal documents, paintings, photographs, and songs, drawn from the extensive holdings of the Gilder Lehrman Collection. The historical essays set the context for understanding and interpreting these primary sources and together, essays and primary sources demonstrate how scholars, teachers, and students can use the raw materials of history to reconstruct the past. Each sub-era also has a timeline and key terms with basic, essential information; additional essays covering other aspects of the topic; podcasts of historians discussing this topic; teaching resources; interactive pieces; and a bibliography of recommended sources for further reading or viewing.

We hope you will find this treasure trove of history and interpretation as exciting as those of us who have worked on creating it do.

Carol Berkin

The Columbian Exchange

by Alfred Crosby

Millions of years ago, continental drift carried the Old World and New Worlds apart, splitting North and South America from Eurasia and Africa. That separation lasted so long that it fostered divergent evolution; for instance, the development of rattlesnakes on one side of the Atlantic and vipers on the other. After 1492, human voyagers in part reversed this tendency. Their artificial re-establishment of connections through the commingling of Old and New World plants, animals, and bacteria, commonly known as the Columbian Exchange, is one of the more spectacular and significant ecological events of the past millennium.

Detail from a 1682 map of North America, Novi Belgi Novaeque Angliae, by Nicholas Visscher. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

When Europeans first touched the shores of the Americas, Old World crops such as wheat, barley, rice, and turnips had not traveled west across the Atlantic, and New World crops such as maize, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, and manioc had not traveled east to Europe. In the Americas, there were no horses, cattle, sheep, or goats, all animals of Old World origin. Except for the llama, alpaca, dog, a few fowl, and guinea pig, the New World had no equivalents to the domesticated animals associated with the Old World, nor did it have the pathogens associated with the Old World's dense populations of humans and such associated creatures as chickens, cattle, black rats, and *Aedes egypti* mosquitoes. Among these germs were those that carried smallpox, measles, chickenpox, influenza, malaria, and yellow fever.

The Columbian exchange of crops affected both the Old World and the New. Amerindian crops that have crossed oceans—for example, maize to China and the white potato to Ireland—have been stimulants to population growth in the Old World. The latter's crops and livestock have had much the same effect in the Americas—for example, wheat in Kansas and the Pampa, and beef cattle in Texas and Brazil. The full story of the exchange is many volumes long, so for the sake of brevity and clarity let us focus on a specific region, the eastern third of the United States of America.

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As might be expected, the Europeans who settled on the east coast of the United States cultivated crops like wheat and apples, which they had brought with them. European weeds, which the colonists did not cultivate and, in fact, preferred to uproot, also fared well in the New World. John Josselyn, an Englishman and amateur naturalist who visited New England twice in the seventeenth century, left us a list, "Of Such Plants as Have Sprung Up since the English Planted and Kept Cattle in New England," which included couch grass, dandelion, shepherd's purse, groundsel, sow thistle, and chickweeds. One of these, a plantain (Plantago major), was named "Englishman's Foot" by the Amerindians of New England and Virginia who believed that it would grow only where the English "have trodden, and was never known before the English came into this country." Thus, as they intentionally sowed Old World crop seeds, the European settlers were unintentionally contaminating American fields with weed seed. More importantly, they were stripping and burning forests, exposing the native minor flora to direct sunlight and to the hooves and teeth of Old World livestock. The native flora could not tolerate the stress. The imported weeds could, because they had lived with large numbers of grazing animals for thousands of

years.

Cattle and horses were brought ashore in the early 1600s and found hospitable climate and terrain in North America. Horses arrived in Virginia as early as 1620 and in Massachusetts in 1629. Many wandered free with little more evidence of their connection to humanity than collars with a hook at the bottom to catch on fences as they tried to leap over them to get at crops. Fences were not for keeping livestock in, but for keeping livestock out.

Native American resistance to the Europeans was ineffective. Indigenous peoples suffered from white brutality, alcoholism, the killing and driving off of game, and the expropriation of farmland, but all these together are insufficient to explain the degree of their defeat. The crucial factor was not people, plants, or animals, but germs. The history of the United States begins with Virginia and Massachusetts, and their histories begin with epidemics of unidentified diseases. At the time of the abortive Virginia colony at Roanoke in the 1580s the nearby Amerindians "began to die quickly. The disease was so strange that they neither knew what it was, nor how to cure it."[1] When the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, they did so in a village and on a coast nearly cleared of Amerindians by a recent epidemic. Thousands had "died in a great plague not long since; and pity it was and is to see so many goodly fields, and so well seated, without man to dress and manure the same."[2]

Smallpox was the worst and the most spectacular of the infectious diseases mowing down the Native Americans. The first recorded pandemic of that disease in British North America detonated among the Algonquin of Massachusetts in the early 1630s: William Bradford of Plymouth Plantation wrote that the victims "fell down so generally of this disease as they were in the end not able to help one another, no not to make a fire nor fetch a little water to drink, nor any to bury the dead."[3]

The missionaries and the traders who ventured into the American interior told the same appalling story about smallpox and the indigenes. In 1738 alone the epidemic destroyed half the Cherokee; in 1759 nearly half the Catawbas; in the first years of the next century two-thirds of the Omahas and perhaps half the entire population between the Missouri River and New Mexico; in 1837–1838 nearly every last one of the Mandans and perhaps half the people of the high plains.

European explorers encountered distinctively American illnesses such as Chagas Disease, but these did not have much effect on Old World populations. Venereal syphilis has also been called American, but that accusation is far from proven. Even if we add all the Old World deaths blamed on American diseases together, including those ascribed to syphilis, the total is insignificant compared to Native American losses to smallpox alone.

The export of America's native animals has not revolutionized Old World agriculture or ecosystems as the introduction of European animals to the New World did. America's grey squirrels and muskrats and a few others have established themselves east of the Atlantic and west of the Pacific, but that has not made much of a difference. Some of America's domesticated animals are raised in the Old World, but turkeys have not displaced chickens and geese, and guinea pigs have proved useful in laboratories, but have not usurped rabbits in the butcher shops.

The New World's great contribution to the Old is in crop plants. Maize, white potatoes, sweet potatoes, various squashes, chiles, and manioc have become essentials in the diets of hundreds of millions of Europeans, Africans, and Asians. Their influence on Old World peoples, like that of wheat and rice on New World peoples, goes far to explain the global population explosion of the past three centuries. The Columbian Exchange has been an indispensable factor in that demographic explosion.

All this had nothing to do with superiority or inferiority of biosystems in any absolute sense. It has to do with environmental contrasts. Amerindians were accustomed to living in one particular kind of environment, Europeans and Africans in another. When the Old World peoples came to America, they brought with them all their plants, animals, and germs, creating a kind of environment to which they were already adapted, and so they increased in number. Amerindians had not adapted to European germs, and so initially their numbers plunged. That decline has reversed in our time as Amerindian populations have adapted to the Old World's environmental influence, but the demographic triumph of the invaders, which was the most spectacular feature of the Old World's invasion of the New, still stands.

[1] David B. Quinn, ed. *The Roanoke Voyages, 1584–1590: Documents to Illustrate the English Voyages to North America* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1955), 378.

[2] Edward Winslow, Nathaniel Morton, William Bradford, and Thomas Prince, *New England's Memorial* (Cambridge: Allan and Farnham, 1855), 362.

[3] William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647*, ed. Samuel E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 271.

Alfred W. Crosby is professor emeritus of history, geography, and American studies at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition to his seminal work on this topic, The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492 *(1972), he has also written* America's Forgotten Pandemic: The Influenza of 1918 *(1989) and* Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900 *(1986).*

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Change and Crisis: North America on the Eve of the European Invasion

by Christopher L. Miller

It was around the year 1450. A young man was living alone in the dense forest somewhere southeast of Lake Ontario because there was not enough food in his home village. Many like him were doing the same and some, perhaps even this young man, were not above killing other men for food. As the story goes, he was butchering a fresh kill—whether man or beast is not immediately relevant—when he was confronted by a stranger. The stranger shamed him for his sad and dishonorable condition and suggested that they engage in trying to correct the problem that had created it. The young man's name was Hienwatha—sometimes spelled Ayenwatha or Hiawatha—and the stranger was called Dekanahwideh.

Detail of the Great Lakes region in 1718, from Carte de la Louisiane et du cours du Mississippi, by Guillaume de l'Isle. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Before striking out on his own, Hienwatha lived among the Mohawk Nation of Iroquois Indians. Dekanahwideh was from the Wendat (sometimes called the Huron) Nation, also Iroquois but fierce rivals of the Mohawks. Dekanahwideh claimed that he did not speak for the Wendats, but was on a mission given to him by a spirit being called "Peacemaker." Peacemaker had charged Dekanhwideh with unifying all Iroquois into a great and peaceful nation.

The occasion of this meeting and the conditions that led to it were part of a far-reaching change that was taking place throughout North America. Like most of the Indians living between the Rocky Mountains and the Atlantic, the Iroquois had for generations been living peacefully in their largely self-sufficient villages on the corn that women grew and the game that men hunted. Warfare was infrequent, and famine all but unknown. But in the years just prior to Hienwatha's birth, all that had begun to unravel as a long-lasting change in the weather made corn production less dependable. To survive, the people were forced to hunt and gather more wild foods to supplement their diets. As hunters roamed more deeply into the forests looking for food, they encountered others who, like themselves, were desperate to harvest the diminishing resources. Conflicts became common. "Everywhere there was peril and everywhere mourning," says one version of the story. "Feuds with outer nations and feuds with brother nations, feuds of sister towns and feuds of families and clans made every warrior a stealthy man who liked to kill."

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Following Dekanahwideh's advice, Hienwatha moved back among the Mohawks, married, and began telling the people about Peacemaker's message. Although many found his words inspiring, some, including the Onondaga leader Tadadaho, opposed him. Tadadaho and his supporters finally attacked Hienwatha, killing his family and forcing him to flee once again into the woods.

Undaunted, Hienwatha tried to think of some way to convince his enemies to accept the idea of cooperation. His solution was to weave a belt of wampum-shell strings that showed a great chain connecting the five northern Iroquois nations—Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca.

Carrying his belt, Hienwatha traveled among the five nations, telling them that they could survive only if they ceased fighting among themselves. It is said that he finally won over Tadadaho with a simple demonstration: he asked the Onondaga chief to break an arrow, which he did easily; then Hienwatha tied a bundle of five arrows together which Tadadaho could not break. Thereafter, Hienwatha, Dekanahwideh, Tadadaho, and the other leaders of the Five Nations created a confederation government that Europeans later would call the League of the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee).

Hienwatha's remarkable story is still celebrated by the Haudenosaunee. Yet it is far from unique. For example, Dekanahwideh's Wendat people did not join the Haudenosaunee, but formed a similar alliance to contend with the unified Haudenosaunee and the neighboring Attiwandaronk, or Neutral Confederacy. Nor were the unsettling effects brought about by climate change and other natural forces limited to the northeastern woodlands. Archaeological evidence demonstrates that widespread reorganization among all populations was going on throughout North America at this time.

In the central Mississippi Valley, for example, large, thriving urban centers had arisen since 900. The jewel in this crown was Cahokia. Situated near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers across from what is now St. Louis, Cahokia at its height had an estimated residential population of 40,000 and controlled territory housing many, many more. At around the same time that the Haudenosaunee began to reorganize, Cahokia experienced a long string of natural and human-caused disasters. First, at the beginning of the thirteenth century the city was struck by a ferocious earthquake that did terrific damage. Then the weather change combined with the Indians' intensive farming and logging led to massive flooding, mudslides, and crop destruction. After 1400, the people in the region began to scatter, creating a "vacant quarter" stretching from the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Cahokia then southward almost to the Arkansas and upstream for a considerable distance along the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.

A similar fate befell the urban agricultural Anasazi and their neighbors the Mogollon in the desert Southwest; they too began to decline after 1300 and by 1425, archaeologist Bruce D. Smith concludes, "the cultural map of the Southwest resembled what was observed by the first European visitors"—a largely unoccupied desert of ruins. North and east of these monumental civilizations, climate change was affecting people of the Great Plains by reducing crop yields. But there was one positive outcome of the colder weather: bison, the last survivor of the great Ice Age megabeasts, began to expand their numbers and their range. As farming declined, hunting improved, and Algonquian- and Siouan-speakers began pushing out from the ever-colder subarctic and Great Lakes region. Here, as with Hienwatha's people, competitors began to meet, confederations grew, and fighting became a way of life.

Similar conditions affected village folk living along the coast of what would become Virginia. Here, too, the climate began to change, putting pressure on food supplies. Probably because they were farther south than the Haudenosaunee, the situation for these people does not seem to have become critical quite so quickly. Yet by 1550, six village-based Algonkian groups formed an alliance and placed a hereditary chieftain (weroance) in charge of coordinating their mutual affairs, signifying a change in conditions. At about the same time a child was born in one of the villages, a latter-day Hienwatha. We do not know what his childhood name was, but as an adult he was called "Wahunsunacock" or sometimes "The Powhatan."

Throughout Wahunsunacock's life, conditions grew continuously worse. In addition to the bad weather, neighboring groups had begun to consolidate into local confederacies and brushfire conflicts were common. More troubling was the increasingly frequent appearance of odd-looking strangers who arrived in ever greater numbers along their shores. Most times these strangers seemed just to be looking

around, exploring the coastline and various river inlets. Other times they seemed interested in trading often wonderful things for items that the Indians traditionally traded among themselves. Sometimes they came wrapped in metal and carrying loud, deadly sticks that could kill a man at a long distance; frequently they took away women and children never to be seen again. And what was worse, shortly after the appearances of these strangers, people in the villages became sick and a great many died.

When Wahunsunacock reached adulthood, he became the weroance of the six-village confederacy into which he had been born. He decided that, in light of worsening conditions, his political state must either expand or die. Calling upon the five to six hundred fighting men who lived in the six villages, Wahunsunacock used a combination of diplomacy, intermarriage, and brute force to pull other confederacies and isolated villages into a larger confederation. By 1607, when the mysterious strangers actually began to settle permanently in the region, the little six-village alliance had grown to nearly thirty villages and occupied some 8,000 square miles. They could field between 1,500 and 2,000 armed soldiers. As the strange newcomers quickly learned, this was a violent world in which warriors largely ruled.

The observations recorded by these newcomers have led to a long-standing impression of what traditional Indian life was like. As noted twentieth-century anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber wrote in 1934, "traditional Indian life" consisted of "warfare that was insane, unending, continuously attritional." But what these European settlers saw was far from "traditional"; it was the product of a particular moment in time, a particular history. It was, as journalist Charles C. Mann put it, like coming upon "refugees from a Nazi concentration camp, and conclud[ing] that they belonged to a culture that had always been barefoot and starving." The period of time for Native Americans was one of adjustment and adaptation to new conditions, not unlike what was going on simultaneously in Europe and for similar reasons. However, Europe would not experience the land-hungry mob bearing novel technologies, animals, and diseases to the native populations, turning crisis into disaster and making Kroeber's conclusion seem reasonable even as it was totally wrong.

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Jamestown and the Founding of English America

by James Horn

Shortly before Christmas 1606, three small ships left London's Blackwall docks to establish a settlement on Chesapeake Bay, in North America. The largest of the ships, the heavily armed, 120-ton merchantman *Susan Constant*, carried seventy-one passengers and crew, including the experienced commander of the fleet, Captain Christopher Newport; a highly successful privateer during the sea war with Spain, he had made many voyages to the Caribbean in the 1590s and early years of the seventeenth century and knew as much about American waters as any Englishman alive. The *Godspeed* followed with fifty-two men on board, while bringing up the rear was the tiny pinnace *Discovery*, which carried twenty-one men crammed together wherever they could find space in between provisions and equipment. Altogether, thirty-nine mariners and 105 adventurers set out to found what would be England's first permanent colony in America.

Detail of Jamestown from 1624 map of Virginia engraved by William Hole. (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division)

The Jamestown expedition was not the first attempt to establish a colony on the mid-Atlantic coast. In 1585, Sir Walter Ralegh sponsored a colony on Roanoke Island, off the mainland of North Carolina, which ended the following year with the abandonment of the settlement. Another attempt made in 1587 under the leadership of John White also ended in failure and the disappearance of 117 men, women, and children (known since as the Lost Colony of Roanoke). On the eve of Jamestown's founding, the English still had not succeeded in establishing a single colony in America.

In some respects, Jamestown was a belated continuation of Ralegh's Roanoke ventures. In the winter of 1586, a small exploratory party had been dispatched from Roanoke Island to survey the Chesapeake Bay. The men had returned with highly favorable reports of the land and deep-water rivers that would make superb harbors for ocean-going ships and privateers, which could then plunder Spanish treasure fleets on their way across the Atlantic.

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By the time planning began to establish a colony on the Chesapeake Bay, James I of England had already concluded a peace treaty with the Spanish and would not tolerate piracy, but he was prepared to allow the planting of English settlements in North America as long as they were located in lands uninhabited by other Europeans. On April 10, 1606, the king granted a charter to the Virginia Company to create two colonies, one to the south between latitudes 34° and 41° North (from modern-day North Carolina to New York), and the other between 38° and 45° (from the Chesapeake to northern Maine). The Virginia Company of London was responsible for promoting and governing the southern colony. Owing to the practical difficulty of overseeing day-to-day affairs in Virginia, the Company created a local council to rule the colony headed by an annually elected president.

The aims of the Jamestown expedition were to establish England's claim to North America, search for

gold or silver mines, find a passage to the Pacific Ocean (the "Other Sea"), harvest the natural resources of the land, and trade with Indian peoples. The settlers arrived off the Virginia capes on April 26 and the ruling council chose Edward Maria Wingfield, one of the prime movers of the expedition and a veteran of wars in the Netherlands and Ireland, as the colony's first president. After reconnoitering lands along the James River for a couple of weeks, the council selected a site on a peninsula about fifty miles from the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, where they landed on May 14. They named the settlement Jamestown in honor of their king.

The English had settled in a region ruled by a powerful chief named Powhatan. Powhatan's domains (called by the Indians Tsenacommacah) stretched from south of the James River to the Potomac River, and included more than thirty tribes numbering approximately 14,000 people. The colonists had been instructed by the Company to be cautious in their dealings with the Indians but to try to keep on good terms so as to encourage trade. Initial contacts indicated that some peoples were friendly but an attack on the English settlement by several hundred warriors at the end of May persuaded the colony's leaders to construct a sturdy fortification. Work began on a triangular fort facing the James River, and was completed within three weeks.

Early explorations confirmed the area's natural abundance, and information passed on by Indians hinted at great wealth to be found in the piedmont and mountains to the west. Secure within the palisades of their newly constructed fort, the settlers' prospects appeared rosy, but after Newport returned to London in June 1607, the colony suffered a number of setbacks. During the summer and fall a combination of disease, sporadic Indian attacks, polluted drinking water, and poor diet led to the deaths of about two-thirds of the men. By December, only thirty-eight of the original 104 colonists who arrived at Jamestown survived. The colony was on the brink of collapse.

Reinforced by more colonists and fresh supplies early in 1608, the English continued to search for precious minerals and a river passage through the mountains that would lead them to the Pacific. Captain John Smith carried out two explorations of the Chesapeake Bay and its major rivers, revealing the extensiveness of the region, but found no evidence of mineral deposits or a passage. When he took over leadership of the colony in September 1608, he urged the colonists to give up the search for gold and silver and concentrate instead on producing goods and manufactures to return to England.

Meanwhile, the London Company, now led by the powerful merchant and financier Sir Thomas Smythe, had decided to thoroughly reform the colony to attract new investors and make the venture profitable. Emphasis was given to strengthening the colony's leadership, producing manufactured goods and commodities, continuing the effort to find precious minerals, and bringing about the conversion of the Powhatans to Christianity.

The arrival of several hundred colonists during 1608 and 1609 led to a steady deterioration in relations with the Powhatans. Full-scale hostilities broke out in the fall of 1609 and in the winter the Powhatans sealed off Jamestown Island in an effort to starve the colony into submission. During the siege, later called by colonists "the starving time," the colony's numbers dropped from about 280 to ninety. Only the arrival of Sir Thomas Gates followed by Lord Delaware, along with hundreds of new settlers, in the spring of 1610 saved the settlement from abandonment.

Gates, Delaware, and another influential leader of this period, Sir Thomas Dale, all men with extensive military experience, introduced a severe code of martial law to maintain order among the colonists and prosecute the war. The "Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall," as they were later known, set out the duties and obligations of settlers as well as penalties for transgressions. Officers were required to ensure all those under their command attended divine service twice daily and to punish anyone who blasphemed

"Gods holy name" or challenged the authority of any preacher or minister. Serious crimes such as murder, treasonous acts and speeches, theft, trading with the Indians without permission, and embezzlement of Company goods were all punishable by death, while lesser offences such as slandering the Virginia Company or the colony's leaders carried the penalty of whippings and galley service (serving at the oars of longboats).

War dragged on for four years before ending inconclusively in 1614. The marriage of Pocahontas, one of Powhatan's favorite daughters, to John Rolfe, a prominent gentleman, was interpreted by the English as a diplomatic alliance and heralded an uneasy truce between the two peoples. Rolfe had been experimenting with the cultivation of tobacco for a couple of years and introduced a new type of leaf from the West Indies that was sweeter than the native Virginia plant and more palatable to English tastes. Settlers enjoyed a rapidly expanding market for tobacco in England leading to the rapid expansion of English settlement along the James River Valley. The Company proceeded with the establishment of a range of industries including glass blowing, iron smelting, and manufacture of potash, soap ashes, pitch, and tar. Settlers also produced a variety of timber goods, as well as attempting unsuccessfully to cultivate grapes for wine-making and mulberry trees for silk production.

In 1618, the Company introduced sweeping reforms designed to replace martial law with laws more like those of England. Land reforms permitted the acquisition of private property (previously all land and profits belonged to the Company). The following year the first representative legislative assembly in America, convened in Jamestown's church at the end of July 1619, underlined that colonists would have some say in running their own affairs.

Just a few weeks later, in August of 1619, *The White Lion*, a privateer carrying about two dozen Africans, sailed up the James River. The Africans had been captured by Portuguese colonists in Angola and put on board a slave ship, the *St. John the Baptist*, bound for Vera Cruz in Spanish America. *The White Lion* had attacked the ship in the Gulf of Mexico and plundered her cargo. In Jamestown, the Africans were exchanged for provisions. Their status as slaves or indentured servants is uncertain but their arrival was an early forerunner of the tens of thousands of enslaved Africans who would follow over the next century and a half, and who would be the main source of labor in Virginia's tobacco fields.

By the early 1620s the colony was booming. The white population, which had never been more than a few hundred in the early years, had risen to well over a thousand. As tobacco exports increased, profits multiplied and planters sought more laborers. The first mass migration to English America occurred between 1618 and early 1622 when at least 3,000 settlers arrived. Yet the spread of English settlement and taking of Indians' lands brought misery and bitterness to local peoples. Led by Opechancanough (who had succeeded his elder brother, Powhatan, as de facto paramount chief on the latter's death in 1618), Indian warriors attacked settlements all along the James River on March 22, 1622, killing about 350 settlers—one-quarter of the colony's white population. The uprising and further losses of life and property over the next year were devastating blows to the Company, which, after a government investigation, collapsed in 1624.

Following the demise of the Company, the crown took control of Virginia, which became England's first royal colony in America. The war with the Powhatans lingered on for the rest of the decade, but colonists quickly rebuilt plantations in response to the continuing demand for tobacco. The success of tobacco cultivation and defeat of the Powhatans secured the colony's future after 1625.

At Jamestown the English learned the hard lessons of sustaining a colony. All successful English colonies followed in its wake, but Jamestown also presents two sides of America's founding. On the one hand, England's New World offered many settlers opportunities for social and economic advancement

unthinkable at home; while on the other, colonization unleashed powerful destructive forces that were catastrophic for Indian peoples, whose lands were taken by colonists, and for enslaved Africans and their posterity, whose labor enabled Jamestown, and indeed America, to flourish.

James Horn is Colonial Williamsburg's vice president of research and historical interpretation. He is the author of numerous books and articles on colonial America, including A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America *(2005).*

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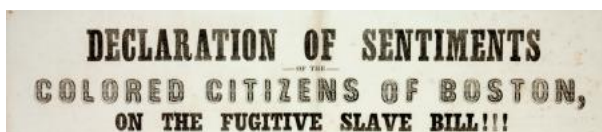
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COLORED CITIZENS OF BOSTON,
ON THE FUGITIVE SLAVE BILL!!!

Headline from a broadside reporting on a meeting held in reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act. The meeting called on all African Americans to guard themselves against southern slave catchers, ca. October 5, 1850. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

The Underground Railroad was a metaphor. Yet many textbooks treat it as an official name for a secret network that once helped escaping slaves. The more literal-minded students end up questioning whether these fixed escape routes were actually under the ground. But the phrase "Underground Railroad" is better understood as a rhetorical device that compared unlike things for the purpose of illustration. In this case, the metaphor described an array of people connected mainly by their intense desire to help other people escape from slavery. Understanding the history of the phrase changes its meaning in profound ways.

Even to begin a lesson by examining the two words "underground" and "railroad" helps provide a tighter chronological framework than usual with this topic. There could be no "underground railroad" until actual railroads became familiar to the American public–in other words, during the 1830s and 1840s. There had certainly been slave escapes before that period, but they were not described by any kind of railroad moniker. The phrase also highlights a specific geographic orientation. Antebellum railroads existed primarily in the North–home to about 70 percent of the nation's 30,000 miles of track by 1860. Slaves fled in every direction of the compass, but the metaphor packed its greatest wallop in those communities closest to the nation's whistle-stops.

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Looking into the phrase "Underground Railroad" also suggests two essential questions: who coined the metaphor? And why would they want to compare and inextricably link a wide-ranging effort to support runaway slaves with an organized network of secret railroads?

The answers can be found in the abolitionist movement. Abolitionists, or those who agitated for the immediate destruction of slavery, wanted to publicize, and perhaps even exaggerate, the number of slave escapes and the extent of the network that existed to support those fugitives. According to the pioneering work of historian Larry Gara, abolitionist newspapers and orators were the ones who first used the term "Underground Railroad" during the early 1840s, and they did so to taunt slaveholders.[1] To some participants this seemed a dangerous game. Frederick Douglass, for instance, claimed to be appalled. "I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted

what they call the *underground railroad*," he wrote in his *Narrative* in 1845, warning that "by their open declarations" these mostly Ohio-based ("western") abolitionists were creating an "*upperground railroad.*"[2]

Publicity about escapes and open defiance of federal law only spread in the years that followed, especially after the controversial Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Anxious fugitives and their allies now fought back with greater ferocity. Douglass himself became more militant. In September 1851, he helped a former slave named William Parker escape to Canada after Parker had spearheaded a resistance in Christiana, Pennsylvania, that left a Maryland slaveholder dead and federal authorities in disarray. The next year in a fiery speech at Pittsburgh, the famous orator stepped up the rhetorical attack, vowing, "The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers".[3] This level of defiance was not uncommon in the anti-slavery North and soon imperiled both federal statute and national union. Between 1850 and 1861, there were only about 350 fugitive slave cases prosecuted under the notoriously tough law, and none in the abolitionist-friendly New England states after 1854.[4] White southerners complained bitterly while abolitionists grew more emboldened.

Students often seem to imagine runaway slaves cowering in the shadows while ingenious "conductors" and "stationmasters" devised elaborate secret hiding places and coded messages to help spirit fugitives to freedom. They make few distinctions between North and South, often imagining that slave patrollers and their barking dogs chased terrified runaways from Mississippi to Maine. Instead, the Underground Railroad deserves to be explained in terms of sectional differences and the coming of the Civil War.

One way to grasp the Underground Railroad in its full political complexity is to look closely at the rise of abolitionism and the spread of free black vigilance committees during the 1830s. Nineteenth-century American communities employed extra-legal "vigilance" groups whenever they felt threatened. During the mid-1830s, free black residents first in New York and then across other northern cities began organizing vigilant associations to help them guard against kidnappers. Almost immediately, however, these groups extended their protective services to runaway slaves. They also soon allied themselves with the new abolitionist organizations, such as William Lloyd Garrison's Anti-Slavery Society. The most active vigilance committees were in Boston, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia led by now largely forgotten figures such as Lewis Hayden, George DeBaptiste, David Ruggles, and William Still.[5] Black men typically dominated these groups, but membership also included whites, such as some surprisingly feisty Quakers and at least a few women. These vigilance groups constituted the organized core of what soon became known as the Underground Railroad. Smaller communities organized too, but did not necessarily invoke the "vigilance" label, nor integrate as easily across racial, religious, and gender lines. Nonetheless, during the 1840s when William Parker formed a "mutual protection" society in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, or when John Brown created his League of Gileadites in Springfield, Massachusetts, they emulated this vigilance model.

These committees functioned more or less like committees anywhere—electing officers, holding meetings, keeping records, and raising funds. They guarded their secrets, but these were not covert operatives in the manner of the French Resistance. In New York, the vigilance committee published an annual report. Detroit vigilance agents filled newspaper columns with reports about their monthly traffic. Several committees released the addresses of their officers. One enterprising figure circulated a business card that read, "Underground Railroad Agent".[6] Even sensitive material often got recorded somewhere. A surprising amount of this secret evidence is also available for classroom use. One can explore letters detailing Harriet Tubman's comings and goings, and even a reimbursement request for her worn-out shoes, by using William Still's *The Underground Railroad* (1872), available online in a dozen different places, and which presents the fascinating materials he collected as head of the Philadelphia

Vigilance Committee. Anyone curious about how much it cost to help runaways can access the site where social studies teacher Dean Eastman and his students at Beverly High School have transcribed and posted the account books of the Boston vigilance committee. And the list of accessible Underground Railroad material grows steadily.

But how did these northern vigilance groups get away with such impudence? How could they publicize their existence and risk imprisonment by keeping records that detailed illegal activities? The answer helps move the story into the 1840s and 1850s and offers a fresh way for teachers to explore the legal and political history of the sectional crisis with students. Those aiding fugitives often benefited from the protection of state personal liberty laws and from a general reluctance across the North to encourage federal intervention or reward southern power. In other words, it was all about states' rights—northern states' rights. As early as the 1820s, northern states led by Pennsylvania had been experimenting with personal liberty or anti-kidnapping statutes designed to protect free black residents from kidnapping, but which also had the effect of frustrating enforcement of federal fugitive slave laws (1793 and 1850). In two landmark cases—*Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842) and *Ableman v. Booth* (1859)—the Supreme Court threw out these northern personal liberty protections as unconstitutional.

Students accustomed to equating states' rights with South Carolina may be stunned to learn that it was the Wisconsin supreme court asserting the nullification doctrine in the mid-1850s. They may also be shocked to discover that a federal jury in Philadelphia had acquitted the lead defendant in the Christiana treason trial within about fifteen minutes. These northern legislatures and juries were, for the most part, indifferent to black civil rights, but they were quite adamant about asserting their own states' rights during the years before the Civil War. This was the popular sentiment exploited by northern vigilance committees that helped sustain their controversial work on behalf of fugitives.

That is also why practically none of the Underground Railroad agents in the North experienced arrest, conviction, or physical violence. No prominent Underground Railroad operative ever got killed or spent significant time in jail for helping fugitives once they crossed the Mason-Dixon Line or the Ohio River. Instead, it was agents operating across the South who endured the notorious late-night arrests, long jail sentences, torture, and sometimes even lynching that made the underground work so dangerous. In 1844, for example, a federal marshal in Florida ordered the branding of Jonathan Walker, a sea captain who had been convicted of smuggling runaways, with the mark "S.S." ("slave-stealer") on his hand. That kind of barbaric punishment simply did not happen in the North.

What did happen, however, was growing *rhetorical* violence. The war of words spread. Threats escalated. Metaphors hardened. The results then shaped the responses the led to war. By reading and analyzing the various Southern secession documents from the winter of 1860–1861, one will find that nearly all invoke the crisis over fugitives.[7] The battle over fugitives and those who aided them was a primary instigator for the national conflict over slavery. Years afterward, Frederick Douglass dismissed the impact of the Underground Railroad in terms of the larger fight against slavery, comparing it to "an attempt to bail out the ocean with a teaspoon".[8] But Douglass had always been cool to the public value of the metaphor. Measured in words, however—through the antebellum newspaper articles, sermons, speeches, and resolutions generated by the crisis over fugitives—the "Underground Railroad" proved to be quite literally a metaphor that helped launch the Civil War.

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[1] Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (1961; Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 143–144.

[2] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* (Boston: Anti-

Slavery Office, 1845), 101 (http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html).

[3] Frederick Douglass, *"The Fugitive Slave Law: Speech to the National Free Soil Convention in Pittsburgh,"* August 11, 1852 (http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?PAGE=4385).

[4] See the appendix in Stanley W. Campbell, *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law: 1850–1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 199–207.

[5] Out of these four notable black leaders, only David Ruggles has an adult biography available in print. See Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[6] Jermain Loguen of Syracuse, New York. See Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 410.

[7] See secession documents online at The Avalon Project from Yale Law School (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/csapage.asp).

[8] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Hartford, CT: Park Publishing, 1881), 272 (http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/douglass.html).

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The Colonial Virginia Frontier and International Native American Diplomacy

by William White

Telling the story of Native Americans and colonial Virginians is a complex challenge clouded by centuries of mythology. The history of early settlement is dominated by the story of a preteen Pocahontas saving the life of a courageous John Smith. Later, as a young woman, she is captured and held hostage by the English. This story ends with the powerful imagery of her conversion to Christianity, marriage to John Rolfe, and travel to and death in England. Popular media portray Pocahontas as a voluptuous cartoon character swimming in waterfalls, having conversations with animals, and becoming involved in a romantic liaison with the dashing John Smith. It is no wonder that Americans are uninformed about Virginia's indigenous people. Even when we try, it is nearly impossible to shed the preconceived notions that inform the way we tell these stories.

Detail of Powhatan receiving John Smith from a 1624 map of Virginia. (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division)

It is also important to understand that Virginia Indians were not a monolithic people. Pocahontas, her father Powhatan, and her uncle Opechancanough who figure so prominently in the Englishman's story of settling Jamestown and the wars of 1622 and 1644 (what the English referred to as "massacres") do not represent the rich cultural variety of Virginia's Native people. The coastal people we now call Powhatans were actually dozens of different peoples surrounded by more independent groups to their north, west, and south. The Native American nations who engaged with Virginians by the middle of the eighteenth century stretched from the Ohio River valley to the western lands of Kentucky to the frontiers of the Carolinas. We often refer to these nations as tribes today, but each had independence, political autonomy, and what we should think of as foreign policies designed to deal with other American Indian nations and with the European nations who were settling in North America. The story of the Native people who came in contact with colonial Virginians is a complex and layered story of diplomacy.

A large part of the challenge we face in understanding that complexity is due to the sources available to us as historians. Those sources are almost exclusively European documents that tell us how Europeans interpreted American Indian actions, and they are clouded with the Eurocentric assumption that Native society was savage and deficient. Increasingly, however, historians are uncovering the larger story of Native Americans and their agency from the documents, particularly translations of Native American speeches. It is a story of diverse peoples with complex interests pursuing the diplomatic goals of their own nations.

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Take for example the Brafferton Indian School in at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg,
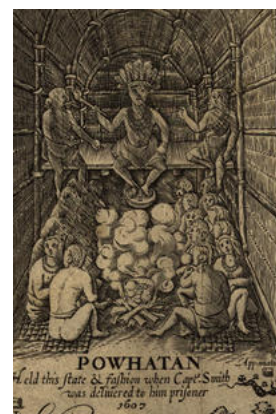
Virginia. The 1693 charter for the college specified, among other things, that the institution was established so "that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians, to the glory of Almighty God." By 1723, the Brafferton building on campus was dedicated to the purpose. Young men were sent to the Brafferton, or Indian School, to be educated as Christian Englishmen. The hope on the part of the founders was that the students would return to their nations and act as agents of "civilization" and Christianization amongst their people.

The English had trouble filling the school. As one Iroquois chief politely noted, "We must let you know, we love our Children too well, to send them so great a Way, . . . We allow it to be good, and we thank you for the Invitation; but our Customs differing from yours, you will be so good as to excuse us."[1]

Nevertheless, Mattaponis, Pamunkeys, Chickahominys, Nansemonds, and others did attend. Evidence indicates that some tribes sent children for a specific purpose. While the English hoped to create agents for conversion and change amongst the American Indians, the Indians hoped to develop go-betweens or mediators between their people and their white neighbors.

One young man, who came to be known as John Nettles, was sent by the Catawbas to the Brafferton in the 1760s. He seemed to be a model student, yet when he returned to his people, the English were disappointed to see him readopt the cultural ways of the Catawbas. Still, the Catawbas teased Nettles for his Bible reading, his preference for English clothes, and his love of European dancing. But Nettles and his English education served the Catawbas well. For nearly 40 years he was the Catawbas' translator, negotiator, and go-between. Nettles became a diplomat for his people.

Such diplomatic work was constant and complex. The Nottoways, Iroquois, Cherokees, Catawbas, and Shawnees sent frequent diplomatic missions to Williamsburg. In August 1751, for example, the Cherokees were in Williamsburg for at least a week negotiating a trade treaty with Virginia. The discussions went well. "You have supply'd all our Wants," the Cherokee representative was quoted as saying, "and we have nothing to desire but the Continuance of your Friendship." The friendship of the Virginia government, however, was not all that was at stake. Rumors circulated that the Nottoways were seeking to ambush the Cherokees to take revenge for the murder "many Years ago" of seven Nottoway young men.[2]

The situation became tense towards the end of the Cherokee visit when the Nottoways arrived in Williamsburg. On that morning the Cherokees made preparations to arm themselves and meet their adversaries, but several Virginia gentlemen apparently acted as mediators. The two groups met on the Market Square. After a series of negotiations, they concluded a peace agreement. The Nottoways produced a belt of wampum received from the Cherokees during their last peace negotiations and indicated that they "desired a Continuance of their Friendship." The Cherokee "Orator, who negotiates all their Treaties" noted that he had presented this wampum himself and accepted it back as a symbol of lasting friendship. The day that began with the threat of open conflict ended in peace.[3]

These complex interchanges made for a constantly shifting landscape for American Indians. By the eighteenth century trade goods were critical to Native culture. Diplomacy ensured that guns, gunpowder, steel axes and knives, iron pots, blankets, cloth and other essential commodities were available to them. By controlling portions of that trade, a nation could make itself more powerful and influential than its neighbors.

These relationships became even more complex during the 1750s when the British and French vied with each other to dominate the Ohio River Valley. While history books declare this a war against the French and the Indians, it is important to remember that there was not just one unified American Indian group.

Diplomatic relationships stretched across many Native peoples, each with their own set of policy objectives intended not to support one European nation or the other, but rather to improve the condition of their own particular nations.

It is also critical to understand these diplomatic relationships were not only complex but also personal. Situations easily and quickly escalated, as was the case in 1774 with the start of what became known as Dunmore's War.

A story told by the Mingo leader known to whites as Captain Logan describes the experience of Native Americans as well as European and African American settlers as they came in contact with each other on the frontier of Virginia.

> I appeal to any white man to say that he ever entered Logan's cabin but I gave him meat; and he gave him not meat; that he ever came naked but I clothed him. In the course of the last war [French and Indian War], Logan remained in his cabin an advocate for peace. I had such an affection for the white people, that I was pointed at by the rest of my nation. I should have ever lived with them, had it not been for Colonel Cressop, who last year cut off, in cold blood, all the relations of Logan, not sparing women and children: There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any human creature. This called upon me for revenge; I have sought it, I have killed many and fully glutted my revenge. I am glad there is a prospect of peace, on account of the nation; but I beg you will not entertain a thought that any thing I have said proceeds from fear! Logan disdains the thought! He will not turn on his heel to save his life! Who is there to mourn for Logan? --- No one.[4]

Similar stories of frontier cooperation and betrayal were told over and over again among groups from 1607 into the nineteenth century. Sometimes it is an American Indian narrative. Sometimes it is a European or African American narrative. If we look carefully, Logan's story tells us a great deal about the experience on the colonial Virginia frontier. It shows that the relationships among people were not usually or by necessity hostile. Logan fed and clothed white Virginians even during the French and Indian War. His affection for whites caused him to be singled out by his own people. Throughout the period, people of various cultures lived in proximity to each other. They helped each other, traded with each other, and forged advantageous alliances with each other. It was a relatively small world. People knew each other, called each other by name, and conducted personal relationships in a face-to-face world.

Consequently, when disagreements erupted into violence, the conflicts were often personal and specific. Logan's story is an example of this. On May 3, 1774, a group of Virginians—one of whom Logan identified as a man named Colonel Cressop—enticed two men and two women across the Ohio River from their Mingo village and murdered them. When eight others from the Mingo village came searching they too were killed. Members of Logan's family were among those murdered.

In the mid-eighteenth-century the Mingo people were forced westward into the Ohio River Valley by European settlements in the east. They lived in close proximity with other displaced peoples such as the Delawares and Shawnees. When his family was murdered, Logan demanded revenge. Young Shawnee men from a neighboring village sought to join him and advocated a major war, but the Shawnee chiefs managed to cool the situation. Still, a small number of Shawnees joined Logan's war party.

Logan's party of Mingos and Shawnees raided Pennsylvania and Virginia settlements on the frontier. They took thirteen scalps and sent hundreds of settlers fleeing eastward out of the back country. This act of revenge sparked a series of reactions. On the Virginia frontier such reactions had international consequences. There were dozens of Native American nations, each maintaining a complex set of diplomatic relationships with other Indian nations and with Europeans.

Logan's revenge resulted in a diplomatic crisis. A substantial number of Shawnees protected white traders living in their country. The Shawnee chief Cornstalk sent a delegation to Fort Pitt, where they made clear that it was their intention to protect the traders. The Delawares living in the area owed their allegiance to the Six Nations of the Iroquois, and the Iroquois instructed their Delaware "brethren" to remove themselves from the territory and avoid the conflict. It was a clear diplomatic statement to militant Mingos and Shawnees that there would be no help from the Iroquois or their allies.

Meanwhile, frightened settlers demanded action and inflamed colonial public opinion against the Indians. Colonial governors felt obligated to respond. Though the governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia both ruled in the name of King George III, they represented very different interest groups and not a singular British policy. Each hoped to secure new western lands for their colonial constituencies. And in the case of Virginia, the governor, Lord Dunmore, was also an investor in land companies and would no doubt benefit personally from a successful western campaign against the Mingos and Shawnees.

The governor of Pennsylvania sent militia to attack Mingo and Shawnee villages in August 1774. Lord Dunmore led the militiamen to the frontier. By this time, Shawnee chiefs had no choice but to take up arms. On October 10, 1774, Virginians and Shawnee clashed at the Battle of Point Pleasant. The colonial forces continued to press into Shawnee territory until the Shawnees were forced to negotiate a peace. Among other things, the settlement required them to give up their hunting rights in Kentucky, revealing yet another consistent factor of the relationships between European and Native peoples: unrelenting pressure in the face of European migration and hunger for western lands.

It is easy to jump ahead in history to the early nineteenth century when Jacksonian Americans forced the removal of American Indian nations. From our perspective today, it seems obvious that Indian removal was the logical extension of British and later United States Indian policy. But when we examine colonial Virginia we must understand that the outcome was not obvious to the players at the time. Diplomacy—with its negotiations, personal and political relationships, and carefully considered and implemented policies in the face of evolving incidents and situations—was a critical tool of hope for the future amongst the Native American nations meeting European incursions and the complex challenges of their time along the frontier that was colonial Virginia.

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[1] *The Treaty held with the Indians of the Six Nations, at Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, in June, 1744*, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1744, 68.
[2] *The Virginia Gazette*, Hunter edition, August 16, 1751, 3.
[3] *The Virginia Gazette*, Hunter edition, August 16, 1751, 3.
[4] *The Virginia Gazette*, Dixon edition, February 2, 1775, 3.

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Indian Slavery in the Americas

by Alan Gallay

The story of European colonialism in the Americas and its victimization of Africans and Indians follows a central paradigm in most textbooks. The African "role" encompasses the transportation, exploitation, and suffering of many millions in New World slavery, while Indians are described in terms of their succumbing in large numbers to disease, with the survivors facing dispossession of their land. This paradigm—a basic one in the history of colonialism—omits a crucial aspect of the story: the indigenous peoples of the Americas were enslaved in large numbers. This exclusion distorts not only what happened to American Indians under colonialism, but also points to the need for a reassessment of the foundation and nature of European overseas expansion.

Without slavery, slave trading, and other forms of unfree labor, European colonization would have remained extremely limited in the New World. The Spanish were almost totally dependent on Indian labor in most of their colonies, and even where unfree labor did not predominate, as in the New England colonies, colonial production was geared toward supporting the slave plantation complex of the West Indies. Thus, we must take a closer look at the scope of unfree labor—the central means by which Europeans generated the wealth that fostered the growth of colonies.

Modern perceptions of early modern slavery associate the institution almost solely with Africans and their descendants. Yet slavery was a ubiquitous institution in the early modern world. Africans, Asians, Europeans, and Native Americans kept slaves before and after Columbus reached America. Enslavement meant a denial of freedom for the enslaved, but slavery varied greatly from place to place, as did the lives of slaves. The life of a *genizaro* (slave soldier) of the Ottoman Empire, who enjoyed numerous privileges and benefits, immensely differed from an American Indian who worked in the silver mines of Peru or an African who produced sugar cane in Barbados. People could be kept as slaves for religious purposes (Aztecs and Pacific Northwest Indians) or as a by-product of warfare, where they made little contribution to the economy or basic social structure (Eastern Woodlands). In other societies, slaves were central to the economy. In many areas of West Africa, for instance, slaves were the predominant form of property and the main producers of wealth.

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As it expanded under European colonialism to the New World in the late fifteenth through nineteenth centuries, slavery took on a new, racialized form involving the movement of millions of peoples from one continent to another based on skin color, and the creation of a vast slave-plantation complex that was an important cog in the modernization and globalization of the world economy. Africans provided the bulk of labor in this new system of slavery, but American Indians were compelled to labor in large numbers as well.

In the wake of the deaths of indigenous Americans from European-conveyed microbes from which they had no immunity, the Spanish colonists turned to importing Africans. A racist and gross misinterpretation of this event posited that most Indians could not be enslaved because of their love for freedom, while Africans were used to having their labor controlled by "big men" in Africa. This dangerous view obscured

a basic fact of early modern history: Anyone could be enslaved. Over a million Europeans were held as slaves from the 1530s through the 1780s in Africa, and hundreds of thousands were kept as slaves by the Ottomans in eastern Europe and Asia. (John Smith, for instance, had been a slave of the Ottomans before he obtained freedom and helped colonize Virginia.) In 1650, more English were enslaved in Africa than Africans enslaved in English colonies. Even as late as the early nineteenth century, United States citizens were enslaved in North Africa. As the pro-slavery ideologue George Fitzhugh noted in his book, *Cannibals All* (1857), in the history of world slavery, Europeans were commonly the ones held as slaves, and the enslavement of Africans was a relatively new historical development. Not until the eighteenth century did the words "slave" and "African" become nearly synonymous in the minds of Europeans and Euro-Americans.

With labor at a premium in the colonial American economy, there was no shortage of people seeking to purchase slaves. Both before and during African enslavement in the Americas, American Indians were forced to labor as slaves and in various other forms of unfree servitude. They worked in mines, on plantations, as apprentices for artisans, and as domestics—just like African slaves and European indentured servants. As with Africans shipped to America, Indians were transported from their natal communities to labor elsewhere as slaves. Many Indians from Central America were shipped to the West Indies, also a common destination for Indians transported out of Charleston, South Carolina, and Boston, Massachusetts. Many other Indians were moved hundreds or thousands of miles within the Americas. Sioux Indians from the Minnesota region could be found enslaved in Quebec, and Choctaws from Mississippi in New England. A longstanding line of transportation of Indian slaves led from modern-day Utah and Colorado south into Mexico.

The European trade in American Indians was initiated by Columbus in 1493. Needing money to pay for his New World expeditions, he shipped Indians to Spain, where there already existed slave markets dealing in the buying and selling of Africans. Within a few decades, the Spanish expanded the slave trade in American Indians from the island of Hispaniola to Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Cuba, and the Bahamas. The great decline in the indigenous island populations which largely owed to disease, slaving, and warfare, led the Spanish to then raid Indian communities in Central America and many of the islands just off the continent, such as Curacao, Trinidad, and Aruba. About 650,000 Indians in coastal Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Honduras were enslaved in the sixteenth century. Conquistadors then entered the inland American continents and continued the process. Hernando de Soto, for instance, brought with him iron implements to enslave the people of La Florida on his infamous expedition through the American southeast into the Carolinas and west to the Mississippi Valley. Indians were used by the conquistadors as *tamemes* to carry their goods on these distant forays. Another form of Spanish enslavement of Indians in the Americas was *yanaconaje*, which was similar to European serfdom, whereby Indians were tied to specific lands to labor rather than lords. And under the *encomienda* system, Indians were forced to labor or pay tribute to an *encomendero*, who, in exchange, was supposed to provide protection and conversion to Christianity. The encomenderos' power survived longest in frontier areas, particularly in Venezuela, Chile, Paraguay, and in the Mexican Yucatan into the nineteenth century.

By 1542 the Spanish had outlawed outright enslavement of some, but not all, Indians. People labeled cannibals could still be enslaved, as could Indians purchased from other Europeans or from Indians. The Spanish also created new forms of servitude for Indians. This usually involved compelling mission Indians to labor for a period of time each year that varied from weeks to months with little or no pay. *Repartimiento*, as it was called, was widespread in Peru and Mexico, though it faded quickly in the latter. It persisted for hundreds of years as the main system for organizing Indian labor in Colombia, Ecuador, and Florida, and survived into the early 1820s in Peru and Bolivia. Indian laborers worked in the silver mines and built forts, roads, and housing for the army, church, and government. They performed

agriculture and domestic labor in support of civilians, government contractors, and other elements of Spanish society. Even in regions where African slavery predominated, such as the sugar plantations in Portuguese Brazil and in the West Indies, Indian labor continued to be used. And in many Spanish colonies, where the plantations did not flourish, Indians provided the bulk of unfree labor through the colonial era. In other words, the growth of African slavery in the New World did not diminish the use of unfree Indian labor, particularly outside of the plantation system.

Whereas in South America and the islands of the West Indies, Europeans conducted the bulk of slaving raids against Indians, (except in Brazil, where *bandeirantes* of mixed blood were employed for slaving), much of the enslavement of Indians in North America above Mexico was done by Indians. North American Europeans did enslave Indians during wars, especially in New England (the Pequot War, King Philip's War) and the southeast (the Tuscarora War, the Yamasee War, the Natchez War, just to name a few), but ordinarily Europeans, especially the English and French, purchased their Indian slaves from Indians. Colonists lured Indians to supply Indian slaves in exchange for trade goods and to obtain alliances with the Europeans and their Indian allies. Indians slaved against not only their enemies, but Indians they had never met. Many Indians recognized they had little choice but to become slavers. If they did not do the Europeans' bidding they could easily become victimized themselves. It was not unusual for peoples victimized by slaving to become slavers, and for those who had been slavers to become the object of raids.

Colonists participated in Indian slave trading to obtain capital. It was as if capital could be created out of thin air: one merely had to capture an Indian or find an Indian to capture another. In South Carolina, and to a lesser extent in North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana, Indian slavery was a central means by which early colonists funded economic expansion. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, a frenzy of enslaving occurred in what is now the eastern United States. English and allied Indian raiders nearly depopulated Florida of its American Indian population. From 1670 to 1720 more Indians were shipped out of Charleston, South Carolina, than Africans were imported as slaves—and Charleston was a major port for bringing in Africans. The populous Choctaws in Mississippi were repeatedly battered by raiders, and many of their neighboring lower Mississippi Valley Indians also wound up spending their lives as slaves on West Indies plantations. Simultaneously, the New England colonies nearly eliminated the Native population from southern New England through warfare, slaving, and forced removal. The French in Canada and in Louisiana purchased many Indian slaves from their allies who swept through the Great Lakes region, the Missouri Country, and up into Minnesota. All the colonies engaged in slaving and in the purchase of Indian slaves. Only in the colonial region of New York and Pennsylvania was slaving limited, in large part because the neighboring Iroquois assimilated into their societies many of those they captured instead of selling them to the Europeans—but the Europeans of those colonies purchased Indian slaves from other regions.

Slaving against Indians did begin to decline in the east in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, largely a result of Indians' refusal to participate in large-scale slaving raids, but the trade moved westward where Apaches, Sioux, and others continued to be victimized by Comanche and others. From Louisiana to New Mexico, large-scale enslavement of American Indians persisted well into the nineteenth century. Slave markets were held monthly in New Mexico, for instance, to facilitate the sale of Indians from the American West to northern Mexico. After the Civil War, President Andrew Johnson sent federal troops into the West to put an end to Indian slavery, but it continued to proliferate in California.

The paradigm of "what happened" to American Indians under European colonialism must be revised. Instead of viewing victimization of Africans and Indians as two entirely separate processes, they should be compared and contrasted. This will shed more light on the consequences of colonialism in the

Americas, and how racism became one of the dominant ideologies of the modern world. It is time to assess the impact of slave trading and slavery on American Indian peoples, slave and free.

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Unruly Americans in the Revolution

by Woody Holton

Nearly all of the blockbuster biographies of the Founding Fathers—whether the subject is George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, or John Adams—portray the vast majority of ordinary Americans as mere bystanders. Although the authors of these bestsellers sometimes pause to honor the common soldiers in the Continental Army, most pay little attention to white men who did not enlist—and none at all to African Americans, American Indians, and women of all ranks.

Meanwhile a host of other historians have been quietly documenting the many ways in which women, slaves, natives, and small farmers—the 95 percent of Americans who were not members of the founding-era gentry—shaped the independence movement and Revolutionary War and were in turn influenced by both. If ordinary colonists really had been as passive as they appear in the most popular histories of the founding era, the American Revolution would have been a very different thing, and it might not have occurred at all.

"Bostonian's Paying the Excise-man, or Tarring and Feathering," print by Philip Dawe, London, 1774. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

TAXES—BUT ALSO TERRITORY

While everyone knows that Parliamentary "taxation without representation" was one of the principal grievances leading to the American Revolution, we sometimes forget that the British government also mounted other assaults against free colonists' economic well being. Nearly all of the best-known Founding Fathers—from Thomas Jefferson and George Washington in Virginia to Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris in Pennsylvania and Henry Knox and Abigail (not John!) Adams in Massachusetts—dreamed of vastly enhancing their wealth by speculating in western land. That meant obtaining large grants directly from the government, essentially for free, and then dividing them into smaller tracts to be sold to actual settlers. But in October 1763, the Privy Council in London took out a map of North America and drew a line along the crest of the Alleghany Mountains. Beyond that line, the ministers declared, no colonist would be permitted to settle.

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At first George Washington was confident that the Proclamation Line was only a "temporary expedient" that would soon be repealed. But the British government stood by the 1763 decree for the same reason that it had been promulgated in the first place: in order (as Washington put it) "to quiet the minds of the Indians." It was not sympathy for the American Indians' plight that had motivated the Privy Council to turn the area west of the Alleghanies into a giant reservation. Nor was it fear, since of course British officials were in no danger. The issue was financial. Earlier in 1763, more than a dozen Native American nations had joined together in a coalition dedicated to preserving their land. The ensuing revolt is popularly known as Pontiac's Rebellion, though that label understates the range of the insurgency and exaggerates the role of a single Ottawa headman in a movement where leadership was actually quite dispersed.

If the Indians of present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan had not decided to rebel in 1763, the

Privy Council might never have drawn the Proclamation Line, and land speculators like Washington and Jefferson would have had one less reason to rebel against Great Britain. The Declaration of Independence mentions the well-known issue of taxation once—and Indians and their land three times.

In 1769, the Virginia House of Burgesses (whose members included Thomas Jefferson and George Washington) unanimously adopted a resolution asking the Privy Council to repeal the Proclamation of 1763. British officials never acted on the request, and one reason was their abiding concern that taking the Indians' land would provoke renewed hostilities. Lord Hillsborough, George III's secretary for his American dominions, was determined to keep Britain out of a "general Indian War, the expense whereof will fall on this kingdom." The imperial government's ensuing decision to thwart the land-hungry provincials had the ironic effect of paving the way for an even more expensive war against a coalition of colonists.

INDISPENSIBLE ALLIES

Once the imperial government had announced its intention to clamp down on its North American colonists in the crucial areas of taxation, territory, and trade, the Americans responded with a wide variety of protests. While it was the Franklins, Jeffersons, and Adamses who made the speeches and published the pamphlets, the real work of erecting liberty poles, intimidating colonial officials, tarring and feathering the recalcitrant, taunting British soldiers, and eventually dumping East India Company tea into Boston Harbor fell to ordinary working people. Historians have shown that many of the most famous incidents of the Revolutionary era grew out of deep-seated conflicts that had begun long before the American Revolution formally began.

The best-known incident that grew out of this longstanding animosity was the so-called Boston Massacre. The shootings in King Street on the night of March 5, 1770, were a direct outgrowth of a host of petty conflicts, for instance a shouting match between workers at a ropewalk (where ships' rigging was made) and off-duty—and underpaid—British soldiers competing with them for work.

Less dramatic but more important to the eventual success of the American Revolution was a series of boycotts of trade with Britain. The best-known item on the banned list was tea, a beverage much more popular among women than men. Male patriots understood that the boycotts could not succeed without the help of their mothers, daughters, and wives, and the result was an unprecedented and highly successful effort to involve women in politics, initiated as much by the women themselves as by men.

The most valuable product that the colonists normally imported from the mother country was cloth, and when the patriots extended their boycott to textiles, they created another opportunity for American women. It was up to them to spin the thread (and in some cases weave the yarn) that would replace the fabric once imported from Britain.

"DOMESTIC INSURRECTIONS"

By the fall of 1774, most free colonists in British North America were angry at the imperial government, but very few of them wanted to wrench their colonies out of the British Empire. Most just wanted to turn back the clock—back to 1763, before Parliament and the Privy Council launched their irksome initiatives in the areas of taxation, territory, and trade. In 1775 and early 1776, a host of well-known factors—notably the British use of German ("Hessian") mercenaries, the loss of life at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, and the publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*—conspired to convert free Americans to the cause of independence.

South of the line that Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon had surveyed in the mid-1760s, many colonists turned against the British for a less well-known reason. They were furious at King George III and his American representatives for forming an alliance with African Americans.

At the time of the American Revolution, about one-fifth of the people in the rebelling colonies—approximately half a million souls—were enslaved. Early in the imperial conflict, black Americans began to perceive that the widening gap between white loyalists and patriots created a space of opportunity for themselves. During protests against the Stamp Act in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1765, white patriots were alarmed to hear their cries of "Liberty" echoed back to them by a group of their slaves. "In one of our Counties lately," the young Virginian James Madison reported in November 1774, "a few of those unhappy wretches met together & chose a leader who was to conduct them when the English Troops should arrive."

African Americans kept on conferring all through the winter and spring of 1775. During the third week of April 1775, officials in Williamsburg, the capital of Virginia, received a half dozen reports of slave insurrection conspiracies—more than during any previous week in the colony's history. At the end of that same week, late in the evening of April 20, 1775, Lord Dunmore, Virginia's royal governor, ordered the removal of the gunpowder from the powder magazine in the center of Williamsburg. White Virginians believed the governor's timing was no coincidence—that he had deliberately removed the gunpowder amid the swirl of insurrection rumors in order to leave them vulnerable to the fury of their slaves. When independent military companies began marching toward Williamsburg in order to force the governor to return the gunpowder, Dunmore seemed to confirm his white subjects' worst fears, declaring that if any top British official was harmed, he "would declare freedom to the slaves & reduce the city of Wmsburg to ashes."

When a group of slaves offered to fight alongside the governor in return for their freedom, he turned them away and even threatened to have them beaten if they returned. But the slaves kept coming—rallying to the British standard not only in Virginia but in other British colonies as well. On November 14, 1775, Governor Dunmore's "Ethiopian Regiment" (as he termed his African American troops) fought a battle against militiamen from Princess Anne County (now Virginia Beach) at Kemp's Landing near Norfolk, and the black soldiers won.

The very next day, November 15, 1775, Dunmore issued an emancipation proclamation that was not too different from the one Abraham Lincoln would publish four score and seven years later. Like Lincoln's, Dunmore's proclamation did not free a single slave. He extended his offer only to black Virginians "appertaining to rebels" (Dunmore was himself a large-scale slaveholder) who were "able and willing" to bear arms for their king. Hundreds of slaves joined Dunmore. Within a year, the majority of them would die, primarily from smallpox. But a remnant survived and earned their freedom by serving on the British side throughout the war.

In the capstone grievance in the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress alleges that George III has "excited domestic insurrection amongst us." Actually, given Governor Dunmore's reluctance to act on his initially empty threat to "declare freedom to the slaves," it is less accurate to say the British initiated their alliance with the slaves than that the slaves incited the British. Here was another case in which seemingly powerless Americans—the black men and women who are routinely excluded from the mammoth biographies that dominate most modern readers' understanding of the American Revolution—played a crucial role in the conflict.

AN AMBIGUOUS LEGACY

In their own way (and sometimes inadvertently), Native Americans, enslaved blacks, and ordinary whites all helped propel men like Washington, Hamilton, and Hancock down the road to independence. In turn, the ensuing years of political upheaval and war powerfully influenced each of these groups.

The Americans who suffered the most were, ironically enough, those who had enjoyed the most success in battle: Indians. Despite their military successes, the American Indians lost out where it mattered most —at the bargaining table in Paris, where of course they were not represented. Although British officials had never purchased or conquered the region between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (essentially the modern-day Midwest), they nonetheless ceded this region to their former colonists in the peace treaty signed in Paris in 1783. It would be another decade before the US military conquered the Native American coalition striving to defend this land, but the nullification of the Proclamation of 1763 had begun on July 4, 1776.

For African Americans the outcome of the Revolutionary War was more complex. Now that white settlers claimed the Mississippi as their western border, slavery had plenty of room into which to expand—which it did after the invention of the cotton gin, with disastrous results for African Americans. On the other hand, the Revolutionary War permitted thousands of black Americans to claim their freedom. Two northern states, Massachusetts and the new state of Vermont, abolished slavery, and most of the others put it on the road to extinction (although in some cases this would prove to be a very long road). But many more slaves—perhaps 10,000 or more—obtained their freedom by fighting on the British side. After the war, the imperial government settled the bulk of them in Nova Scotia, but continuing discrimination convinced many of these refugees to accept Parliament's offer to move to the new British colony of Sierra Leone in West Africa. Others made their way to British colonies that remained in the imperial fold or to the home island. Some have even been traced to Australia.

Historians of the American Revolution have never been able to reach an agreement about what it did for —or to—free women. Most recently, women's historians have argued that free women did benefit—at least temporarily. They had been politicized during the 1760s and 1770s, as their domestic activities took on political meaning in the boycotts. Moreover, when men left home to become soldiers and statesmen, women took over their farms and businesses. As they mastered activities such as hiring farm workers and selling crops, their self-confidence grew. More than one wife who corresponded with her absent husband went from describing the family farm as "yours" early in the war to declaring it "ours" (and in some case "mine") several years later.

Free women benefited in another way as well. Americans feared that their new form of republican government would fail unless ordinary men practiced political virtue—a willingness to sacrifice for their country. After the Revolution, reformers turned to women to instill this patriotism in their sons and daughters. Mothering thus became a "civic" act and Republican Motherhood a new ideology for women. With it came a realization that women could not properly instruct their children in virtue if they themselves did not receive a proper education in such fields as political theory, philosophy, and history. "If we mean to have Heroes, Statesmen and Philosophers," Abigail Adams told her husband in August 1776, "we should have learned women."

Yet, if these were gains for women, they were offset by the fact that full citizenship, including suffrage, was denied them. And, in many new states women's economic situation worsened as inheritance laws changed and put them at a disadvantage.

Free white men were the clearest winners of the American Revolution, but for the vast majority of freemen, these gains were modest at best. Historians have shown that, especially after the adoption of the US Constitution in 1789, ordinary farmers actually lost ground in some important areas. For instance,

control over the money supply—which determined whether debtors gained at the expense of creditors or vice versa—passed from the colonial assemblies, many of which had been elected annually, to a federal government that often seemed beyond the reach of common plowmen.

If the vast majority of Americans of the founding era received few lasting benefits from the American Revolution, the long-term prospect was brighter. Most white men of the founding era chose not to respect women's, African Americans', and Indians' right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of the happiness, and many members of the gentry class suspected that Jefferson's affirmation that all men are created equal was not even true among white males. And yet the promises of liberty and equality held forth in this document written by a slaveholder have continued to serve as beacons. The 1848 Seneca Falls Declaration of Rights and Sentiments that initiated the women's rights movement was modeled on the Declaration of Independence, and Frederick Douglass harried the consciences of white Northerners by asking, "What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July?" Indeed the whole subsequent history of the United States can be summed up as a struggle between the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the circumstances of its creation.

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The Indians' War of Independence

by Colin G. Calloway

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson clearly described the role of American Indians in the American Revolution. In addition to his other oppressive acts, King George III had "endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions." Inscribed in the founding document of the United States, almost a sacred text, Jefferson's words placed Indians on the wrong side of the struggle for liberty and the wrong side of history from the very beginning of the Revolution. Thus while Americans fought for their rights and freedoms, Jefferson argued that Native Americans fought against them, the vicious pawns of a tyrannical king.

George III's Proclamation of 1763, ending the French and Indian War and restricting British colonial activity on American Indian lands. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

All nations have their creation stories, where myth and history merge, and the creation story of the United States is no exception. In July 1776, the British had not—at least not yet—unleashed Indian warriors on the frontiers. In fact, the Stockbridge Indians of western Massachusetts, who were among the first to get involved in the Revolution, joined Washington's army, fighting against the redcoats. Most Indians tried to stay neutral in what they saw as a British civil war—getting caught in the middle of a domestic disturbance is never a good idea. Even when, eventually, most sided with the British, they were not fighting against freedom; like the American patriots, they fought to defend their freedom as they understood it. In Indian eyes, aggressive Americans posed a greater threat than did a distant king to their land, their liberty, and their way of life. The American War of Independence was an Indian war for independence as well.

This was not the first time Indians had waged a war of independence. A dozen years before American colonists rebelled against Britain, American Indians in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes took on the mightiest empire in the world. In 1763, fresh from their triumphs in the French and Indian War, the British were behaving like conquerors in Indian country. Baulking at the presence of British garrisons and the absence of British gifts, which the Indians believed served to cement alliances and ensure good faith relationships, Pontiac of the Ottawas, Guyashota of the Senecas, Shingas of the Delawares, and other war chiefs launched a multi-tribal assault that destroyed every British fort west of the Appalachians except Detroit, Niagara, and Fort Pitt. The colonial government in London responded by declaring the Appalachian Mountains the boundary between British settlement and Indian lands. This Royal Proclamation of 1763 alienated American land speculators like George Washington who had hoped to get rich by selling trans-Appalachian lands to westward moving settlers. Designed to bring order to the American frontier, the Proclamation initiated a chain of events that culminated in revolution and independence.

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When the Revolution broke out, therefore, Indian peoples knew that Indian lands were at stake. The

Cherokees had every reason to be concerned. For more than half a century, they had seen their lands in Georgia, eastern Tennessee, and western North and South Carolina whittled away in treaty after treaty with the colonies, and the tempo of land loss escalated alarmingly in the late 1760s and 1770s. Young Cherokee men, frustrated by their fathers' policies of selling land, were determined to prevent further erosion of the Cherokee homeland. They seized the outbreak of the Revolution as an occasion to drive trespassers off their lands. Cherokee warriors attacked frontier settlements in 1776, but they did so on their own, without British support and against the advice of British agents who urged them to wait until they could coordinate with His Majesty's troops. American forces immediately retaliated, burning Cherokee towns and forcing Cherokee chiefs to sue for peace, which they did at the cost of ceding even more land. Many Cherokees, led by a war chief named Dragging Canoe, migrated rather than make peace with the Americans. They kept up the fight from new towns they built around Chickamauga Creek in southwestern Tennessee. American campaigns against the Chickamauga Cherokees sometimes struck the villages of those Cherokees who had made peace instead because they were closer and offered easier targets. The Revolution left the Cherokee Nation devastated and divided, but the Chickamaugas remained defiant and continued to fight against American dominance until 1795.

The Revolution divided the Iroquois or Haudenosaunee as well. The Six Nations of the Iroquois League in upstate New York—the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras—constituted the dominant Native power in northeastern North America. They were accustomed to exerting their influence and flexing their muscles in colonial and intertribal diplomacy, and to playing off rival colonial powers, which they had done for much of the eighteenth century. But the Revolution shattered the unity of the League. Mohawks, led by war chief Joseph Brant and his sister, Molly Brant, supported the Crown, due in no small measure to the influence of Sir William Johnson, Molly Brant's husband. An Irish-trader-turned-Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Johnson had lived among the Mohawks for years and functioned as the pivotal figure in British-Iroquois relations until his death in 1774. But the Mohawks' neighbors, the Oneidas, leaned toward the colonists, influenced by their missionary, Samuel Kirkland, a Presbyterian/Congregationalist who favored breaking with the Church of England. At the Battle of Oriskany in 1777, Oneidas fought alongside the Americans, while Mohawks and Senecas fought with the British, a devastating development for Iroquois society that was built around clan and kinship ties.

Like the Cherokees, many Iroquois lost their homes during the Revolution. Mohawks were driven from the Mohawk Valley and Oneidas fleeing retaliation lived in squalid refugee camps around Schenectady, New York. In 1779 George Washington dispatched General John Sullivan to conduct a scorched-earth campaign in Iroquois country. Sullivan's troops burned forty Iroquois towns, cut down orchards, and destroyed millions of bushels of corn. Without shelter or food to sustain them, thousands of Iroquois people fled to the British fort at Niagara. But Niagara lay at the end of a long supply line that was closed during the winter months when vessels from Montreal and Quebec could not navigate the ice-bound Great Lakes. The refugees at Niagara endured exposure, starvation, sickness, and misery during one of the coldest winters on record. Iroquois warriors resumed attacks on American settlements on the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania, to take grain and cattle as much as scalps and captives.

At the end of war, many Iroquois relocated north of the new border into Canada rather than stay in New York and deal with the Americans. Joseph Brant and his followers settled on lands set aside for them by the British government on the Grand River in Ontario, the genesis of the Six Nations Reserve. Others—Senecas at Tonawanda and Buffalo Creek, for example—remained on their ancestral homeland. Formerly masters of the region, they now struggled to survive in a new world dominated by Americans.

Between the Cherokees and the Iroquois, in the territory drained by the Ohio River, Indian peoples lived in a perilous situation. The Ohio Valley had been virtually emptied of human population because of

intertribal wars in the seventeenth century. But it had become a multi-tribal homeland again by the eve of the Revolution. Delawares, Shawnees, Mingos, and other tribes had gravitated toward the region, attracted by rich hunting grounds and growing trade opportunities, and pressured by colonial expansion in the east. European settlers were not far behind. Shawnee warriors were fighting to keep pioneers like Daniel Boone out of their Kentucky hunting grounds before the Revolution, and they fought in Lord Dunmore's War against Virginia in 1774.

The Revolution turned the Ohio Valley into a fiercely contested war zone. Henry Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit, and George Morgan, the American agent at Fort Pitt, competed for the allegiance of the tribes. Most tried to remain neutral but neutrality was not a viable option. The Shawnee chief Cornstalk, who had led his warriors in Lord Dunmore's War, now counseled a neutral stance and cultivated peaceful relations with the Americans. But Cornstalk was seized under a flag of truce at Fort Randolph and murdered by American militia in 1777. Most Shawnees made common cause with the British, who had been telling them they could expect nothing less than annihilation at the hands of the Americans. However, Cornstalk's sister, Nonhelema, continued to work for peace and assisted the Americans. Kentucky militia crossed the Ohio River almost every year to raid Shawnee villages. About half of the Shawnees migrated west to present-day Missouri, which was claimed by Spain. Those who remained moved their villages farther and farther away from American assault. By the end of the Revolution most American Indians living in Ohio were concentrated in the northwestern region.

Like their Shawnee neighbors, the Delawares were initially reluctant to take up arms or support the British. In fact, the Delaware chief, White Eyes, led his people in making the Treaty of Fort Pitt in 1778, the first Indian treaty made by the new nation. The Delawares and the United States Congress agreed to a defensive alliance. But American militiamen murdered White Eyes, their best friend in the Ohio Indian country. American authorities put out that he had died of smallpox but the damage was done. Like the Shawnees, Delawares took up the hatchet and made Britain's war their own.

Americans struck back—blindly. In 1782 a force of American militia marched into the town of Gnadenhatten. It was a community of Delaware Indians who had converted to the Moravian faith. They were Christians and they were pacifists. But all that mattered to the militia was the fact that they were Delawares. The Americans divided them into three groups—men, women, and children. Then, with the Indians kneeling before them singing hymns, they took up butchers' mallets and bludgeoned to death 96 people. Gnadenhatten means "Tents of Grace." Delaware warriors, now fighting as allies of the British, exacted brutal revenge for the massacre when American soldiers fell into their hands.

In the east, the fighting between redcoats and rebels effectively ended after Lord Cornwallis surrendered to Washington's army and their French allies at Yorktown in 1781. In the west, Indians continued their war for independence and there things did not go so well for the Americans. In 1782, for example, Shawnee and other warriors ambushed and roundly defeated Daniel Boone and a force of Kentuckians at the Battle of Blue Licks. But the British had had enough. At the Peace of Paris in April 1783, Britain recognized the independence of the United States and transferred its claims to all the territory between the Atlantic and the Mississippi and between the Great Lakes and Florida.

There were no American Indians at the Peace of Paris and Indians were not mentioned in its terms. They were furious and incredulous when they learned that their allies had sold them out and given away their lands. Fully expecting another war with the young republic, the British in Canada maintained alliances with Indians for years after the Revolution, but tribes south of the new international border now had to deal primarily with the United States. At the start of the Revolution, despite American entreaties and assurances, the Indians had worried and the British had warned that the Americans were only interested

in taking their land. The worries and warnings were well founded.

Although George Washington, his secretary of war Henry Knox, Thomas Jefferson, and other good men of the founding generation wrestled with how to deal honorably with Indian peoples, the taking of Indian land was never in doubt. After the long war against Britain, the United States government had no money; its only resource was the land the British had ceded at the Peace of Paris—Indian land. Acquiring actual title to that land and transforming it into "public land" that could be sold to American settlers to help fill the treasury was vital to the future, even the survival, of the new republic. Having won its independence from the British Empire, the United States turned to build what Jefferson called "an empire of liberty." In this empire, all citizens shared the benefits. But—and this was a question that plagued the nation and the national conscience for generations—who qualified as citizens? Did African Americans? Did women? Did Native Americans? And how could Americans claim to deal honorably with Indian peoples at the same time as they built their nation on Indian lands?

The Declaration of Independence provided answers and justifications: hadn't Indians fought against American rights and freedoms at the moment of the nation's birth? They could not now expect to share those rights and freedoms that had been won at such a cost. The United States had no obligation to include Indians in the body politic or to protect Indian lands. But, the Declaration had also made clear that Indians were "savages," and Washington, Jefferson, and others believed that the United States did have an obligation to "civilize" them. The United States must and would take the Indians' lands; that was inevitable. But it would give them civilization in return, and that was honorable.

For Native Americans, this translated into a dual assault on their lands and cultures, which were inextricably linked. In the years following the Revolution, American settlers invaded Indian country. So too, at different times and places, did American soldiers, Indian agents, land speculators, treaty commissioners, and missionaries. Indians fought back: they disputed American claims to their homelands, killed trespassers, and sometimes inflicted stunning defeats on American armies. Not until General Anthony Wayne defeated the allied northwestern tribes at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 did the Indians make peace at the Treaty of Greenville and cede most of Ohio to the United States. Then, Indians turned to more subtle forms of resistance in what remained of their homelands, compromising where they had no choice, adapting and adjusting to changes, and preserving what they could of Indian life and culture in a nation that was intent on eradicating both.

The American nation won its war for independence in 1783. American Indian wars for independence continued long after. In their ongoing struggles for their rights, and their tribal sovereignty within the constitutional democracy that grew out of the American Revolution, some would say, Native Americans are still fighting to realize the promise of that revolution.

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The Righteous Revolution of Mercy Otis Warren

by Ray Raphael

Seven months after British Regulars marched on Lexington and Concord, three months after King George III declared the colonies in a state of rebellion, and a month after British artillery leveled the town of Falmouth (now Portland, Maine), even the most radical delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia did not dare utter the "I" word: independence. Their caution bothered Mercy Otis Warren, and she, for one, was ready to take the next step. On November 15, 1775, as her husband James penned a letter to the Warrens' close friend John Adams, a delegate to Congress, Mercy suddenly interrupted:
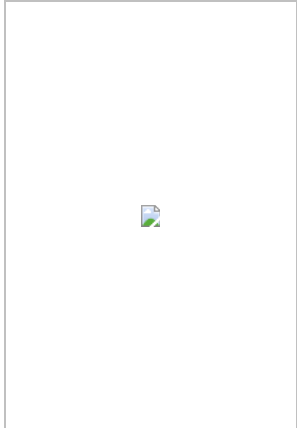
> She [Mrs. Warren] sits at the table with me, will have a paragraph of her own; says you [Congress] "should no longer *piddle* at the threshold. It is time to *leap* into the theatre, to unlock the bars, and open every gate that impedes the rise and growth of the American republic, and then let the giddy potentate send forth his puerile proclamations to France, to Spain and all the commercial world who may be united in building up an Empire which he can't prevent.

Then and there she composed some verse, "extempore":

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

> At leisure then may G[eor]ge his reign review,
> And bid to empire and to crown adieu.
> For lordly mandates and despotic kings
> Are obsolete like other quondam things.

Mercy Otis Warren had not always been so brazen. She was true-blue Puritan, a *Mayflower* descendent who lived a mere stone's throw from Plymouth Rock. She learned early on that her supreme duty, and the supreme duty of all women, was to submit to the will of God. But try as she must to submit, two things challenged her resolve: education and politics. As a child, when her two older brothers studied with a private tutor so they might attend Harvard, she convinced her father to let her crash the course. With a passion her brothers lacked, she devoured world history, English literature, Enlightenment philosophy, and everything else that came her way, filtering it all through a Calvinist lens to heighten its moral tone and didactic purpose.

Perhaps, in normal times, the ideas of the Enlightenment would have produced no more than minor diversions from the straight and narrow, but this was no ordinary epoch. In 1761, Mrs. Warren's older brother James Otis had argued in the Superior Court of Massachusetts that blanket search warrants, called "writs of assistance," should be declared null and void because they violated natural law. Four years later, during the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, her husband, James Warren, entered the fray as well. At least for her menfolk, the times were politically charged.

At first Mercy Warren tried to resist the pull of politics. Consulting her religion and her muse, Mrs. Warren produced a sweeping condemnation of political involvement, with its "dismal train of warring passions" and "endless strife." In a poem she titled "To J. Warren, Esqr./ An Invitation to retirement," she urged him to "Come leave the noisy smoky town/ Where vice and folly reign./ The vain pursuits of busy men/ We wisely will disdain."

It would not be long, however, before Mercy Warren succumbed to the warring passions and joined the dismal train. The turning point coincided with the mental and emotional unhinging of brother James. By 1769, even Otis's protégé John Adams admitted that the patriots' hero had become "raving mad." Strangely, James Otis's insanity strengthened the emerging bond between the Adams family (John and his wife, Abigail) and the family of Otis's sister (Mercy Otis Warren and her husband, James). For the next several years, as resistance turned to rebellion, these four came together frequently and wrote to each other incessantly, their friendship part-and-parcel of the dramatic events unfolding around them.

Meeting informally at the Warrens' home in Plymouth, John Adams, James Warren, and a cadre of patriot leaders surveyed the political landscape, discussed prospects, and developed strategies. According to one contemporary account, it was in the Warrens' salon that a new infrastructure for the growing resistance was first discussed: Committees of Correspondence for each local community throughout the province.

Contrary to custom, Mercy Warren contributed liberally to these conversations—and when she talked, men listened. Impressed by her learning and her talent for verbal expression, John Adams took a particular interest in James Warren's wife. He encouraged her to use her facility with verse to benefit their shared cause. Despite her professed admiration for the "gentleness, charity, and piety that adorned the female of earlier times," she obliged. Combining her knowledge of classical history with a penchant for flourish, she composed a series of dramatic satires—*The Adulateur*, *The Defeat* (and a sequel by the same name), *The Group*, *The Blockheads*—that she published anonymously in the patriotic press. These were no-holds-barred attacks on prominent local supporters of Crown policy, most notably Governor Thomas Hutchinson, thinly disguised as Rapatio, the rapacious "Bashaw" of "Upper Servia." Rapatio's opening soliloquy in *The Adulateur* set the tone:

> O Fortunate!
> Could I have tho't my stars would be so kind
> As thus to bring my deep laid schemes to bear!
> Tho' from my youth ambition's path I trod,
> Suck'd the contagion from my mother's breast;
> The early taint has rankl'd in my veins,
> And lust for pow'r is still my darling lust;
> Despotic rule my first, my sov'reign wish;
> Yet to succeed beyond my sanguine hope,
> To quench the gen'rous flame, the ardent love
> Of liberty in SERVIA'S freeborn sons,
> Destroy their boasted rights, and mark them slaves,
> To ride triumphant o'er my native land,
> And revel on its spoils.

When tradesmen and apprentices picked up the *Boston Gazette* or *Massachusetts Spy* to read Warren's biting satires (not knowing the author was a woman, of course), they might not get all the classical allusions, but they certainly got the gist of her critique: Colonial society was in the throes of an epic battle

between the virtuous and the wicked. For the author, this fight had enormous repercussions, with the moral tone of the British Empire hanging in the balance.

There was no hint of charity or even nuance in Mercy Warren's vindictive attacks. Her own rancor seemed to startle her, and nagged by her Puritan upbringing, she fretted. Early in 1775, after publishing her fourth confrontational piece, she asked John Adams whether he thought her "satiric propensity" should be "reined in." Was it justifiable to make a particular individual "the object of public derision"? Was it "consistent with the benevolent system of Christianity to vilify the delinquent, when we only wish to ward off the fatal consequences of his crime"? And one further question, peculiar to her particular circumstance: Was it permissible for a *woman* to vilify people this way, or was that overstepping the "narrow bounds" that circumscribed her proper role?

Mrs. Warren's most ardent admirer responded with the assurances she wanted and needed to receive, and perhaps the answer she was fishing for:

> If we look into human nature . . . we shall find it is really a dread of satyr that restrains our species from exorbitances, more than laws, human, moral or divine. . . . The business of satyr is to expose vice and vicious men as such to this scorn and to enrobe Virtue in all the charms which fancy can paint.

So Mercy Otis Warren, through her biting pen, was exposing vice to ensure virtue.

In these pre-war years, John Adams and Mercy Otis Warren developed a mutual admiration society of the first order, she praising his valiant forays in the political arena, and he trumpeting her literary works and urging her to write more. She willingly complied. In October of 1773, for his personal perusal, she penned sixty-four lines of verse, which she called simply "To Mr. Adams." In thirty-two rhyming couplets, marked by no shortage of abstract nouns (including Reason, Truth, Virtue, each capitalized), she entertained her audience of one and cajoled him to keep up the patriotic fight. Two months later, after patriots dumped tea into the Boston Harbor, Mercy Warren received a personal request from Adams for "a certain poetical pen, which has no equal that I know of in this Country . . . to describe a late frolic among the sea nymphs and goddesses." Flattered, Warren consulted her muse and responded with over one hundred lines.

Half a year later, as Adams headed off to the First Continental Congress, he asked his good friends James and Mercy Otis Warren for advice: "I must entreat the favour of your sentiments and Mrs. Warrens," he wrote to James, "what is proper, practicable expedient, wise, just, good necessary to be done at Phyladelphia." His request was not in jest this time, for serious business was at hand. James wrote back with his ideas, but Mercy politely declined to contribute: "I shall not be so presumptuous as to offer anything but my fervant wishes that the enemies of America may hereafter tremble at the wisdom the firmness the prudence and justice of the delegates." A few weeks later, however, she decided she had some important advice to offer after all. In a letter to Abigail Adams, she gave counsel to John: "[T]ell him I hope they will beware that no future annals may say they chose an ambitious Philip for their leader, who subverted the noble order of the American Amphyctiones [council of the ancient Greek league of Delphi] and built up a monarchy on the ruins of the happy institution." Ever suspicious of power and always vigilant against its corrupting influence, Mercy Warren had no immediate cause to worry that her good friend would abandon republican principles, and yet, in hindsight, her warning seems almost prophetic.

* * *

Mercy Otis Warren and John Adams experienced the war years from very different perspectives. He played first on a national stage in Philadelphia, where he helped steer Congress toward independence, and then on an international stage in Europe, where he represented American interests, both diplomatic and financial. She, meanwhile, stayed in Massachusetts, doing what she could to support her husband James in public duties that included president of the Provincial Congress, speaker of the Massachusetts Assembly, general in the Massachusetts militia, and paymaster general for the Continental Army. She continued to write, but only for private audiences. Reading her letters today, we see that the war took its toll on Mercy Otis Warren, dampening her dreams of a perfect, virtuous republic. She viewed the wartime profiteering in commercial Boston, offensive in its own right, as a personal affront. She groused, and as the war dragged on she groused even more. Meanwhile, her one-time friend and political partner John Adams was being corrupted by the decadence of European high society—at least that's how she saw the matter.

Politically, the two parted ways irrevocably in 1787–1788 during the debates over the proposed new Constitution for the United States. Although Adams himself was not present at the Constitutional Convention, the basic structure of the document reflected his thinking, his writings, and the constitution he had drafted for the state of Massachusetts back in 1779. Warren was no great fan of Adams's Massachusetts constitution, and she viewed the new framework for the nation as a clear repudiation of the republican ideals for which the Revolutionary War had been fought. Writing as "A Columbian Patriot," she argued that the Constitution, which lacked a bill of rights, undermined several liberties key to republican thought: freedom of the press, prohibition of warrantless searches and seizures, civil trials by jury, freedom from military oppression, annual elections, rotation of elected officials ("term limits" in today's parlance), direct access to representatives, explicit repudiation of aristocratic rule, and local control over taxation. Not knowing the "Columbian Patriot" was a woman, Antifederalists in the key battleground state of New York printed and distributed 1,700 copies of Warren's *Columbian Patriot* pamphlet to counter the 500 printed copies of the now-famous *Federalist Papers*.

In the fight over ratification, Warren lost the battle but not the war. With other Antifederalists, she could soon claim credit for passage of the Bill of Rights. After that, of course, Federalists controlled the government for a dozen years, a dominance climaxed by the near-dictatorial rule (in her eyes) of that republican-gone-astray, John Adams. But Mercy Warren and her allies, styling themselves republican defenders of the Revolution, rallied behind Thomas Jefferson to win back what they termed the soul of their nation. In 1805, feeling that the Revolution had been vindicated after all, and writing under her own name this time, Warren published her three-volume magnum opus, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution, interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Observations*, a book three decades in the making. Her most sweeping "moral observation" was that the American Revolution had been a great and heroic struggle for republican values—"the natural equality of man, their right of adopting their own modes of government, the dignity of the people." Another observation, though, was that the Revolution had started strong but slowly regressed, culminating in John Adams's betrayal of its most basic values. After "living near the splendor of courts and couriers," she wrote, Adams had "relinquished the republican system, and forgotten the principles of the American Revolution, which he had advocated for near twenty years." He even displayed "a partiality for monarchy"—a phrase she hung around his neck not once but twice.

Back in 1775, when the two were close comrades and Warren was just starting to jot down notes for her *History*, Adams had encouraged her to tell the truth on all occasions, come what may: "The faithful historian delineates characters truly, let the censure fall where it will." But that was not his attitude now. While Warren felt betrayed by Adams's politics, Adams thought he had been vilified unfairly by Warren's defamatory pen. Perhaps he was stunned, or perhaps he had suspected such an outcome ("I dread her

history," he had said jokingly back in 1780, when the two had first begun to fall out), but in any case he fired back with an angry letter to his former admirer, then another, and yet another, ten in all within a six-week period, some as long as twenty pages. "Why am I singled out to be stigmatized?" he demanded. And why had she not given him more credit for his role in the early stages of resistance? "I ought not to have been shoved off the theatre and kept behind the screen for fourteen years," he griped, without even the role "of a doorkeeper, a livery servant, a dancer, a singer, or a harlequin." Adams, by any standard, was unhinged by Warren's accusations. He accused her of pandering "to gratify the passions, prejudices, and feelings of the party who are now predominant," of adjusting her history to suit "the taste of the nineteenth century," and even of writing for revenge, since Adams, when in power, had not granted official positions to her sons.

In the face of Adams's wrath, Warren stood firm. "It is not in the design of my historic work to write a panegyric on your life and character, though fully sensible of your virtues and your services," she stated flatly. She observed that she had also said several favorable things (Adams was "endowed with a comprehensive genius" and "actuated by the principles of integrity"; he was also a man with "unimpeachable . . . habits of morality, decency, and religion"), but she refused to bend on political matters. Still, Adams continued his assault, writing additional letters before she had answered the previous one. Finally she just cut him off:

> The lines with which you concluded your late correspondence cap the climax of rancor, indecency, and vulgarism. Yet, as an old friend, I pity you; as a Christian, I forgive you; but there must be some acknowledgment of your injurious treatment or some advances to conciliation, to which my mind is ever open, before I can again feel that respect and affection toward Mr. Adams which once existed in the bosom of MERCY WARREN.

While once Warren had expressed concerns that as a woman she was overstepping her bounds by speaking harshly, those doubts were now gone. She accepted without complaint that men were better suited "to repel the bold invader," and beyond that, to "describe the blood-stained field" with "manly eloquence." But that advantage did not extend to moral history, her chosen genre. "A concern for the welfare of society ought equally to glow in every human heart," she wrote in the introduction to *History*. "Every domestic enjoyment depends on the unimpaired possession of civil and religious liberty," and as a woman, she suffered no disadvantage when transmitting the love of liberty "to the rising youth of my country."

Mercy Otis Warren was no modern feminist. She did not promote woman suffrage, but she did foster and model women's participation in the body politic through the promulgation of virtue in the public arena. She spoke her mind, wrote from her heart, and bowed to nobody. The Revolution, with its "warring passions" and challenges to traditional modes of political behavior, certainly affected this once-submissive woman—and she in turn placed her own stamp on the Revolution.

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The Antifederalists: The Other Founders of the American Constitutional Tradition?

by Saul Cornell

THE GREAT DEBATE

The publication of the Constitution in September 1787 inaugurated one of the most vigorous political campaigns in American history. In the process of arguing over the merits of the new plan of government, Americans not only engaged in a lively inquiry into the meaning of constitutional government, they also helped make constitutionalism a central defining characteristic of American political culture. Although the Constitution had been drafted in private by a small select group of statesmen, its meaning was inescapably public. As soon as the results of the Philadelphia Convention became known, Americans began discussing the new frame of government. A week after the convention adjourned, one Philadelphian reported that "the new plan of government proposed by the Convention has made a bustle in the city and its vicinity." Less than a month later, farther west in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, another observer noted that "the new Constitution for the United States seems now to engross the attention of all ranks." In other parts of America similar observations were made. One Virginia commentator remarked that "the plan of a Government proposed to us by the Convention—affords matter for conversation to every rank of beings from the Governor to the door keeper."[1]

Detail from the political cartoon "The Looking Glass for 1787," which focuses on the Federalist/Antifederalist conflict in Connecticut, shown here as a wagon filled with debts and sunk in mud. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

The decision of the Philadelphia Convention to submit the Constitution to state ratification conventions meant that Americans from all walks of life would be drawn into a wide-ranging public debate about its merits. The Constitution was subjected to an unprecedented level of public scrutiny; every clause of the document was parsed and analyzed. Some writers approached this task soberly, invoking the classical republican tradition by adopting pen names such as Brutus or Publius. Rather than inflame popular passions, these writers pleaded with their readers to examine the Constitution in a calm and dispassionate manner. Other authors took the low road, gleefully hurling invective and insult. One writer signaled his intention to adopt this scurrilous path by choosing to sign his name as "a Defecater." In one of the only surviving political cartoons from this epic debate, entitled "The Looking Glass for 1787," the outrageous nature of much of the popular debate over the Constitution comes through clearly. In this cartoon, one protagonist has dropped his pants with the intent of fouling his opponents. The central theme of the cartoon, an allegory about ratification in Connecticut, depicts the state as a wagon stuck in the mud, loaded down by paper money. Federalists valiantly try to pull the cart to a bright future, while Antifederalists impede the cart's progress.

The debate over the Constitution was not restricted to the pages of the nation's papers. Arguments over the merits of the Constitution were conducted in taverns, town squares, and occasionally in the streets. Federalists and Antifederalists each made use of the rituals of popular politics, parading and staging mock funerals and executions to express their views of the Constitution. In a few instances these spirited celebrations and protests escalated into full-scale riots. Violent outbursts, however, were the exception, not the norm, in the struggle over the Constitution.

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WHO WERE THE ANTIFEDERALISTS?

Antifederalists were never happy with their name. Indeed, Elbridge Gerry, a leading Antifederalist, reminded his fellow Congressmen that "those who were called antifederalists at the time complained that they had injustice done them by the title, because they were in favor of a Federal Government, and the others were in favor of a national one." Since the issue before the American people was ratification of the Constitution, Gerry reasoned it would have been more appropriate to call to the two sides "rats" and "anti-rats!"[2]

No group in American political history was more heterogeneous than Antifederalists. Even a cursory glance of the final vote on ratification demonstrates the incredible regional and geographical diversity of the Antifederalist coalition. Antifederalism was strong in northern and western New England, Rhode Island, the Hudson River Valley of New York, western Pennsylvania, the south side of Virginia, North Carolina, and upcountry South Carolina. The opposition to the Constitution brought together rich planters in the South, "middle class" politicians in New York and Pennsylvania, and backcountry farmers from several different regions. Among leading Antifederalist voices one could count members of the nation's political elite—aristocratic planters such as Virginia's George Mason and the wealthy New England merchant Elbridge Gerry. Mason and Gerry were adherents of a traditional variant of republicanism, one that viewed the centralization of power as a dangerous step toward tyranny. The opposition to the Constitution in the mid-Atlantic, by contrast, included figures such as weaver-turned-politician William Findley and a former cobbler from Albany, Abraham Yates. These new politicians, drawn from more humble, middling ranks, were buoyed up by the rising tide of democratic sentiments unleashed by the American Revolution. These men feared that the Constitution threatened the democratic achievements of the Revolution, which could only survive if the individual states—the governments closest to the people— retained the bulk of power in the American system. Finally, Antifederalism also attracted adherents of a more radical plebeian view of democracy. For these plebeian populists, only the direct voice of the people as represented by the local jury, local militia, or the actions of the crowd taking to the streets could fulfill their radical localist ideal of democracy. The democratic ethos championed by Findley and Yates proved far too tame for plebeian populists such as William Petrikin, the fiery backcountry radical from Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

THE ANTIFEDERALIST CRITIQUE OF THE CONSTITUTION

Although there was considerable diversity among the opponents of the Constitution, the outline of a common critique of the Constitution slowly emerged as the document was debated in public. Three core issues defined this critique:

1. The omission of a bill of rights

   The absence of a bill of rights was an often-repeated criticism of the Constitution. Antifederalists

not only believed that the inclusion of a bill of rights was essential to the preservation of liberty, but they also believed that a fundamental statement of political and legal principle would educate citizens about the ideals of republicanism and make them more effective guardians of their own liberty.

2. The centralizing tendencies of the new government

The new powerful central government created by the Constitution would slowly absorb all power within its orbit and effectively reduce the states to insignificant players in a powerful new centralized nation state. Antifederalists feared that the new Constitution would create a central state similar to Great Britain's fiscal/military model. The extensive powers to tax, the provision for a standing army, and the weakening of the state militias would allow this new powerful government to become tyrannical.

3. The aristocratic character of the new government

The charge of aristocracy frequently voiced by Antifederalists could be framed in either democratic terms or in a more traditional republican idiom. Thus, for middling democrats or plebeian populists, the charge of aristocracy was in essence a democratic critique of the Constitution. According to this view, the Constitution favored the interests of the wealthy over those of common people. For elite Antifederalists, by contrast, the charge of aristocracy echoed the traditional republican concern that any government with too much power would inevitably become corrupt and would place the interests of those in power over the common good.

ANTIFEDERALISM AND THE HISTORIANS

The changing historical view of Antifederalism has itself become a remarkable historical litmus test for the political mood of the nation. Throughout American history, Antifederalist ideas have been resurrected by groups eager to challenge the power of the central government. Historians have not been exempt from the tendency to see Antifederalism through a political lens. Over the course of the twentieth century historians continuously reinterpreted the meaning of Antifederalism. These different interpretations tell us as much about the hopes and fears of the different generations of scholars who wrote about the opposition to the Constitution as it does about the Antifederalists themselves.

At the end of the nineteenth century, populists cast the Antifederalists as rural democrats who paved the way for Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy.[3] This interpretation was challenged by counter-progressive historians writing during the Cold War era. For these scholars, the Antifederalists were examples of the paranoid style of American politics and were backward-looking thinkers who failed to grasp the theoretical brilliance of the new Constitution.[4] This claim was later challenged by Neo-Progressive historians who saw Antifederalism as a movement driven by agrarian localists who were opposed by a group of commercial cosmopolitan supporters of the Constitution.[5] The rise of the new social history during the turbulent era of the 1960s had relatively little impact on scholarship on Antifederalism. The many community studies produced by social historians were generally concerned with more long-term changes in American society and hence tended to shy away from the topic of ratification. Social history's emphasis on recovering the history of the inarticulate also pulled historians away from the study of elite constitutional ideas in favor of other topics. [Thus, none of the many excellent New England town studies, for example, dealt directly with ratification. Some neo-conservative scholars actually faulted the new social history for abandoning constitutional politics entirely; see Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The New History and the Old* (1987)].

The Constitution was, however, of considerable interest to students of early American political ideology. For scholars working within this ideological paradigm, the struggle between Federalists and Antifederalists was a key battle in the evolution of American political culture. Some saw the opponents of the Constitution as champions of a traditional civic republican ideology, clinging to notions of virtue and railing at corruption. Others cast the Antifederalists as the forerunners of modern liberal individualism with its emphasis on rights and an interest-oriented theory of politics.[6]

Over the course of the twentieth century Antifederalism played a central role in a number of different narratives about American history. For some, opposition to the Constitution was part of the rise of democracy; for others, it heralded the decline of republicanism; while others saw it as source of modern liberal individualism. Given the heterogeneity of Antifederalism, it is possible to find evidence to support all of these claims, and more. Rather than seek a single monolithic true Antifederalist voice, it would be more accurate to simply recognize that Antifederalism was a complex political movement with various ideological strains, each of which made important contributions to the contours of early American political and constitutional life.

ANTIFEDERALISM AND THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL TRADITION: THE ENDURING LEGACY OF THE OTHER FOUNDERS

Historians and political scientists are hardly the only groups to show an interest in the ideas of the Antifederalists. Judges, lawyers, and legal scholars have increasingly canvassed the ideas of the Antifederalists in their efforts to discover the original understanding of the Constitution and the various provisions of the Bill of Rights. Indeed, in a host of areas, from federalism to the Second Amendment, legal scholars and courts have increasingly turned to Antifederalist texts to support their conclusions.[7] If the past is any guide to the future, the ideas of the Antifederalists are likely to continue to play a prominent role in future constitutional controversies.

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[1] Saul Cornell. *The Other Founders: Anti-Federalism and the Dissenting Tradition in America, 1788–1828* (1999).

[2] Cornell, *Other Founders*.

[3] Orrin Grant Libby. *The Geographical Distribution of the Vote of the Thirteen States on the Federal Constitution, 1787–88* (1894).

[4] Cecelia Kenyon. *Men of Little Faith: The Anti-Federalists on the Nature of Representative Government* (1955).

[5] Jackson Turner Main. *The Antifederalists; Critics of the Constitution, 1781–1788* (1961).

[6] Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776–1787* (1969); Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: The Evolution of a Party Ideology* (1978); Richard Beeman, et al., eds. *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and National Identity* (1987). For an early effort to frame the struggle over the Constitution in light of the perspective of new social history, see Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (1985; rev ed. 2003).

[7] Michael C. Dorf, "No Federalists Here: Anti-Federalism and Nationalism on the Rehnquist Court" 31 *Rutgers Law Journal* 741 (2000).

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The Supreme Court Then and Now

by A. E. Dick Howard

The framers of the United States Constitution made clear that the document was to be regarded as fundamental law. Article VI states that the Constitution and those laws "which shall be made in pursuance thereof" (as well as treaties) shall be "the supreme Law of the Land." The framers also provided, in Article III, for one Supreme Court and such inferior courts as Congress might establish. Do those two provisions, read together, give the Supreme Court the power to strike down laws, including acts of Congress, found to be inconsistent with the Constitution?

"The Chief Justices of the United States," published by Kurz and Allison, 1894. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

While the framers clearly intended that there be a judicial branch, at the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 they spent little time mulling how far the "judicial power" might extend. They spent far more time debating the powers the new federal government would have, the composition of the federal Congress, the balance which ought to be struck between state and federal power, and the nature of the new federal executive. When the proposed Constitution was put to the several states for their approval, the ratification debates focused heavily on concerns about federal power generally—and on the lack of a bill of rights.

At the state level, judicial review—the power of a court to declare a legislative act to be unconstitutional—was only just beginning to emerge in the early years of the republic. The very idea of democracy was thought to emphasize the role of legislatures as being the voice of popular will. But Americans soon discovered that their own legislatures, like kings or parliaments, could threaten rights and freedoms. Hence, along with ideas like separation of powers and checks and balances, judicial review emerged as a linchpin of ensuring constitutional supremacy.

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At the federal level, it was Chief Justice John Marshall who, in 1803, made explicit the courts' power of judicial review. In famous language, oft quoted in later cases, Marshall declared, "It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is." And that duty, he concluded, encompasses the courts' power to strike down even acts of Congress if they are found to conflict with the Constitution.

Until the American Civil War, the Supreme Court's constitutional jurisprudence focused largely on matters of federalism. The Bill of Rights, added to the Constitution in 1791, applied only to federal actions, not to the states. After the Civil War, however, the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment enjoined the states from denying any person due process of law or equal protection of the laws. In time these provisions would be the basis both for major congressional actions (such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964) and for more sweeping judicial power (notably including the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, finding racial segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the Supreme Court was often perceived as protecting property and enterprise against progressive legislation. In 1905, for example, the Court, striking down a New York law limiting the number of hours bakers could work in a day, called such statutes "meddlesome interferences" with the rights of individuals. That kind of judicial thinking put the Court on a collision course, in the 1930s, with President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Threatened with "Court packing"—the proposal that further seats might be added to the Court—the justices changed course and took a more deferential approach to state and federal social and economic reform legislation.

Today's Supreme Court undertakes to review a remarkable range of issues. America is sometimes referred to as a "litigious society." Certainly Americans seem to have a knack for converting disputes into judicial contests—a trait commented on in the nineteenth century by Alexis de Tocqueville. In the 1960s, in the era of Chief Justice Earl Warren, the Court embarked on an especially ambitious agenda. The Warren Court decreed one person, one vote to be the rule in legislative appointment, applied most of the procedural guarantees of the Bill of Rights to the states, gave heart to the civil rights movement, and opened the door to a constitutional right of privacy and autonomy. Even with justices appointed by more recent Republican presidents, the Court has shown a discernable self-confidence in tackling many of the country's great issues.

What role does the Supreme Court play in American life? Among its key functions is that of being an arbiter of the federal system. No issue occupied more of the framers' attention at Philadelphia than giving the national government adequate powers while at the same time protecting the interests of the states. Thus the Supreme Court regularly is called upon to decide whether a federal statute or regulation preempts a state action. Likewise, the Court is often asked to decide whether a state law, otherwise valid, impinges upon some national interest such as the free flow of commerce. For example, when North Carolina passed a law that, neutral on its face, discriminated against Washington state apples in favor of local growers, the Court saw protectionism at work and invalidated North Carolina's law.

The Supreme Court also plays a fundamental role in ensuring the rights and liberties of individuals. James Madison once worried lest the Bill of Rights be only a "parchment barrier." In modern times the Court has been active in enforcing the guarantees of the Bill of Rights, not only against the federal government (their original purpose), but also against the states. The Court's reading of constitutional protections has often been robust and assertive. For example, in 1963 the Court held that the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of the right to counsel means, not only one's right to have a lawyer in court, but also the right to have counsel appointed, at state expense, if the defendant is too poor to afford a lawyer. The justices are especially solicitous of freedom of expression. Thus, in 1965 the Court held that, if a public officials who bring libel suits must meet a demanding standard— "actual malice," that is, proving that the speaker knew that the statement was false or acted in reckless disregard of its truthfulness.

One hears lively debate over whether the Constitution should be read as a "living" document. Some argue that judges should search for the Constitution's "original meaning," that is, the meaning ascribed it to by its framers, augmented perhaps by tradition and precedent. Others see the document as more organic. Thus in cases arising under the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment, the Court has invoked a notion of "evolving standards," permitting the Court, as it did in 2005, to declare the death penalty for youthful offenders to be unconstitutional.

There is no doubt that the Court has gone beyond the literal text of the Constitution in recognizing and securing particular rights. A conspicuous example is the right of privacy or autonomy. Drawing upon the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of due process of law, the Court has found constitutional protection for such interests as the right of contraception, a woman's right to choose to have an abortion,

and, in 2004, the right not to be punished by a state for homosexual behavior. The Court's abortion decisions have been especially controversial, but, whatever the Court may do in future abortion cases, it is hard to imagine the justices' declaring that there is no constitutional basis, in general, for some notion of personal privacy.

Under the Constitution, justices of the Supreme Court serve for life or good behavior. No justice has ever been removed from the Court by impeachment. Nominations to the Court, however, have in recent decades become highly political events. The more territory the Court's decisions cover, the higher the stakes when a vacancy occurs. To what extent, then, do the Court's decisions reflect the social and political attitudes of the day? Some cynics suggest that the justices "read the newspapers"—that they take public opinion into account when they shape opinions. There is little basis for this view. A fairer judgment is that, over the long term, the Court tends to reflect the country's dominant mood. Thus the Warren Court, in the 1960s, was sympathetic to national solutions for national problems. Under the leadership of Chief Justice Rehnquist, the Court in more recent years became, in some respects, a more conservative tribunal, more respectful of the states' place in the federal union. As the Roberts Court gets underway, the struggle between the more conservative and liberal justices on the Court seems to have become sharper.

The Supreme Court's decisions raise a fundamental question: What is the place of an unelected judiciary in a democracy? There is an inherent tension between two basic principles in a constitutional liberal democracy—accountable government by a democratically elected majority, and enforcement of the Constitution even if it requires striking down laws favored by that majority. Judicial review is especially attractive when it reinforces democratic principles such as one person, one vote, free and fair elections, and freedom of speech and press. The rule of law—indeed, the very idea of a constitution—requires that the Constitution be enforced as the supreme law of the land. The Supreme Court may err in particular cases. But the Court's role in ensuring the rule of law commands widespread assent among the American people.

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The Legal Status of Women, 1776–1830

by Marylynn Salmon

State law rather than federal law governed women's rights in the early republic. The authority of state law meant that much depended upon where a woman lived and the particular social circumstances in her region of the country. The disparity in standards can perhaps be seen most dramatically in the experiences of African American women. In the North, where states abolished slavery after the Revolution, black women gained rights to marry, to have custody of their children, and to own property. On paper at least, their rights were identical to those of white women. In the slaveholding South, lawmakers continued to deny enslaved workers these basic human rights. But even in the South, a rising number of freed black women theoretically enjoyed the same privileges under the law as white women. However, racial prejudice against both black and Native American women made it difficult to ensure these rights in practice.

"The Life and Age of Woman," by A. Alden, Barre, MA, ca. 1835. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

In every state, the legal status of free women depended upon marital status. Unmarried women, including widows, were called "femes soles," or "women alone." They had the legal right to live where they pleased and to support themselves in any occupation that did not require a license or a college degree restricted to males. Single women could enter into contracts, buy and sell real estate, or accumulate personal property, which was called *personalty*. It consisted of everything that could be moved—cash, stocks and bonds, livestock, and, in the South, slaves. So long as they remained unmarried, women could sue and be sued, write wills, serve as guardians, and act as executors of estates. These rights were a continuation of the colonial legal tradition. But the revolutionary emphasis on equality brought some important changes in women's inheritance rights. State lawmakers everywhere abolished primogeniture and the tradition of double shares of a parent's estate, inheritance customs that favored the eldest son. Instead, equal inheritance for all children became the rule—a big gain for daughters.

Marriage changed women's legal status dramatically. When women married, as the vast majority did, they still had legal rights but no longer had autonomy. Instead, they found themselves in positions of almost total dependency on their husbands which the law called coverture. As the English jurist William Blackstone famously put it in his *Commentaries on English Law* (1765–1769):

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By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in the law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs every thing.

Coverture was based on the assumption that a family functioned best if the male head of a household controlled all of its assets. As a result, a married woman could not own property independently of her

husband unless they had signed a special contract called a marriage settlement. Such contracts were rare and even illegal in some parts of the country. In the absence of a separate estate, all personalty a woman brought to her marriage or earned during marriage, including wages, became her husband's. He could manage it or give it away, as he chose, without consulting her.

This sounds bad, and it was. But one rule worked to mitigate some of the worst effects of coverture. A married woman had the right to be maintained in a manner commensurate with her husband's social status. If he refused to provide for her appropriately, she could sue and win support from the courts. While waiting for the court's judgment, she was permitted to run up charges at local stores and taverns—and her husband had to pay for them. Judges consistently applied this rule, called the *doctrine of necessities*, in order to prevent men from neglecting their wives. But the courts could not stop husbands from gambling or making bad investments. Women had no protection when their husbands proved irresponsible. If creditors pursued a husband for debts, his wife was entitled to keep only the bare necessities of life. This was usually defined as two dresses (so she would have one to wear while the other was being washed), cooking utensils, and a bed.

Women's rights to *real property*—the lands and buildings that constituted most wealth in the early national period—were more extensive than their rights to personalty. A husband could not sell or mortgage the realty his wife brought to their marriage without her consent. He could use it, but he could not convey it because a woman's real estate, generally inherited from her father, was meant to stay in the family and descend through her to her children. A wife also had important rights to the real property that her husband brought to the marriage or purchased afterwards. He could not sell or mortgage it unless she signed a statement signifying her free consent, which was recorded with the deed. Few mortgagors or buyers would enter into an agreement without the wife's consent. They knew that she retained her right to be maintained by the property in the event of her husband's death, even if he died insolvent. Courts were careful to ensure that a wife signed a conveyance of her own free will and not because of pressure from her husband. A court officer questioned her apart from him to confirm that she actually agreed to the sale or mortgage.

One of the most important rights of a married woman was *dower*, which was designed to provide her with support during widowhood. It consisted of a life estate in one-third of the husband's real property if there were children and one half if there were not. A "life estate" did not mean actual ownership of the property. It was meant only to provide for the wife as her husband would have done had he lived, under a legal system that recognized her position of dependency within the family. When a widow died, her dower lands descended automatically to her husband's heirs or to his creditors. A solvent husband could leave his widow more than dower if he chose to. He could even leave her his entire estate in fee simple (absolute ownership). But he could not leave her less. Most couples relied on dower as their standard for how much to leave.

Dower was a legal tradition carried over from colonial days. This and other rules about married women's property rights were meant to support the family as a unit. They worked reasonably well in an economic system based on landed wealth, under which families typically stayed in one place and rarely sold or mortgaged their farms. They did not work as well, however, in a society like the rapidly expanding and industrializing nineteenth-century United States, where lands changed hands frequently and where there was growth in personal property as well as land.

Under these new circumstances, the old system of property law faltered. It failed to give adequate protection to women and, at the same time, denied them the ability to safeguard their own interests. In recognition of this dilemma, states began to pass married women's property acts in the antebellum

decades. These acts gave wives the same legal rights as single women with regard to their estates and wages. It was piecemeal legislation, enacted reluctantly by male lawmakers who would have preferred to keep women dependent within the family. Yet the lawmakers recognized that these reforms were essential in a capitalist economy based on movable wealth.

Political rights were a function of control over property for men in the republic, but gender alone was the basis for women's exclusion from voting or holding office. Simply put, men with property had the right to vote in the early national period but women, no matter how wealthy, did not, even though women paid the same taxes as men. The reasoning behind this discrimination rested on the assumption that married women were liable to coercion by their husbands; if a wife voted, legislators argued, it meant that a man cast two ballots. As one man put it, "How can a fair one refuse her lover?" Yet single women were also denied suffrage, a clear sign that more was at stake than the power of a husband to influence his wife's choices at the polls.

Blatantly discriminatory attitudes kept lawmakers from giving women the vote. They did not want to share their political power with daughters, mothers, and wives, just as they did not want to share it with freed black men or immigrants. This pattern can be seen clearly in New Jersey, the one state where women with property were allowed to vote after the Revolution. In 1807 legislators took this right away—not only from women but from black men and aliens as well. As it turned out, discrimination against women in the area of the franchise lasted the longest of any disadvantaged group, at least on paper.

American independence brought women greater freedom from husbands who were abusive, neglectful, or adulterous. In colonial society, divorce was virtually impossible under English precedent, but all of the new states recognized the need to end unhappy marriages. The choice of appropriate remedies varied considerably, however. Some states, particularly in the South, only allowed separate residence with alimony (called divorce from bed and board). Other states granted absolute divorce with the right of the innocent party to remarry. In matters of divorce, social and religious values affected the laws in different parts of the country. The conservatism of divorce laws in the southern states, for example, was probably related to slavery: it was difficult for lawmakers to grant women absolute divorces because of their husbands' adulterous relationships with slaves. Liberal New England laws, in contrast, stemmed from a longstanding Puritan belief that it was better for unhappy couples to separate and remarry than to be joined forever in a state of discord and temptation to sin.

Child-custody rights also changed after the Revolution. The courts were increasingly willing to bypass colonial precedents that favored men in custody disputes. Instead, they placed young children and daughters (although not sons) under the care of mothers. These reforms reflect the rising importance of the gender-based ideology of separate spheres, which gave women moral preeminence in the private sphere of the home and men supremacy in the marketplace and politics. Women would use the concept of moral motherhood to great advantage in their struggle for social justice over the next century.

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The Presidential Election of 1800: A Story of Crisis, Controversy, and Change

by Joanne B. Freeman

Nasty political mud-slinging. Campaign attacks and counterattacks. Personal insults. Outrageous newspaper invective. Dire predictions of warfare and national collapse. Innovative new forms of politicking capitalizing on a growing technology. As much as this seems to describe our present-day presidential contests, it actually describes an election more than two hundred years past.

Resolutions for amending the Constitution on Election of the President, 1800. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

The presidential election of 1800 was an angry, dirty, crisis-ridden contest that seemed to threaten the nation's very survival. A bitter partisan battle between Federalist John Adams and Republican Thomas Jefferson, it produced a tie between Jefferson and his Republican running mate, Aaron Burr; a deadlock in the House where the tie had to be broken; an outburst of intrigue and suspicion as Federalists struggled to determine a course of action; Jefferson's election; and Burr's eventual downfall. The unfolding of this crisis tested the new nation's durability. The deadlock in the House revealed a constitutional defect. It also pushed partisan rivalry to an extreme, inspiring a host of creative and far-reaching electoral ploys. As a sense of crisis built, there was even talk of disunion and civil war, and indeed, two states began to organize their militias to seize the government if Jefferson did not prevail.

Oddly enough, this pivotal election has received relatively little scholarly attention. Much of it is recent, possibly inspired by the presidential election of 2000. One recent study—*Adams vs. Jefferson,* by John Ferling—does an excellent job of tracing the contest's many twists and turns. (Judging from its title, *Jefferson's Second Revolution*, by Susan Dunn, to be released in September 2004, promises to do the same.) A recent collection of articles, *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic,* edited by James Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf, offers an excellent survey of different historical approaches to the election, such as the study of constitutional realities, political culture, or the influence of slavery. Garry Wills's *Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power* focuses on the influence of slavery on Jefferson's politics, including his election as president. And yours truly examines the election as a prime example of the period's political culture in the final chapter of *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic.* Older studies that discuss the election include Noble E. Cunningham Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789–1801* (1957); Daniel Sisson, *The American Revolution of 1800* (1974); Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism* (1993); and James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (1993).

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Why so little scholarship? In part, because of our tendency to view the election of 1800 as a victory for
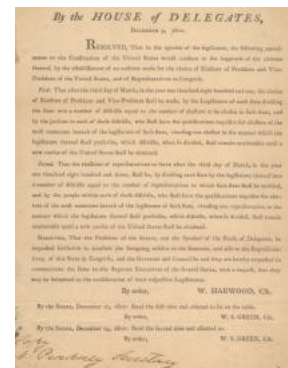
our modern two-party system—the first such victory in American national politics. As the nation's constitutional framework dictated, Federalist Adams handed the presidency to Republican Jefferson, a new regime took command, and the nation endured. Viewed in this light—as a neat and tidy stepping-stone to modern party politics—the election doesn't seem to merit further analysis.

This is not to say that the calm transferal of power from one regime to another is not noteworthy. It was certainly a powerful endorsement of our Constitution. But envisioning the election as the birth of our modern political system masks the many ways in which it was distinctly not modern. In fact, in 1800, there was no modern party system. The Republicans and Federalists were not parties as we now understand them. An institutionalized two-party system would not be accepted for decades to come. And events were far more uncertain and crisis-ridden than the idea of a "system" allows; there was no telling what would happen or why. Similarly, participants operated according to ideas and assumptions very different from our own. In short, the election of 1800 transpired in a world with its own culture and contingencies.

To recapture the contingency of this historical moment, we have to look through the eyes of our historical subjects and understand them in the context of their own world. In 1800, the American Constitution had been in effect for only eleven years. The national government was still a work-in-progress, a political experiment with no model of comparison in the modern world. A republic was supposedly superior to its Old World predecessors, but this assumption had yet to be tested. Political parties were not an accepted part of this picture: instead they were viewed as illicit groups of self-interested men intent on winning power and position in the next election. The stability and long-term practicability of a republic was likewise a question, every political crisis raising fears of disunion and civil war. This tense, tenuous political environment produced anxiety, bitterness, and high emotion for good reason.

Given America's survival for more than two hundred years, it is easy to forget this central political reality of the early Republic: The United States was new, fragile, shaky, and likely to collapse, a prevailing anxiety that could not help but have an enormous impact on the period's politics. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, the two driving forces behind the Constitution, went to their deaths with the Union's vulnerability on their minds. Both men wrote final pleas for its preservation on the eve of their demise, Madison composing a memorandum entitled "Advice to My Country," and Hamilton writing one last letter on the night before his duel with Aaron Burr, urging a friend to fight against the "Dismemberment of our Empire."[1] Indeed, Hamilton fought the duel in part to preserve his reputation for that future time when the Republic would collapse and his leadership would be in demand.[2] Virginian Henry Lee's offhand comment in a 1790 letter to James Madison is a blunt reminder of the tenuous nature of the national Union: "If the government should continue to exist . . . ," Madison wrote in passing, offering evidence of a mindset that is difficult to recapture.[3]

Witness the period's political chronology. In 1790, the controversy over the location of the national capital and Alexander Hamilton's financial plan convinced many that the Union was not long for this world. In 1792, partisan conflict exploded into the newspapers, threatening, as George Washington put it, to "tare the [federal] Machine asunder."[4] In 1793, the inflammatory activities of "Citizen" Edmond Genet threatened to spread French revolutionary fervor to American shores, prompting even Francophile Republicans to abandon his cause. In 1794, when western Pennsylvania farmers refused to pay a national whiskey tax, President George Washington called an armed force of 15,000 soldiers to the field. [5] In 1795, the lackluster Jay Treaty with Britain provoked angry public protests around the nation; thousands of people gathered in New York City alone, a handful of them reputedly throwing rocks at Alexander Hamilton's head. In 1796, with George Washington's retirement, the nation had its first real presidential election, Washington's departure alone prompting many to fear the nation's imminent

collapse. The 1797–1798 XYZ Affair (prompted by a French attempt to get bribe money from American diplomats), the Quasi-War with France (stemming from French seizure of American ships and the XYZ Affair), the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts (wartime measures to deport threatening aliens and silence attacks on the government), the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions (recommending that state governments interpose their authority over the Alien and Sedition Acts), Fries's Rebellion (a revolt against wartime taxes), and finally, the presidential election of 1800—these are only the most prominent of the period's many crises, each one raising serious questions about the survival and character of the national government and its relationship to the body politic.

Even the Constitution itself was uncertain—a work-in-progress with serious design flaws. The election ultimately centered on one of these flaws—a fundamental constitutional defect in the presidential and vice presidential voting process. As originally drafted, the Constitution did not differentiate between presidential and vice presidential candidates. Each presidential elector cast two votes, and regardless of political affiliation, the man who received the most votes became president and the runner-up became vice president; any candidate could win either office. When two candidates were tied, the election was thrown into the House, where each state had one vote, to be decided by a majority of the delegation. In 1796, this produced a Federalist president (John Adams) and a Republican vice president (Thomas Jefferson). In 1800, it created a tied election in which both candidates were entitled to claim the presidency, and even the backup procedure of deciding the election in the House almost failed; it took six days and thirty-six ballots to break the deadlock. This defect was resolved by the Twelfth Amendment in 1804, which provided separate balloting for president and vice president.

So the dire predictions and overwrought rhetoric that characterized the election were not mere campaign excess; people really feared disunion. They were also nervous about party loyalties. Rather than intense party unity, there was a jumble of suspicions and conflicting loyalties—personal, ideological, and regional, as well as partisan—at the heart of the election. For example, Northerners and Southerners deeply distrusted each other—Federalists and Republicans alike. Aware of this potential problem, both alliances held a congressional caucus before the election, during which Northerners and Southerners personally vowed to support the candidate from the other region. These vows ultimately proved necessary, for regional loyalties came to the fore throughout the election, prompting a string of nervous demands for reassurance. After hearing a rumor that Virginia Republicans were going to drop votes for Burr to ensure Jefferson's victory, Burr's friend David Gelston sent two anxious letters to Madison, reminding him that personal honor was at stake. "I am not willing to believe it possible that such measures [as dropping votes for Burr] can be contemplated," he wrote, suggesting just the opposite. "We know that the honour of the Gentlemen of Virgina, and N.Y. was pledged at the adjournment of Congress," and to violate such an agreement would be "a sacrilege."[6] A letter from Madison to Jefferson reveals that Gelston's fears were well founded. Gelston "expresses much anxiety & betrays some jealousy with respect to the integrity of the Southern States," Madison wrote. "I hope the event will skreen all the parties, particularly Virginia[,] from any imputation on this subject; tho' I am not without fears, that the requisite concert may not sufficiently pervade the several States." Such fears eventually compelled Jefferson himself, as he later explained, to take "some measures" to ensure Burr Virginia's unanimous vote.[7]

Clearly, this was no election of simple party politics. Nor did it represent a sudden acceptance of a "modern" politics. The Federalist and Republican congressional caucuses of May 1800 suggest as much. Led astray by the word "caucus," many scholars pinpoint these meetings as a modern innovation. But in truth, they were something quite different. Participants sometimes referred to them as "caucuses," but they also called them "the agreement," "the promise," "the compromise," and "the pledge," to which they would be "faithful" and "true."[8] Clearly, these caucuses involved negotiation and compromise between men of different views, rather than the simple confirmation of a presidential ticket. Nor was the result of

these compromises—electoral tickets featuring a northerner and a southerner—a foregone conclusion, regardless of how obvious such a strategy seems to us. For national politicians, a cross-regional ticket was risky, for it required a high degree of national partisan loyalty and mutual trust between North and South. The national caucuses were attempts to create national party unity, not expressions of it. Indeed, as suggested by words such as "pledge" and "promise," national party loyalty was so weak that it had to be supplemented by personal vows. To compel politicians to stay the course, they had to commit themselves by pledging their word of honor and their reputations; the only way to unite Northerners and Southerners was to appeal to them as gentlemen who would be dishonored if they abandoned their allies. These honor-pledging ceremonies were not party caucuses as we understand them today.

The election was ultimately decided by a Federalist who abandoned his political loyalties, putting his loyalty to his home state above all else; James Bayard, the lone representative from Delaware, had an entire state's vote in his power during the deadlock in the House. A letter to Hamilton written shortly after the tie was announced reveals Bayard's dilemma. First and foremost, he considered himself a Federalist who would require "the most undoubting conviction" before he separated himself from his Federalist friends. He also thought of himself as a Northerner whose intense dislike of Virginia seemed to make Burr the preferable choice for president. Under normal circumstances, these two perspectives would have been in accord, for the Federalists were largely a Northern party with a particular hatred of Virginia, the heart of their Republican opposition. Bayard's problems arose when he perceived a conflict between Federalist concerns and the welfare of his home state. New England Federalists seemed willing to sacrifice the Union rather than install Jefferson as president. And if the Union collapsed, the tiny state of Delaware would probably be swallowed by another state or a foreign power. As Bayard explained after the election, "Representing the smallest State in the Union, without resources which could furnish the means of self protection, I was compelled by the obligation of a sacred duty so to act as not to hazard the constitution upon which the political existence of the State depends."[9] Compelled to decide between loyalty to Federalism and to his home state, Bayard abandoned Federalism.

In all of these ways, the election of 1800 cannot be summed up as a stepping-stone to modern party politics. Of course, there are exceptions to all rules, and not surprisingly, Aaron Burr offers one exception. Inspired by the prevailing sense of crisis (as well as by his sheer enjoyment of the political game), Burr pushed political innovation to an extreme. Anxieties were certainly at an extreme in the spring of 1800, for New York City was the most crucial contest of the campaign, capable of deciding the election. The challenge of the moment spurred Burr to new heights of political creativity. For example, he personalized his campaign to an extraordinary degree, purportedly compiling a roster with the name of every New York City voter, accompanied by a detailed description of his political leanings, temperament, and financial standing. His plan was to portion the list out to his cadre of young supporters, who would literally electioneer door-to-door; in the process, he was politically organizing the citizenry—not his goal, but the logical outcome. Similarly, rather than selecting potential electors based on their rank and reputation, he selected the men "most likely to run well," canvassing voters to test the waters. Perhaps his most striking innovations concerned his advance preparations for the city's three polling days. As one contemporary described it, Burr "kept open house for nearly two months, and Committees were in session day and night during that whole time at his house. Refreshments were always on the table and mattresses for temporary repose in the rooms. Reporters were hourly received from sub-committees, and in short, no means left unemployed."[10] In essence, Burr created an early version of a campaign headquarters.

Indeed, as a whole, the election featured a number of electoral innovations. Newspapers were used with particular effectiveness, partly the result of creative politicking, and partly the result of the ever-spreading power of the press—a growing technology. Also, some elite politicians spent more time electioneering

among voters than they had before; for example, both Burr and Hamilton pledged "to come forward, and address the people" during the course of the election. During New York City's three days of voting, both men scurried from polling place to polling place, addressing the crowds. As Burr supporter Matthew Davis noted, this Burr had "never done at any former election."[11] The partisan presses recognized the novelty of such a gesture. How could a "would be Vice President . . . stoop so low as to visit every corner in search of voters?" asked the Federalist *Daily Advertiser*. The *Commercial Advertiser* likewise commented on the "astonished" electorate that greeted Hamilton's efforts.[12]

The tone of politics was slowly shifting. But such changes do not signal a simple acceptance of a "modern" form of politics. In the crisis-ridden election of 1800, the many prevailing anxieties about the fate of the Union pushed people to change past habits. Of course, people did not accept such change in a blind rush. Rather, they forged a gradual, intricate series of compromises between "shoulds" and "should-nots," negotiating between past standards and the demands of the moment. For the political elite, this involved new levels of communication with the populace. Examined closely, this type of compromise reveals the complex dynamic of political change. The nature of politics changed slowly, one decision at a time.

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[1] James Madison, "Advice to My Country," 1834, in Irving Brant, *James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812–1836* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1961), 530–31; Alexander Hamilton to Theodore Sedgwick, July 10, 1804, Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 27 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961–87), 26:309.

[2] See Alexander Hamilton, [Statement on Impending Duel with Aaron Burr], [June 28–July 10, 1804], *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton,* 26:278, 280.

[3] Henry Lee to James Madison, April 3, 1790, Robert Rutland and J. C. A. Stagg, eds., *The Papers of James Madison,* 17 vols. to date (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1962–), 13:136.

[4] George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, August 26, 1792, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 12:276.

[5] See Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 481. This book offers a detailed discussion of the many crises of the 1790s.

[6] David Gelston to James Madison, October 8 and November 21, 1800, *The Papers of James Madison,* 17:418–19, 438; James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, October 21, 1800, *ibid.*, 17:425–26.

[7] Jefferson, memorandum, January 26, 1804, in Franklin B. Sawvel, ed., *The Complete Anas of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Round Table Press, 1903), 224–28.

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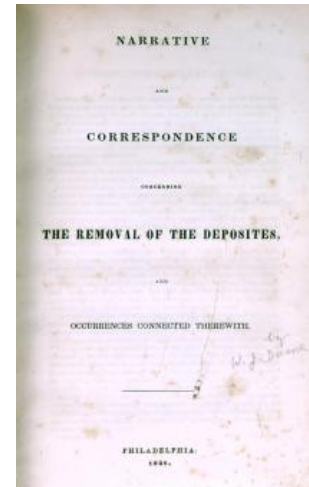
Andrew Jackson and the Constitution

by Matthew Warshauer

In 1860, biographer James Parton concluded that Andrew Jackson was "a most law-defying, law obeying citizen." Such a statement is obviously contradictory. Yet it accurately captures the essence of the famous, or infamous, Jackson. Without question, the seventh president was a man of contradictions. To this day, historians have been unable to arrive at accepted conclusions about his character or impact on the nation. Was he, as Robert Remini has argued across the pages of more than a dozen books, the great leader and symbol of a burgeoning mass democracy? Or was Jackson merely a vainglorious bully with no vision for the nation, reacting in response to his own sensitive pride, as Andrew Burstein and others have insisted?

There is much that one can look at in Jackson's life when attempting to arrive at conclusions. In particular, his relationship with the law and Constitution offer a significant window into his worldview. Whether it was illegally declaring martial law in New Orleans, invading Spanish Florida and executing British citizens, removing federal deposits from the Bank of the United States, or questioning the Supreme Court's authority in *Worcester v. Georgia*, Jackson acted in a manner that was at times distinctly illegal yet widely hailed by supporters as being in the nation's best interest. And before we conclude that this support was partisan banter bestowed by his own Democratic Party, we must remember that historians and legal scholars to this day have wrestled with the larger ideological and constitutional meaning of Jackson's beliefs and actions. One thing is certain: Jackson had no qualms about overstepping the law, even the Constitution, when he believed that the very survival of the nation required it. Moreover, this perspective remains at the heart of debate in a post-9/11 America. The essential question stands—can a leader violate the law in order to ultimately save it and the nation?

Title page of Narrative and Correspondence Concerning the Removal of the Deposites and Occurrences Connected Therewith, by William J. Duane (Philadelphia, 1833). Duane, Jackson's Treasury secretary, refused to withdraw government deposits from the Bank of the US and was dismissed from the Cabinet. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Andrew Jackson's fame came with the Battle of New Orleans in 1814 and 1815, where he demolished a seasoned British army with virtually no loss to his troops. The victory launched the general to national stardom and ultimately the presidency. Yet there were looming, constitutionally delicate issues that roiled beneath the surface of this victory, namely Jackson's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and declaration of martial law. The first was authorized by the Constitution, but the Supreme Court had determined that only Congress could suspend the privilege of the writ, which allowed a judge to "bring a body" before the court thus making it impossible for an arresting authority (the police or military) to hold a person indefinitely without filing charges. Jackson suspended the writ anyway, and went even further by imposing martial law, which canceled all civilian authority and placed the military in control. The act was wholly illegal. There existed no provision in the Constitution authorizing such an edict. The rub was that martial law saved New Orleans and the victory itself saved the nation's pride. After several years of dismal military encounters during the War of 1812 and the burning of the nation's capitol to the ground in the summer of 1814, no one, especially President Madison, was in the mood to investigate, let alone

chastise, the victorious General Jackson's illegal conduct. Thus Jackson walked away from the event with two abiding convictions: one, that victory and the nationalism generated by it protected his actions, even if illegal; and two, that he could do what he wanted if he deemed it in the nation's best interest.

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Jackson's convictions came into play only three years later in 1818, when the indomitable general exceeded his orders to protect the Georgia frontier by crossing into Spanish Florida, where he invaded two towns and executed two British citizens for making war on the United States. Once again, Jackson's actions were questionable, if not outright illegal. He essentially made war on Spain without congressional approval, overstepped his own boundaries as a commander, and summarily executed two men, which could very well have incited legal and military difficulties with Great Britain and Spain. However, Jackson's conduct was once again seen by many, including himself, as a necessary defense of the nation. The Spanish had done nothing to stop the marauding Seminole Indians from crossing the border and attacking American farms. The general's actions were therefore justified as national self-defense by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, the sole member of President Monroe's cabinet to support Jackson. Adams used the turmoil over the incident to convince Spain that they should sell Florida for a measly $5 million.

Unlike Jackson's use of martial law in New Orleans, Congress debated Jackson's rogue behavior in Florida, with Henry Clay announcing that the general was a "military chieftain" and dangerous to a young republic. Although legislators wrangled over the matter, nothing significant resulted except that Jackson became a more and more polarizing figure, particularly because of his political aspirations. When he ran for president in 1824, critics unleashed a torrent of abuse, much of it focused on his lawless ways. Jackson was forced to respond, and commented specifically on his violations of the Constitution. He noted that some in the nation believed him to be "a most dangerous and terrible man. . . . and that I can break, & trample under foot the constitution of the country, with as much unconcern & careless indifference, as would one of our backwoods hunters, if suddenly placed in Great Britain, break game laws." He continued, "it has been my lot often to be placed in situations of a critical kind" that "imposed on me the necessity of Violating, or rather departing from, the constitution of the country; yet at no subsequent period has it produced to me a single pang, believing as I do now, & then did, that without it, security neither to myself or the great cause confided to me, could have been obtained."

Jackson's ideological conviction about the flexible nature of the law and Constitution in the face of dangers confronting the still-fledgling nation can be seen in many subsequent Jacksonian battles. When President Jackson confronted the Bank of the United States in 1832, he did so with the belief that it was a corrupt fiscal monster threatening the nation's economic security. He not only vetoed the Bank's recharter, which was within his right as chief executive, but went a step further by removing federal deposits even after Congress had deemed them safe. Jackson transferred one secretary of the treasury and fired another in order to secure the deposit removals. His actions were questionable, if not completely illegal, and the Senate censured him by making a notation in their journal. They didn't attempt impeachment for lack of support.

Other legal conflicts surfaced. Jackson allegedly defied the Supreme Court over *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832), announcing, "John Marshall has made his decision now let him enforce it." The case revolved around Georgia's attempt to apply state laws to Cherokee lands. The Court had ruled against Georgia's authority to do so and Jackson, dedicated to Indian removal, allegedly challenged Marshall. Although there is little evidence to support the above quotation, it certainly sounds like Jackson. Nonetheless, the case required nothing of Jackson and was ultimately settled out of court. The fact remained, however, that in this case and in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), when it was ruled that the Bank of the United

States was in fact constitutional, Jackson challenged the Court's authority as the final arbiter. As president, Jackson believed that his authority to deem what was constitutional equaled the Supreme Court's.

Jackson's views regarding American Indians also challenged the law. Treaties were and continue to be legal agreements among sovereign nations. However, Jackson refused to believe that Native American tribes were sovereign and thus viewed Indian treaties as an absurdity. Ultimately, he forcibly removed a number of tribes, most notoriously the Cherokee, from their homes. The Trail of Tears is one of Jackson's most infamous legacies. Yet even removal and issues of tribal sovereignty fit within a larger context of Jackson's convictions regarding national security and state sovereignty. The general's rise was due to his success as an Indian fighter on the frontier. He always, and to some extent legitimately, viewed American Indians as a serious threat to settlers. As president, Jackson understood the sentiment of southern states and their conception that states could not be erected within sovereign states such as Georgia. All of this, of course, revolved around the larger issue of Native American dispossession and who rightfully owned of the land. This ideological—and to some extent legal—issue remains unresolved.

A variety of other incidents in Jackson's life and career expose the nature of his relationship with the law and Constitution: the fact that he was a lawyer who engaged in dueling; his actions during the Nullification Crisis; and his failure as president to follow federal guidelines concerning mail delivery of abolitionist propaganda. Most fit within his larger conception of duty, honor, and what was necessary for the sanctity of the Union. Jackson's ideology remains as controversial now as it was in his own time. There are few easy answers. Yet this is what makes Jackson's views and conduct so relevant today. When presented with Jackson's history, students invariably split down the middle over whether he was justified in his conduct, regardless of legality. In this sense, Jackson continues to serve as an important source of reflection when considering how America should and should not act when it comes to matters of national security.

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Andrew Jackson's Shifting Legacy

by Daniel Feller

Of all presidential reputations, Andrew Jackson's is perhaps the most difficult to summarize or explain. Most Americans recognize his name, though most probably know him (in the words of a famous song) as the general who "fought the bloody British in the town of New Orleans" in 1815 rather than as a two-term president of the United States from 1829 to 1837. Thirteen polls of historians and political scientists taken between 1948 and 2009 have ranked Jackson always in or near the top ten presidents, among the "great" or "near great." His face adorns our currency, keeping select company with George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and the first secretary of the treasury, Alexander Hamilton. Jackson is the only president, and for that matter the only American, whose name graces a whole period in our history. While other presidents belong to eras, Jackson's era belongs to him. In textbooks and in common parlance, we call Washington's time the Revolutionary and founding eras, not the Age of Washington. Lincoln belongs in the Civil War era, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson in the Progressive era, Franklin Roosevelt in the era of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and World War II. But the interval roughly from the 1820s through 1840s, between the aftermath of the War of 1812 and the coming of the Civil War, has often been known as the Jacksonian Era, or the Age of Jackson.
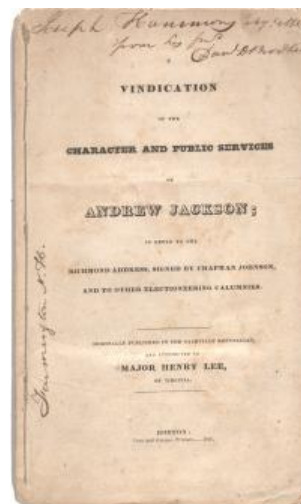
A Vindication of the Character and Public Services of Andrew Jackson, by Henry Lee (Boston: True and Greene, 1828). (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Yet the reason for Jackson's claim on an era is not readily apparent. Washington was the Father of his country. Lincoln, Wilson, and Franklin Roosevelt were war leaders who also (not wholly coincidentally) presided over dramatic changes in government. But besides winning a famous battle in the War of 1812 years before his presidency—and at that, a battle that had no effect on the war's outcome, since a treaty ending it had just been signed—just exactly what did Andrew Jackson do to deserve his eminence? He led the country through no wars. No foreign policy milestones like Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase or the "Doctrines" of James Monroe or Harry Truman highlighted Jackson's presidency. He crafted no path-breaking legislative program like Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal or Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Indeed Jackson's sole major legislative victory in eight years was an 1830 law to "remove" the eastern Indian tribes beyond the Mississippi, something more often seen today as travesty rather than triumph. That measure aside, the salient features of Jackson's relations with Congress were his famous vetoes, killing a string of road and canal subsidies and the Bank of the United States, and Jackson's official censure by the United States Senate in 1834, the only time that has yet happened. On its face, this does not look like the record of a "top ten" president.

An exception might be claimed for Jackson's handling of the Nullification Crisis of 1832–1833. Most southern states in Jackson's day vehemently opposed the "protective tariff," an import tax that provided most of the government's revenue and also aided American manufacturers by raising the price of competing foreign (mainly British) goods. In 1832 the state of South Carolina declared the tariff law unconstitutional and therefore null and void. In assuming this right, independent of the Supreme Court or

anybody else, to judge what the US Constitution meant and what federal laws had to be obeyed, South Carolina threatened the very viability of the federal union. Although he was himself a southerner, no great friend of the tariff, and a South Carolina native, Jackson boldly faced down the nullifiers. He first confronted nullification's mastermind (and his own vice president), John C. Calhoun, with a ringing public declaration: "Our Federal Union—It must be preserved." He then responded officially to South Carolina's action with a blistering presidential proclamation, in which he warned that nullification would inexorably lead to secession (formal withdrawal of a state from the United States), and secession meant civil war. "Be not deceived by names. Disunion by armed force is *treason*. Are you really ready to incur its guilt?" Bloodshed was averted when Congress passed a compromise tariff that South Carolina accepted and Jackson approved. Although he played no direct role in its passage, Jackson took much credit for the compromise, and even many political opponents conceded it to him.

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For his own generation and several to come, Jackson's defiance of nullification earned him a place in the patriotic pantheon above the contentions of party politics, at least in the eyes of those who approved the result. In the secession crisis thirty years later, Republicans—including Abraham Lincoln, an anti-Jackson partisan from his first entry into politics—hastened to invoke his example and quote his words. In 1860 James Parton, Jackson's first scholarly biographer, managed to praise Jackson's unionism while providing a negative overall assessment of his character.

Still, though not wholly forgotten, Jackson's reputation as defender of the Union has faded distinctly in the twentieth century and hardly explains historians' interest in him today. Secession is a dead issue, and commitment to an indivisible and permanent American nationhood is now so commonplace as to seem hardly worth remarking.

Rather, Jackson's continuing prominence, and the source of continuing controversy, lies in something much less concrete: his place as an emblem of American democracy. He is remembered less for specific accomplishments as president than for his persona or image, his role as America's first presidential Representative Man. That image has deep roots. In 1831–1832, midway through Jackson's presidency, a French aristocrat named Alexis de Tocqueville toured the country. Returning home, he published *Democracy in America,* still the most penetrating analysis of American society ever penned. De Tocqueville organized his exposition (which in many respects was not at all flattering) around two themes. One was "the general equality of condition among the people." The other was democracy, which gave tone to everything in American life: "the people reign in the American political world as the Deity does in the universe." De Tocqueville saw democracy, for good or ill, as the future of Europe and the world. "I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought there the image of democracy itself, with its inclinations, its character, its prejudices, and its passions, in order to learn what we have to fear or to hope from its progress."

America, then, was democracy embodied—and Andrew Jackson was its exemplar. Born poor, half-educated, self-risen, he was the first president from outside the colonial gentry, the first westerner, the first with a nickname ("Old Hickory"), the first to be elected in a grand popular plebiscite—all in all, the first living proof that in America, anyone with enough gumption could grow up to be president. He furnished the plebeian template of humble origins, untutored wisdom, and instinctive leadership from which would spring "Old Tippecanoe" William Henry Harrison, "Honest Abe" Lincoln, and a thousand would-be imitators down to the present day.

The image of Jackson as a quintessential product of American democracy has stuck. Yet always complicating it has been the interplay between the personal and the political. If Jackson is a potent

democratic symbol, he is also a conflicted and polarizing one. In his own lifetime he was adulated and despised far beyond any other American. To an amazing degree, historians today still feel visceral personal reactions to him, and praise or damn accordingly.

Jackson's outsized, larger-than-life character and career have always offered plenty to wonder at and to argue about. His lifelong political antagonist Henry Clay once likened him, not implausibly, to a tropical tornado. Jackson's rough-and-tumble frontier youth and pre-presidential (mainly military) career showed instances of heroic achievement and nearly superhuman fortitude. Mixed in with these were episodes of insubordination, usurpation, uncontrolled temper, wanton violence, and scandal. Jackson vanquished enemies in battle everywhere and won a truly astonishing victory at New Orleans. He also fought duels and street brawls, defied superiors, shot captives and subordinates, launched a foreign invasion against orders, and (disputably) stole another man's wife. As president he was, depending on whom one asked, either our greatest popular tribune or the closest we have come to an American Caesar.

An adept manipulator of his own image, Jackson played a willing hand in fusing the political and the personal. First as a candidate and then as president, he reordered the political landscape around his own popularity. Swept into office on a wave of genuine grassroots enthusiasm, Jackson labored successfully through eight years as president to reshape his personal following into an effective political apparatus—the Democratic Party, our first mass political party, which organized under his guidance. Significantly, the party's original name was the American Democracy, implying that it was not a party at all but the political embodiment of the people themselves. Democrats labeled their opponents, first National Republicans and then Whigs, as the "aristocracy." But the initial test of membership in the Democracy was less an adherence to a political philosophy than fealty to Andrew Jackson himself.

A generation after Jackson's presidency, biographer James Parton found his reputation a mass of contradictions: he was dictator or democrat, ignoramus or genius, Satan or saint. Those conundrums endure, and the facts, or arguments, behind them would fill a book.

There are a few focal points upon which Jackson's modern reputation has turned for better or for worse. One is his attack on corporate privilege and on the concentrated political influence of wealth. In his famous Bank Veto of 1832, Jackson juxtaposed "the rich and powerful" against "the humble members of society—the farmers, mechanics, and laborers," and lamented that the former "too often bend the acts of government to their selfish purposes." No president before and few since have spoken so bluntly of economic antagonisms between Americans. Jackson went on, in his Farewell Address in 1837, to warn of an insidious "money power," made up of banks and corporations, that would steal ordinary citizens' liberties away from them. (It said something of Jackson's sense of his own importance that he presumed to deliver a Farewell Address, an example set by Washington that no previous successor had dared to follow.)

Jackson's Bank Veto was so riveting, and so provocative, that in the ensuing presidential election both sides distributed it as a campaign document. Foes of bankers, corporations, Wall Street, and "the rich" have turned to it ever since. Populists and other agrarian insurgents in the nineteenth century, and New Deal Democrats in the twentieth, claimed it as their birthright. Writing in the wake of the Great Depression and the New Deal, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. made the Bank Veto the centerpiece of *The Age of Jackson* (1945), the foundational work of modern Jacksonian scholarship.

In the late twentieth century, Jackson's strictures attracted some historians who were articulating a class-based analysis of American history, and who used them to interpret Jackson as a foe not only of capitalist abuses and excesses, but of capitalism itself. To other recent scholars, though, the Bank Veto has seemed merely demagogic, while to most people outside the academy the whole Jacksonian

struggle over banking grew to appear baffling and arcane, divorced from our present concerns. All of that has suddenly changed. Since the financial collapse of 2008, Jackson's warnings seem not only urgently relevant but eerily prescient. They are again often quoted, and his reputation has enjoyed, at least for the moment, a sharp uptick.

The other framing issue for Jackson's recent reputation—one that Schlesinger did not even mention, but which has come since to pervade and even dominate his image—is Indian removal. The symbolic freighting of this subject can hardly be overstated. Just as Jackson—child of the frontier, self-made man, homespun military genius, and plain-spoken tribune of the people—has sometimes served to stand for everything worth celebrating in American democracy, Indian removal has come to signify democracy's savage and even genocidal underside. It opens a door behind which one finds Jackson the archetypal Indian-hater, the slave owner, the overbearing male patriarch, and the frontiersman not as heroic pioneer but as imperialist, expropriator, and killer.

To Schlesinger (who was no racist) and to others who have seen Jackson's essential importance in his championship of the common man, the "little guy," against corporate domination, Indian removal appeared to be an aside, at worst a regrettable failing, but to many today it shows Jackson and his white man's democracy at their core. There is no doubt that removing the American Indians, particularly those in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, was centrally important to Jackson. Together with purging the federal bureaucracy of his political opponents and instituting what he called "rotation in office" (and what his enemies dubbed the "spoils system"), it stood at the head of his initial presidential agenda. Jackson's motives and methods in pursuing Indian removal were deeply controversial at the time and remain so today. He claimed to be acting only on impulses of duty and philanthropy. American Indians could not, without violating the essential rights of sovereign states, remain where they were; their own self-preservation required quarantine from pernicious white influences; and the terms offered for their evacuation were reasonable and even generous. Critics, then and since, have branded these as artful rationalizations to cover real motives of greed, racism, and land-lust.

Connecting directly to our widely shared misgivings about the human cost of Euro-American expansion and the pejorative racial and cultural attitudes that sustained it, the recent debate over Jackson's Indian policy has gone mainly one way. A handful of defenders or apologists—most notably Jackson biographer Robert V. Remini—have dared to buck the tide, but for most scholars the question is not whether Jackson acted badly, but whether he acted so badly as to exclude considering anything else he might have done as palliation or excuse. Both inside and outside the academy, at least until the sudden resuscitation of Jackson as anti-corporate champion, the arch-oppressor of Indians had become Jackson's prevalent image. Far more American schoolchildren can name the Cherokee Trail of Tears (which actually happened in Martin Van Buren's presidency, though in consequence of Jackson's policy) than the Bank Veto, the Nullification Proclamation, or perhaps even the Battle of New Orleans.

No simple conclusion offers itself. Jackson's reputation, like the man himself, defies easy summary. The one thing that seems certain is that Americans will continue to argue about him.

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Indian Removal

by Theda Perdue

In 1828 pressure was building among white Americans for the relocation of American Indians from the eastern United States to lands west of the Mississippi River. A student at a mission school in the Cherokee Nation, which lay within the chartered borders of Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, and Tennessee, demanded to know, "they have got more land than they can use, what do they want to get ours for?"[1] American Indians have grappled with that question ever since Europeans arrived, and historians have tried to understand exactly what motivated hostility to Indians, especially peaceable groups such as the Cherokees and others, who were ejected from their homelands in the early nineteenth century. In this period, the dispossession of Indians fell under a federal policy called "removal," taken from the title of the 1830 Indian Removal Act that authorized the negotiation of treaties to rid the east of American Indians. The use of that neutral sanitized term obscures both the motivations and effects of the policy.

President Andrew Jackson to Secretary of War Lewis Cass on the appropriation of $500,000 for the removal of the Indians, February 10, 1832. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

European legal principles, which the United States inherited, recognized a "right of discovery," which gave title to newfound land to the Christian, "civilized" European nation that discovered it and limited the rights of indigenous "savage" peoples to occupancy. When Native people died out, moved away, or forfeited their rights, the European title became absolute. In order to cement their title, colonial governments recognized the legitimacy of tribal governments by entering into treaties with them, something only sovereign nations do. Treaties that regulated trade, cemented alliances, and provided for the cession of land became a cornerstone of US Indian policy. In the 1820s, however, some politicians, most notably Andrew Jackson, began to question the practice of making treaties with, and thereby recognizing the sovereignty of, Indian nations.

This change of heart accompanied an intellectual shift in the United States and Europe. The Enlightenment idea that "all men are created equal" had shaped US Indian policy in the three decades following the writing of the Constitution. Cultural disparities, policy makers had thought, stemmed from education and opportunity, not inherent differences. Therefore, American Indians could be "civilized" and assimilated into white American culture as individuals. The United States appointed agents to live among the tribes, hired farmers and artisans to teach the Indians skills, and provided funds for missionaries to establish schools and churches. These efforts had barely gotten underway when objections arose.

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By the 1820s, new ideas about human differences as immutable had begun to emerge on both sides of the Atlantic. In Europe, for example, the Congress of Vienna in 1815 had tried to redraw the national boundaries of post-Napoleonic Europe to reflect the supposed innate differences among people. The assumption that distinct cultures reflected racial differences began to take hold in the United States, and policy makers increasingly believed that American Indians could not be assimilated. Once an Indian, they believed, always an Indian. Furthermore, their differences meant that Indians and whites could not live

together. Sometimes called "Romantic Nationalism," these views contributed to the decision to force Native peoples from the East, as well as to subsequent atrocities on both sides of the Atlantic for more than a century.

The decisions that some Indian nations made seemed to support the tenets of Romantic Nationalism. Some tribes, such as the Shawnees in southern Ohio, experienced a revitalization that dramatically conveyed their preference for their own culture. Many tribes, on the other hand, welcomed the education and practical skills that missionaries and agents brought, but expressed little interest in Christianity or assimilation. Among peoples in the Southeast, in particular, the "civilization" program simply better equipped leaders to defend their nations' sovereignty. The Cherokees, for example, developed commercial agriculture, operated toll roads and ferries, adopted a writing system, published a bilingual newspaper, and instituted a constitutional government that took Georgia to court when the state infringed on its tribal sovereignty. The Cherokees and other tribes adopted aspects of European culture while preserving many of their own practices and beliefs, and they defended their right to make decisions for themselves. The dissolution of their nations and assimilation into the United States were not on their agendas.

Native peoples east of the Mississippi confronted demographic changes that made their positions increasingly untenable. The original thirteen states had transferred their western lands, granted in colonial charters, to the United States. Indians lived on much of this land, and the intrusion of white settlers led to unrest and violence, especially north of the Ohio River where an alliance led by the Shawnee brothers Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh resisted encroachment before meeting military defeat in 1811. They failed to stop US expansion, and by 1820, the number of states had risen to twenty-two. Older states feared loss of revenue and political power as new states emerged, and those with American Indian populations eyed Native lands. Georgia, home of the Creeks and Cherokees, led the charge to dispossess Indians. The sentiment was widespread that people as fundamentally different as Indians and Europeans could not live next to each other and that the Indians had to go. Eliminating property requirements for voting, increasing the number of offices directly elected, and other democratic reforms in this period made removal a potent political issue that demagogues used to inflame voters who either lacked land or wanted more.

In 1828 Americans elected Andrew Jackson president. Jackson did not succeed in convincing legislators to abandon treaty-making; instead he cynically used treaties to expel five large southern tribes. In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the President to negotiate treaties for the removal of eastern Indian nations and appropriated $500,000 to accomplish that goal. Given the disdain with which Jackson regarded Indian treaties, it is not surprising that some of this money went to bribe chiefs to sign removal treaties. Treaty commissioners appointed by the United States also negotiated with unauthorized parties, circumvented established protocol, and lied, cajoled, and threatened in order to achieve land cessions.

The President used the Indian Removal Act to target southern tribes, many of whom lived on prime cotton-growing land. In 1830, a rump council of the Choctaw Nation agreed to removal after the full council refused. Two years later the Chickasaws surrendered their land east of the Mississippi River only to discover that there was no land west of the river for them, and they were forced to merge with the Choctaws. Having signed a removal treaty, the Creeks became victims of such violence from white Americans that whites feared retaliation, and the United States removed the Indians as a military measure. While Seminole leaders were touring land in the West, their escorts pressured them into signing a treaty that they repudiated upon their return home. And when the Cherokee Nation refused to sell, commissioners convinced a small, unauthorized faction to sign a removal treaty.

Indians did not submit to these high-handed and duplicitous dealings without a struggle. Under a provision in their treaty, thousands of Choctaws chose to remain in Mississippi, and when their agent refused them the land to which they were legally entitled, they squatted on public land or became tenant farmers until finally getting a reservation in the twentieth century. Creeks who had avoided the military roundup tried to become invisible, but many ended up illegally enslaved by white planters in Alabama. Others settled on a small tract of land that the United States held in trust and survived as a Creek community. The Cherokees petitioned the US Senate to deny ratification of their removal treaty, which the Senate refused to do. Legal maneuvers enabled some Cherokees to remain, particularly in western North Carolina, where they obtained land. When soldiers arrived to begin deportations in Florida, the Seminoles went to war in a struggle that ended formally in 1842. The US Army withdrew, leaving behind several hundred Seminoles. Despite these acts of resistance, however, most citizens of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Nations went west, resettled in what is today eastern Oklahoma, and rebuilt their nations. Their removal, which cost them their homelands and at least one-fourth of their citizens, has come to be known as the "Trail of Tears."

Southern Indians have received the most attention from historians, but they were not the only victims of removal. The Oneidas from New York and the Stockbridge people from Massachusetts sought refuge in Wisconsin to escape white harassment and encroachment on their lands. The state militia forced the Sauks from their Illinois lands to Iowa in 1831, and a year later in the Black Hawk War, the Illinois militia attacked a starving group of Sauks whom Black Hawk had led back to their homeland. Ultimately, the Sauks lost their lands in Iowa and most moved to Kansas. From the Old Northwest, the Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, Shawnee, Miami, Wyandot, and Delaware peoples also lost their lands and moved to what would become Kansas and Nebraska. Each of these removals occurred under different circumstances, but all were fraught with anguish and loss.

Although it was no longer the focus of federal Indian policy, removal did not end in the 1840s. Efforts to transport remnants of removed tribes continued into the twentieth century. In 1903, the United States tried to get Choctaws in Mississippi to move to Oklahoma and receive allotments of land, but the effort met with little success. At the end of the twentieth century, some Choctaws believed that the United States would make yet another attempt to remove them. The continuing fear of removal magnified the sense of loss that Native people felt, and some scholars suggest that their grief became trans-generational. Parents passed the despair they felt on to their children, affecting their physical as well as mental health.

Although we use the term "removal," the United States actually engaged in ethnic cleansing when it forced Native Americans west of the Mississippi. By 1830 most white Americans did not believe that Indians and whites could live together, and they thought that Indians held resources, especially land, to which whites were entitled. Democratic institutions meant that Native peoples, who had no vote, could be dispossessed by those who did. As a result, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, the United States expelled Indians from the East "with wonderful ease, quietly, legally, philanthropically."[2] The insistence of the United States that its policy was just should lead modern Americans to contemplate not only why their ancestors so desperately wanted Indian land, but also how they justified taking it.

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[1] Nancy Reece to Reverend Fayette Shepherd, Dec. 25, 1828, John Howard Payne Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill.

[2] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Tocqueville: Democracy in America* (New York: Library of America, 2004), 391.

Theda Perdue, Atlanta Distinguished Professor of Southern Culture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is the author or co-author of nine books including Cherokee Women: Gender and Culture Change, 1700–1835 *(1998), which won the Julia Cherry Spruill Award for the best book in southern women's history and the James Mooney Prize for the best book in the anthropology of the South. More recently, she has published* Race and the Atlanta Cotton States Exposition of 1895 *(2010) and, with co-author Michael D. Green,* The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears *(2007) and* North American Indians: A Very Short Introduction *(2010).*

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Abolition and Antebellum Reform

by Ronald G. Walters

When the Boston abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson looked back on the years before the Civil War, he wrote, "there prevailed then a phrase, 'the Sisterhood of Reforms.'" He had in mind "a variety of social and psychological theories of which one was expected to accept all, if any." Of that sisterhood, anti-slavery stands out as the best-remembered and most hotly debated, even though it was not the largest in terms of membership or the most enduring. (That honor goes to the temperance movement.) Abolitionism continues to fascinate because of its place in the sectional conflict leading to the Civil War, its assault on gender and racial inequality, and its foreshadowing of the twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement.

Sometimes, however, it is useful to consider abolitionism in relation to Higginson's Sisterhood of Reforms. The years between 1815—the year that marked the end of the War of 1812—and 1861 did indeed produce a remarkable flowering of movements dedicated to improving society, morals, and individuals. Some appear silly from a present-day perspective (would cheap postage really foster international unity and understanding?), but many contemporaries nonetheless took them seriously. And although Higginson exaggerated connections between movements, it was relatively common for people who believed in anti-slavery reform also to believe in religious reforms, women's rights, temperance, and health reform. (The latter was based on the idea that proper diet—a severely vegetarian one—could eliminate illness and produce moral human beings.)

Placing anti-slavery within the sisterhood helps us to see both what was and what was not distinctive about it, as well as begin to address the larger question of why certain periods in American history provide especially fertile ground for reform movements. The answer to the latter question is not always straightforward. Drunkenness did not begin around 1819, when a temperance movement began to take shape; slavery had not suddenly changed in 1831, the year a new, more radical anti-slavery movement emerged; and the oppression of women did not start around 1848, the year of the pioneering women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York. For that matter, segregation and racial discrimination began well before the twentieth-century Civil Rights Movement. Making it all the more difficult to answer the question of timing is the fact that periods of intense reform activity sometimes coincide with economic crises, as was notably the case during the Great Depression of the 1930s, while at other times such as the Progressive Era (1890–1919) and the 1960s, periods of reform are also periods of general prosperity. But regardless of whether reform movements take place in good or bad economic times, the point is that reform movements usually are more than just simple, direct responses to a perceived problem.

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Multiple changes converged after the War of 1812 to produce the Sisterhood of Reforms. Improvements in transportation—especially steamboats, canals, and railroads—made it easier to send lecturers and publications—including abolitionists, other reformers, and their writings—far and wide. And new printing technologies in the 1830s lowered the cost of publications, including publications from abolitionists.

At the same time, a dynamic American economy created a new class of men and women with the leisure time and financial resources to devote to reform movements. A comparison with eighteenth-century reformers is revealing. They were fewer in number and, with some notable exceptions (mostly Quakers), tended to be part-timers like Benjamin Franklin who were either retired or had other jobs. By contrast, antebellum reformers were both more numerous and, in cases like that of the abolitionist editor William Lloyd Garrison, had no other career.

Social and economic change also provided a psychological context for reform. After 1820, the rapid growth of cities and expanding commerce and manufacturing seemed both to herald a glorious future and to open the door to temptations and vice. How to ensure that God, and not Satan and Mammon, would win?

Behind that question lay two powerful traditions that compelled reformers to contrast what America and Americans were with what they ought to be. One was the legacy of the American Revolution. Even when most critical of their government, reformers evoked it. The first women's rights convention modeled its declaration after the Declaration of Independence. Similarly, after publicly and notoriously burning a copy of the Constitution on July 4, 1854, William Lloyd Garrison asked, "What is an abolitionist but a sincere believer in the Declaration of '76?" He was repudiating a government that supported slavery, not the principles of the Revolution.

The other tradition was evangelical Protestantism. An outpouring of religious fervor in the early nineteenth century—sometimes called the Second Great Awakening—swept from west to east and fired the hearts of millions of Americans. It encouraged many to believe they had a moral imperative to do what they could to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. Although not all evangelicals were reformers, and not all reformers were evangelicals, the Awakening put the power of religion behind a belief that individual men and women could change the world, rather than passively accept as inevitable whatever fate held in store, as their ancestors often had done.

Why should they conclude that that job fell to them rather than to their leaders? The most famous foreign observer of the young republic, Alexis de Tocqueville, was struck by the peculiar propensity of Americans to form local "voluntary associations" to accomplish a wide range of goals, including reforms. In large measure, this was a reasonable approach in a nation with few effective institutional sources of moral authority, and one with relatively weak political institutions, no national church, and a culture mistrustful of governmental power. Use of voluntary associations also reflected a feeling among some—especially the most radical abolitionists—that elected officials were part of the problem, not the solution. Antebellum reformers believed in moral absolutes; politicians believe in the art of the deal, even when the result is compromise with an evil like slavery. Under the circumstances, it seemed better to go around the political system than through it (a position temperance reformers and some abolitionists began to reconsider in the 1840s).

If multiple changes came together after the War of 1812 to produce the Sisterhood of Reforms, they did not determine *how* antebellum reformers tried to change the world or what they regarded as the main thing wrong with it. Even within a movement like abolitionism, there was widespread disagreement over tactics and goals.

Running through many reforms, however, were common themes and assumptions, one of the most important of which was a passionately held belief that individuals must be able to act as free moral agents, capable of choosing right from wrong, and not restrained by the "arbitrary power" of someone else (like a slaveholder or immoral husband) or something else (like alcohol, bad diet, or mental illness). In that respect, abolitionism was the ultimate expression of the antebellum reform impulse: Slaves, for

abolitionists, were the mirror image of freedom, symbols of what it was not—the most extreme example of unfreedom. This logic helps explain the close connection between abolitionists and reforms such as the women's rights movement, as well as why abolitionists felt an affinity with European revolutionaries and efforts to end serfdom in Russia. All such cases, in their view, were part of a larger international drama of the progress of freedom. With this powerful rhetorical tradition entrenched by the 1840s, it is no accident that the term "slave" persisted in reform rhetoric throughout the nineteenth century, long after the institution itself died in 1865—drunkards as "slaves" to the bottle, women as "slaves" to men, and factory workers as "wage slaves."

Abolitionists themselves were vague about what freedom might mean in practice after the death of slavery, and unconcerned that others might disagree with their definitions. Even so, their emphasis on individual moral agency and their use of the antithesis between slavery and freedom to define freedom's absence and presence locates them within Higginson's sisterhood. But in three important respects—in their views on their government, gender, and race—abolitionists parted company with other sisterhood reforms. Few reform movements prior to 1861 produced the fundamental attacks on the American political system that abolitionists mounted in denouncing its devil's bargain with slavery. And although all major antebellum reforms depended heavily upon women, only a handful of utopian communities gave as prominent a voice to them as abolitionism in its most radical forms.

Most distinctive, however, was how abolitionists framed the relationship between anti-slavery and race, using ideas and concepts that went well beyond the movement's assault on slavery and that eventually came home in the form of attacks on discriminatory laws and practices in the North. In addition, the abolitionist movement was unusually interracial. The fame of a few black abolitionists—notably Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Tubman—somewhat obscures the high degree to which lesser-known African American abolitionists also supported the cause in every way possible, including with their own organizations, pens, speeches, and dollars. If racism never entirely disappeared among white abolitionists, and if relations between them and black colleagues were sometimes strained, it is nonetheless true that no other movement of the day was remotely close to abolitionism in interracial cooperation, in mobilizing black communities, and in challenging racism in both theory and practice. On those issues, abolitionism was both part of a band of sister reforms and a movement that went well beyond them.

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Allies for Emancipation? Black Abolitionists and Abraham Lincoln

by Manisha Sinha

Abraham Lincoln was not an original advocate of abolition. In fact we know that his journey to what he called "the central act of my administration, and the great event of the nineteenth century" was a relatively slow, though continuous, one. Emancipation was a complex process that involved the actions of the slaves, the Union Army, Congress, and the President. Historians have argued over the relative roles of the slaves and Lincoln in the coming of emancipation. It is my purpose to shift the terms of this debate by drawing attention to a third group of emancipators—abolitionists, particularly black abolitionists, and Radical Republicans.
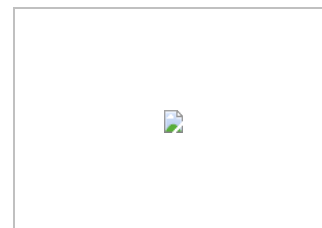
African Americans had demanded freedom from bondage as early as the American Revolution, and in the thirty years before the Civil War a strong interracial movement had called for the immediate abolition of slavery and for black rights. Lincoln himself came under enormous pressure from abolitionists and radicals within his own party during the first two years of the war to act against slavery. But when it comes to the contemporary history of emancipation, the influence of abolitionists has been somewhat undervalued.

Audio clip provided by BackStory with the American History Guys

Black and white abolitionists, as both supporters and critics of the President, played a crucial part in leading the movement for emancipation. Abolitionists enjoyed unprecedented access to the White House during Lincoln's presidency. Lincoln's famous ability to listen to all sides of the story may not have served abolitionists well when it came to border state slaveholders and Northern conservatives, but it did bode well for their own role as the staunchest supporters of emancipation. Not only did black abolitionists strenuously advocate the cause of the slave, they also made the President give up on his long-cherished plan of colonizing free blacks outside the country and to contemplate civil and political rights including suffrage for African Americans. Abolitionist influence on Lincoln must be gauged in terms of ideology and philosophy. In their view, the Civil War was a revolutionary struggle against slavery, not, as Lincoln argued early on, just a war for the Union, but an abolition war, a position that he came to accept in the last years of the war.

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Lincoln, of course, was not an empty receptacle into which others poured their views or a man who had no prior convictions. We know that Lincoln held at least two beliefs on slavery and race on the eve of becoming the president of the United States. He abhorred slavery as a moral and political blot on the

American republic even though he did not advocate political equality for black people. Like most nineteenth-century Americans who revered the Union and the Constitution, Lincoln did not sympathize with the abolitionist goal of immediate emancipation. But in viewing slavery as an unmitigated evil, he already shared important ground with abolitionists. Lincoln, a moderate, anti-slavery Republican, was committed only to the non-extension of slavery, the lowest common denominator in anti-slavery politics, with a rather nebulous hope in its "ultimate extinction." But it was a position that he adhered to with great tenacity. Without these prior anti-slavery convictions, it is difficult to imagine how Lincoln would have come to accept the logic of emancipation during the Civil War.

Lincoln's position on black rights on the eve of the Civil War put him behind many abolitionists and radical Republicans and led him to flirt continuously with the idea of colonization, but it put him far ahead of most hardened racists in the North and South who would expunge African Americans from the human family. Ironically, it was Lincoln's belief in a democratic America that made him an opponent of slavery as well as a believer in the colonization of African Americans because his ideal republic would not accommodate inequality. It was precisely in this area that black and white abolitionists would exercise their greatest influence on him, pushing him to come to grips with civil and political rights for African Americans and the consequences of emancipation. African American leaders, abolitionists, and radical Republicans, who had long envisioned the establishment of an interracial democracy in the United States, played an indispensable role in pushing the President to accept the logical outcomes of his own views on slavery and democracy: abolition, black rights, and citizenship.

With the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, abolitionists and radical Republicans immediately urged Lincoln to use his war powers to strike against slavery. They were doomed to disappointment. Preoccupied with retaining the loyalty of the border slave states and engendering Northern unity and support for the prosecution of the war, Lincoln insisted that his primary goal was the reconstruction of the Union and he gave short shrift to the abolitionist agenda. Lincoln's revocation of John Fremont's and David Hunter's emancipation orders, the appearance of the President lagging behind Congress, and what was perceived as his general tardiness to move on the slavery question aroused strong criticism among abolitionists. The government's refusal to enlist black men in the Union Army further dampened African American and abolitionist enthusiasm for the war.

Other actions, which did not garner so much attention, however, indicated that the President was not averse to the idea of emancipation. He approved of General Benjamin Butler's policy of designating runaway slaves "contraband" of war and the rescinding of the *Dred Scott* decision, he signed the two Confiscation Acts that confiscated slaves used for military purposes by the Confederacy and all slaves of rebels and the acts abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia and the federal territories, and proposed plans for gradual, compensated emancipation for the border states. Most African Americans were pleased with the initial anti-slavery steps taken by the Republicans. Furthermore, the Lincoln administration, pledged to enforce the suppression of the African slave trade, hanged the first American slave trader for participating in the illegal trade and extended diplomatic recognition to the black republics of Haiti and Liberia. African Americans hailed the news of emancipation in the capital especially as a portent of general emancipation.

By the summer of 1862, Lincoln decided to issue an emancipation proclamation. It was not simply that he was wisely biding his time and waiting for Northern anti-slavery sentiment to mature in order to move on emancipation. He himself had to be convinced of the failure of his appeasement of border state slaveholders and Northern conservatives and of the military necessity to free the slaves and enlist black men. The emancipationist arguments of abolitionists and radical Republicans, especially those who shared a personal relationship with the President, like Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, made

headway when border state slaveholders proved to be completely obdurate regarding the President's proposals for gradual, compensated emancipation, and the war reached a stalemate amid heavy Union losses. Abolitionists realized that Lincoln's presidency and the war presented them with a golden opportunity to make their case for emancipation anew. During the Civil War, the long-reviled abolition movement gained new respectability in the eyes of the Northern public. Abolitionist leaders, branded as disunionists and fanatics until the very eve of the war, acquired public authority as influential proponents of the policy of emancipation especially as the war dragged on. They revived their earliest tactics and deluged Congress with petitions as they had not done since the 1830s. The crucial difference was that an anti-slavery party now controlled Congress and their petitions were read with respect rather than gagged as incendiary documents. Abolitionists, who had been political outsiders as radical agitators throughout the antebellum period, now walked the halls of power as influential advocates for the slave, though a sizeable minority advocated emigration outside the United States in the 1850s.

Lincoln also became one of the first American presidents to receive African Americans in the White House and the first to solicit their opinion in matters affecting them. African Americans had served as domestic workers in the White House since the inception of the republic and the presidency but they had never before been consulted on matters of state. (One exception was James Madison who met with the black Quaker captain Paul Cuffe, whose ships had been impounded during the 1812 war.) For black abolitionists, as much as their white counterparts, a Republican presidency meant having for the first time the political opportunity to pressure the federal government to act on abolition. Perhaps no other black abolitionist leader was more influential in this regard than Frederick Douglass, who used his monthly magazine and speeches to vent his views on abolition, black rights, and military service. When Lincoln met Douglass, he acknowledged having read his criticisms of Lincoln's slowness to act on emancipation. African Americans who struggled to have their voices heard both within and outside the abolition movement had gained the President's ear and Lincoln's ability to meet with black people without any condescension impressed them. It also enabled him to listen to the opinions of black abolitionists on some important occasions.

While black abolitionists formed one part of the chorus of voices that pressured Lincoln to act on emancipation, they were foremost in opposing his ideas on colonization. The President had long recommended the colonizing of all free blacks outside the country. Colonization was a project that had been supported by the founding fathers like Jefferson, Madison, and prominent politicians such as Henry Clay, Lincoln's "beau ideal" of a statesman. Lincoln's support for colonization was not merely a clever tactic to win support for emancipation, but a long-held belief predating the Civil War on how to solve the country's so-called race problem. On the other hand, black abolitionism had come of age in the 1820s by opposing the American Colonization Society, which was founded in 1816.

Well aware of abolitionist antipathy toward colonization, Lincoln invited five African Americans, four of whom were former slaves and none of whom were prominent in black abolitionist circles, to persuade them to support his plans for the colonization of black Americans in August 1862, just before issuing his preliminary proclamation. The reaction among black abolitionists was swift and hostile. Strong black opposition to colonization did not deter Lincoln from experimenting with questionable plans to colonize African Americans in Chiriqui in Panama, Liberia, and Haiti. The failure of the Lincoln administration's many colonization schemes, African American non-compliance, and abolitionist pressure forced the President to give up on colonization as a viable option for freed people. Lincoln's eventual abandonment of colonization after he had decided to free the slaves was a triumph of abolitionism, particularly black abolitionism. Black abolitionists had played no small part in uncoupling colonization from emancipation in his mind.

On January 1, 1863, when Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, he had come to abolitionist ground. For abolitionists, the President would become permanently identified with the moment of liberation, living on as an icon of black freedom in African American celebrations of emancipation in years to come. By this time, Lincoln came to share the abolitionist and African American view of the Civil War as a providential, apocalyptic event that would not only end slavery but also redeem the American republic and its founding principles. The abolitionist insistence on tying the cause of the slave with that of American democracy influenced Lincoln's overall conception of the war. He would immortalize this understanding of the war in the Gettysburg Address as the second American Revolution, as representing a "new birth of freedom" in the republic. The abolitionist interpretation of the war gave meaning and purpose to it in a way that simply a war for the Union never could. Lincoln eloquently gave words to the abolitionist view of the Civil War in his Second Inaugural Address.

Even more than emancipation, it was in regard to black rights and citizenship that Lincoln "grew" during the war. The contributions of African American soldiers to Union victory made him amenable to the idea of black citizenship. The exigencies of the war and shortage of manpower as the conflict dragged on led the Lincoln administration to recruit African Americans, including slaves, and grant freedom to those who served and their families. Abolitionists like Massachusetts Governor John Andrews and the wealthy George L. Stearns, a proponent of black military service, hired prominent African American abolitionists like Douglass, William Wells Brown, Charles Lenox Remond, John Mercer Langston, Henry Highland Garnet, and Martin Delany as recruiting agents. By the end of the war, nearly 200,000 black Americans had served in the Union Army and Navy. Despite initial inequalities in pay and rank, abolitionists supported recruitment of black soldiers. Protests over racial inequalities in the Union Army prepared African Americans and abolitionists for the long fight for equality and citizenship rights. Black heroism at the battles of Fort Wagner, Milliken's Bend, and Port Hudson impressed both the President and the Northern public. Indeed Lincoln adopted nearly all the abolitionist arguments on the value and significance of black military service. When peace arrived he wrote, "there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind onto this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it."

Lincoln soon came to sympathize with the idea that one could not possibly deny citizenship rights to black soldiers who had fought on behalf of the Union. According to the precepts of republicanism, in which Lincoln, abolitionists, and the soldiers themselves were well versed, one deserved the rights of citizenship after performing the duties of citizenship. As early as November 1863 New Orleans's politically active free blacks asked the military governor for the right to vote. Lincoln received their two representatives, Jean Baptiste Roudanez and Arnold Bertonneau, and their visit must have made some impression on the President. Soon after, Lincoln penned his famous letter to Louisiana's Governor Michael Hahn, suggesting that "the very intelligent, and especially those who have fought gallantly in our ranks" be given the franchise.

By the time of his death, Lincoln's views on slavery and racial equality had evolved greatly. Abolitionists, African Americans, and radical Republicans challenged him to abandon colonization and accept both abolition and black rights. Their ideas on interracial democracy and equal citizenship, largely forgotten in the history of emancipation, forced both the President and the nation to accept the consequences of abolition and helped set the agenda for Reconstruction. Precisely because Lincoln had come around to the idea of immediate, uncompensated abolition and black rights during the war, his historical legacy would be inextricably bound with the African American struggle for freedom and with the movement to abolish slavery.

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Primary Source: President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, 1865

Winning the Vote: A History of Voting Rights

by Steven Mintz

VOTING RIGHTS ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

The basic principle that governed voting in colonial America was that voters should have a "stake in society." Leading colonists associated democracy with disorder and mob rule, and believed that the vote should be restricted to those who owned property or paid taxes. Only these people, in their view, were committed members of the community and were sufficiently independent to vote. Each of the thirteen colonies required voters either to own a certain amount of land or personal property, or to pay a specified amount in taxes.

The County Election, based on a painting by George C. Bingham, 1854. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Many colonies imposed other restrictions on voting, including religious tests. Catholics were barred from voting in five colonies and Jews in four.

The right to vote varied widely in colonial America. In frontier areas, seventy to eighty percent of white men could vote. But in some cities, the percentage was just forty to fifty percent.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION

The American Revolution was fought in part over the issue of voting. The Revolutionaries rejected the British argument that representation in Parliament could be virtual (that is, that English members of Parliament could adequately represent the interests of the colonists). Instead, the Revolutionaries argued that government derived its legitimacy from the consent of the governed.

This made many restrictions on voting seem to be a violation of fundamental rights. During the period immediately following the Revolution, some states replaced property qualifications with taxpaying requirements. This reflected the principle that there should be "no taxation without representation." Other states allowed anyone who served in the army or militia to vote. Vermont was the first state to eliminate all property and taxpaying qualifications for voting.

By 1790, all states had eliminated religious requirements for voting. As a result, approximately 60 to 70 percent of adult white men could vote. During this time, six states (Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Vermont) permitted free African Americans to vote.

THE CONSTITUTION AND VOTING RIGHTS

The US Constitution left the issue of voting rights up to the states. The only thing that the Constitution said about voting was that those entitled to vote for the "most numerous Branch of the state legislature"

could vote for members of the House of Representatives.

POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the election process changed dramatically. Voting by voice was replaced by voting by written ballot. This was not the same thing as a secret ballot, which was instituted only in the late nineteenth century; parties printed ballots on colored paper, so that it was still possible to determine who had voted for which candidate.

The most significant political innovation of the early nineteenth century was the abolition of property qualifications for voting and officeholding. Hard times resulting from the Panic of 1819 led many people to demand an end to property restrictions on voting and officeholding. In 1800, just three states (Kentucky, New Hampshire, and Vermont) had universal white manhood suffrage. By 1830, ten states permitted white manhood suffrage without qualification. Eight states restricted the vote to taxpayers, and six imposed a property qualification for suffrage. In 1860, just five states limited suffrage to taxpayers and only two still imposed property qualifications. And after 1840, a number of states, mainly in the Midwest, allowed immigrants who intended to become citizens to vote.

Pressure for expansion of voting rights came from propertyless men; from territories eager to attract settlers; and from political parties seeking to broaden their base.

Ironically, the period that saw the advent of universal white manhood suffrage also saw new restrictions imposed on voting by African Americans. Every new state that joined the Union after 1819 explicitly denied blacks the right to vote. In 1855, only five states—Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—allowed African Americans to vote without significant restrictions. In 1826, only sixteen black New Yorkers were qualified to vote.

The era of universal white manhood suffrage also saw other restrictions on voting. In New Jersey, the one state that had allowed women property holders to vote, women lost the right to vote. Twelve states forbade paupers from voting and two dozen states excluded felons. After 1830, interest in voting registration increased. There were also some attempts to impose literacy tests and prolonged residence requirements (ranging up to twenty-one years) in the 1850s.

THE DORR WAR

The transition from property qualifications to universal white manhood suffrage occurred gradually, without violence and with surprisingly little dissension, except in Rhode Island, where lack of progress toward democratization provoked an episode known as the Dorr War.

In 1841, Rhode Island, still operating under a Royal Charter granted in 1663, restricted suffrage to landowners and their eldest sons. The charter lacked a bill of rights and grossly underrepresented growing industrial cities, such as Providence, in the state legislature. As Rhode Island grew increasingly urban and industrial, the state's landless population increased and fewer residents were eligible to vote. By 1841, just 11,239 out of 26,000 adult males were qualified to vote.

In 1841, Thomas W. Dorr, a Harvard-educated attorney, organized an extralegal convention to frame a new state constitution and abolish voting restrictions. The state's governor declared Dorr and his supporters guilty of insurrection, proclaimed a state of emergency, and called out the state militia. Dorr tried unsuccessfully to capture the state arsenal at Providence. He was arrested, found guilty of high treason, and sentenced to life imprisonment at hard labor. To appease popular resentment, the governor

pardoned Dorr the next year, and the state adopted a new constitution in 1843. This constitution extended the vote to all taxpaying native-born adult males (including African Americans). But it imposed property requirements and lengthy residence requirements on immigrants.

Rhode Island was unusual in having a large urban, industrial, and foreign-born working class. It appears that fear of allowing this group to attain political power explains the state's strong resistance to voting reform.

THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION

Although Abraham Lincoln had spoken about extending the vote to black soldiers, opposition to granting suffrage to African American men was strong in the North. Between 1863 and 1870, fifteen Northern states and territories rejected proposals to extend suffrage to African Americans.

During Reconstruction, for a variety of reasons, a growing number of Republicans began to favor extending the vote to African American men. Many believed that African Americans needed the vote to protect their rights. Some felt that black suffrage would allow the Republican party to build a base in the South.

The Reconstruction Act of 1867 required the former Confederate states to approve new constitutions, which were to be ratified by an electorate that included black as well as white men. In 1868, the Republican Party went further and called for a Fifteenth Amendment that would prohibit states from denying the vote based on race or previous condition of servitude. A proposal for a stronger amendment that would have prohibited states from denying or abridging the voting rights of adult males of sound mind (with the exception of felons and those who had engaged in rebellion against the United States) was defeated.

A variety of methods—including violence in which hundreds of African Americans were murdered, property qualification laws, gerrymandering, and fraud—were used by Southern whites to reduce the level of black voting. The defeat in 1891 of the Federal Elections Bill, which would have strengthened the federal government's power to supervise elections, prevent suppression of the black vote, and overturn fraudulent elections, ended congressional efforts to enforce black voting rights in the South.

THE MISSISSIPPI PLAN

In 1890, Mississippi pioneered new methods to prevent African Americans from voting. Through lengthy residence requirements, poll taxes, literacy tests, property requirements, cumbersome registration procedures, and laws disenfranchising voters for minor criminal offenses, Southern states drastically reduced black voting. In Mississippi, just 9,000 of 147,000 African Americans of voting age were qualified to vote. In Louisiana, the number of black registered voters fell from 130,000 to 1,342.

Meanwhile, grandfather clauses in these states exempted whites from all residence, poll tax, literacy, and property requirements if their ancestors had voted prior to enactment of the Fifteenth Amendment.

THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Fears of corruption and of fraudulent voting led a number of northern and western states to enact "reforms" similar to those in the South. Reformers were especially troubled by big-city machines that paid or promised jobs to voters. Reforms that were enacted included pre-election registration, long residence qualifications, revocation of state laws that permitted non-citizens to vote, disfranchisement of felons, and

adoption of the Australian ballot (which required voters to place a mark by the name of the candidate they wished to vote for). By the 1920s, thirteen northern and western states barred illiterate adults from voting (in 1924, Oregon became the last state to adopt a literacy test for voting). Many western states prohibited Asians from voting.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

In 1848, at the first women's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, delegates adopted a resolution calling for women's suffrage. But it would take seventy-two years before most American women could vote. Why did it take so long? Why did significant numbers of women oppose women's suffrage?

The Constitution speaks of "persons"; only rarely does the document use the word "he." The Constitution did not explicitly exclude women from congress or from the presidency or from juries or from voting. The Fourteenth Amendment included a clause that stated, "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States."

In the presidential election of 1872, supporters of woman suffrage, including Susan B. Anthony, appeared at the polls, arguing that if all citizens had the right to the privileges of citizenship, they could certainly exercise the right to vote. In *Minor v. Happersett* (1875) the Supreme Court ruled that women could only receive the vote as a result of explicit legislation or constitutional amendment, rather than through interpretation of the implications of the Constitution. In a unanimous opinion, the Court observed that it was "too late" to claim the right of suffrage by implication. It also ruled that suffrage was a matter for the states, not the federal government, to decide.

One group of women led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony sought a constitutional amendment. Another group, led by Lucy Stone, favored a state-by-state approach. In 1890, the two groups merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Rather than arguing in favor of equal rights, the NAWSA initially argued that women would serve to uplift politics and counterbalance the votes of immigrants. Meanwhile, opponents of women's suffrage argued that it would increase family strife, erode the boundaries between masculinity and femininity, and degrade women by exposing them to the corrupt world of politics.

Women succeeded in getting the vote slowly. Wyoming Territory, eager to increase its population, enfranchised women in 1869, followed by Utah, which wanted to counter the increase in non-Mormon voters. Idaho and Colorado also extended the vote to women in the mid-1890s. A number of states, counties, and cities allowed women to vote in municipal elections, for school boards or for other educational issues, and on liquor licenses.

During the early twentieth century, the suffrage movement became better financed and more militant. It attracted growing support from women who favored reforms to help children (such as increased spending on education) and the prohibition of alcohol. It also attracted growing numbers of working-class women, who viewed politics as the way to improve their wages and working conditions.

World War I helped to fuel support for the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, extending the vote to women. Most suffragists strongly supported the war effort by selling war bonds and making clothing for the troops. In addition, women's suffrage seemed an effective way to demonstrate that the war truly was a war for democracy.

At first, politicians responded to the Nineteenth Amendment by increasingly favoring issues believed to be

of interest to women, such as education and disarmament. But as it became clear that women did not vote as a bloc, politicians became less interested in addressing issues of particular interest to them. It would not be until the late twentieth century that a gender gap in voting would become a major issue in American politics.

DECLINING PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

Voter turnout began to fall after the election of 1896. Participation in presidential elections fell from a high of about 80 percent overall to about 60 percent in the North in the 1920s and about 20 percent in the South. Contributing to the decline in voter participation was single-party dominance in large parts of the country; laws making it difficult for third parties to appear on the ballot; the decline of urban political machines; the rise of at-large municipal elections; and the development of appointed commissions that administered water, utilities, police, and transportation, reducing the authority of elected officials.

VOTING RIGHTS FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS

In 1944, in *Smith v. Allwright*, the US Supreme Court ruled that Texas's Democratic Party could not restrict membership to whites only and bar blacks from voting in the party's primary. Between 1940 and 1947, the proportion of Southern blacks registered to vote rose from 3 percent to 12 percent. In 1946, a presidentially appointed National Committee on Civil Rights called for abolition of poll taxes and for federal action to protect the voting rights of African Americans and Native Americans.

At the end of the 1950s, seven Southern states (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia) used literacy tests to keep blacks from voting, while five states (Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia) used poll taxes to prevent blacks from registering. In Alabama, voters had to provide written answers to a twenty-page test on the Constitution and on state and local government. Questions included: "Where do presidential electors cast ballots for president?" And "Name the rights a person has after he has been indicted by a grand jury." The Civil Rights Act of 1957 allowed the Justice Department to seek injunctions and file suits in voting rights cases, but it only increased black voting registrations by 200,000.

In an effort to bring the issue of voting rights to national attention, Martin Luther King Jr. launched a voter registration drive in Selma, Alabama, in early 1965. Even though blacks slightly outnumbered whites in this city of 29,500 people, Selma's voting rolls were 99 percent white and 1 percent black. For seven weeks, King led hundreds of Selma's black residents to the county courthouse to register to vote. Nearly 2,000 black demonstrators, including King, were jailed by County Sheriff James Clark for contempt of court, juvenile delinquency, and parading without a permit. After a federal court ordered Clark not to interfere with orderly registration, the sheriff forced black applicants to stand in line for up to five hours before being permitted to take a "literacy" test. Not a single black voter was added to the registration rolls.

When a young black man was murdered in nearby Marion, King responded by calling for a march from Selma to the state capital of Montgomery, fifty miles away. On March 7, 1965, black voting-rights demonstrators prepared to march. As they crossed a bridge spanning the Alabama River, 200 state police with tear gas, nightsticks, and whips attacked them. The march resumed on March 21 with federal protection. The marchers chanted, "Segregation's got to fall . . . you never can jail us all." On March 25, a crowd of 25,000 gathered at the state capitol to celebrate the march's completion. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed the crowd and called for an end to segregated schools, poverty, and voting discrimination. "I know you are asking today, 'How long will it take?' . . . How long? Not long, because no lie can live

forever."

Two measures adopted in 1965 helped safeguard the voting rights of black Americans. On January 23, the states completed ratification of the Twenty-fourth Amendment to the Constitution barring a poll tax in federal elections. At the time, five Southern states still had a poll tax. On August 6, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act, which prohibited literacy tests and sent federal examiners to seven Southern states to register black voters. Within a year, 450,000 Southern blacks registered to vote.

The Supreme Court ruled that literacy tests were illegal in areas where schools had been segregated, struck down laws restricting the vote to property-owners or tax-payers, and held that lengthy residence rules for voting were unconstitutional. The court also ruled in the "one-man, one-vote" *Baker v. Carr* decision that states could not give rural voters a disproportionate sway in state legislatures. Meanwhile, the states eliminated laws that disenfranchised paupers.

REDUCING THE VOTING AGE

The war in Vietnam fueled the notion that young people who were young enough to die for their country were old enough to vote. In 1970, as part of an extension of the Voting Rights Act, a provision was added lowering the voting age to eighteen. The Supreme Court ruled that Congress had the power to reduce the voting age only in federal elections, not in state elections. To prevent states from having to maintain two different voting rolls, the Twenty-sixth Amendment to the Constitution barred the states and the federal government from denying the vote to anyone eighteen or older.

AN UNFINISHED HISTORY

The history of voting rights is not yet over. Even today, debate continues. One of the most heated debates is whether or not convicted felons who have served their time be allowed to vote. Today, a handful of states bar convicted felons from voting unless they successfully petition to have their voting rights restored. Another controversy—currently being discussed in San Francisco—is whether non-citizens should have the right to vote, for example, in local school board elections. Above all, the Electoral College arouses controversy, with critics arguing that our country's indirect system of electing a president overrepresents small states, distorts political campaigning, and thwarts the will of a majority of voters. History reminds us that even issues that seem settled sometimes reopen as subjects for debate. One example might be whether the voting age should be lowered again, perhaps to sixteen. In short, the debate about what it means to be a truly democratic society remains an ongoing, unfinished, story.

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Women and the Early Industrial Revolution in the United States

by Thomas Dublin

The industrial revolution that transformed western Europe and the United States during the course of the nineteenth century had its origins in the introduction of power-driven machinery in the English and Scottish textile industries in the second half of the eighteenth century. But far more than the cotton textile industry was transformed in the course of that revolution. Non-industrial wage labor increased; urban centers grew; and in farming areas, outwork occupations and commercial agriculture transformed the rural labor market. Finally, these economic developments coincided with dramatic changes in family life, particularly declining family size and increasing life expectancy. A greater role for women in the labor force, contemporary politics, and reform activities was certainly one of the unintended consequences of technological change in nineteenth-century America.

Boott Mill Weave Room at the Lowell (MA) National Historic Park. (National Park Service photo)

The industrial revolution in the United States was dependent from the outset on the transatlantic movement of British immigrants and British technology, including the adoption of the spinning jenny, water frame, and spinning mule that made the textile industry possible. The flood of British exports to the United States after the American Revolution stimulated efforts to replicate the inventions that gave English manufacturers such an advantage in the American marketplace. Out of these efforts emerged the first permanent cotton spinning mill in the United States, in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. English emigrant Samuel Slater—himself a former apprentice at the English textile firm of Arkwright & Strutt—reconstructed an Arkwright water frame under the sponsorship of Providence merchants William Almy and Moses Brown. The firm of Almy, Brown, & Slater pioneered in the machine production of cotton yarn between 1790 and 1840. This company expanded, gave rise to a number of other firms, and established the basic set of business practices that came to be called the Rhode Island system. These southern New England textile firms followed British practices, employing entire families, with children comprising the vast majority of the mill workforce. While the mills focused on carding and spinning, they relied on rural and urban hand weavers to finish the cloth. Thus the first cotton textile mills were very much a part of the region's rural landscape.

The success of these first factories spawned new competitors, however, and the new factories contributed to a wave of urbanization in northern New England. The new wave of textile investment followed on the heels of a famous bit of industrial espionage by Boston merchant Francis Cabot Lowell. Lowell visited mills in Great Britain and, on his return to Massachusetts, began efforts to reconstruct the power loom he had seen there. By 1814 he had succeeded and, armed with a charter of incorporation from the state legislature, he established the Boston Manufacturing Company in Waltham, Massachusetts.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

Textile mills of the Waltham-Lowell system sprang up across the northern New England countryside

between 1814 and 1850 and grew steadily across the second half of the century. Mills of the Rhode Island variety expanded as well, and the earlier regional differences faded over time. At mid-century, New England's textile workforce had grown to number 85,000 producing cloth goods valued at $68 million annually. Adding in a substantial textile industry in the Philadelphia area, cotton and woolen textile mills were the nation's leading industrial employers at this date.

The adoption of the power loom permitted the vertical integration of all steps in the cloth manufacturing process under a single roof. From opening the bales, to carding, spinning, dressing the warp yarn, and finally weaving the cloth, all production steps were conducted within the mill. This change led to a change in the labor force as well. Both the power loom and the dressing frame required fairly tall workers and children simply wouldn't do as they had for the mills in southern New England. Thus, the Waltham company depended from the outset on a workforce of young, single women recruited from the countryside. The firm reached far into the countryside for this workforce and had to construct boardinghouses to accommodate the rural women it recruited. Finally, to entice this new pool of labor, management offered monthly cash wages, a definite competitive advantage in comparison to practices in the family-style Rhode Island mills.

Between 1830 and 1860, women remained a key labor force for this growing industry. Mill superintendents paid recruiters to circulate through northern New England and to bring suitable young women to work in their mills. The wages, typically set at $3.00 to $3.50 per week, were much higher than anything farm daughters could earn in their hometowns and proved a strong attraction.

What motivated young women to leave their families in the countryside to work in the mills of New England's growing urban centers? Between analysis of the economic backgrounds of the families of mill women and what they had to say in their correspondence it is clear that mill employment permitted young women to earn their own support without depending on their families; second, the wages permitted young women to save something for their future marriages; finally, some daughters used their earnings to assist their families.

On the whole, a mix of personal and familial motivations led daughters to leave their farming homes and take up mill employment. There was, in fact, a continuum stretching from those who went to the mills for entirely personal reasons and those who went to earn money to help support their families. Long-term economic considerations—particularly how to save in anticipation of marriage—had more to do with the migration than the short-term consideration of immediate self-support. Women came from farming families that were able to maintain a modest standard of living. So it was not poverty, per se, but the lack of future opportunities that pushed young women into the mills. And while young women were attending to their futures, and supporting themselves in mill towns, they achieved a measure of economic and social independence not possible while living under the parental roof.

Beyond the economic consequences of the growth of factory employment, significant cultural changes accompanied women's work in the early mills. Contemporaries repeatedly expressed concern that the mills were making young women unfit in a variety of ways for what was expected of them as nineteenth-century women. Some were concerned that mill employment made farmers' daughters less fit for marriage because they had become citified. They argued that the urban mill experience made young women dissatisfied with the country life of their parents. Thus one writer complained in 1858 that young working women no longer wanted a farm life. "They contemn," he wrote, "the calling of their father, and will, nine times out of ten, marry a mechanic in preference to a farmer." And this perception was based to a considerable degree on reality. Tracing a sample of mill women over their lifetimes reveals that only about a third married men who were farmers or farm laborers and only a quarter of those who married

lived the rest of their lives in their hometowns. Mill employment led many rural women to marry artisans or other urban workers and to migrate from the farming homes of their youth to New England's growing cities. Young people voted with their feet and their elders did not approve.

Mill employment also led some farmers' daughters to become engaged in the reform movements of the antebellum decades. There were labor protests in Lowell and other New England mill towns in the 1830s and 1840s, and the women who became involved in these struggles were active across a wide range of reform activity.

The height of labor protest in the New England mills before the Civil War came with the emergence in the 1840s of a Ten Hour Movement aiming for reduction in the hours of labor in the mills. The mills ran for seventy-three hours a week in this period, averaging slightly more than twelve hours a day. As the pace of work in the mills increased without any wage gains, millworkers came to demand a ten-hour workday, giving them time to relax, attend meetings and lectures, and participate in the urban cultural scene around them. These protests built on earlier strikes, known as "turn-outs" in the language of the time, reveal much about the sensibility that New England women brought to the mill experience. In October 1836, on the occasion of the second turn-out in Lowell, women founded the Lowell Factory Girls Association to organize their protest. The preamble to the association's constitution reveals mill women's sense of themselves as "daughters of freemen" and their connection to the young nation's republican tradition. The mill women, some 2,500 in number, left the mills to protest an increase in charges at company boardinghouses unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in their wages. The women held out for several months and displayed a keen sense of tactics in their struggle with the mill agents. In the end, the companies reduced boardinghouse charges for a good proportion of their workers, and the mill women returned to work.

Ten years later, women organized the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association with a view to restricting the hours of labor. The association survived for two and a half years and organized petition campaigns calling on the state legislature to set ten hours as the legal limit for the working day. Republicanism from the revolutionary tradition and perfectionism from evangelical Protestantism were two major threads that both working men and working women drew upon to protest the new impositions of industrial capitalism in nineteenth-century America.

These traditions also led mill women to become involved in a variety of other reform movements. Anti-slavery was strong in Lowell and mill women sent several petitions to Washington opposing slavery in the District of Columbia and opposing war with Mexico, which might contribute to an expansion of slavery into the Southwest. Woman reformers came to see opposition to black slavery and wage slavery as related causes. Some also participated in the women's rights conventions that mushroomed after the first one was held in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. Mary Emerson, a leader in Lowell's ten-hour movement, attended a women's rights convention in Worcester, Massachusetts, in October 1851. She shared the broad reform perspective that launched woman mill workers into labor protest in these two decades and contributed to the widening perspectives of American women in politics and social reform in the mid-nineteenth century.

The experiences of mill women demonstrate that factory employment not only brought women's work out of the home but also provided women a collective experience that supported their participation in the world of broader social reform. Lowell women became involved in anti-slavery, moral reform, peace, labor reform, prison reform, and women's rights campaigns. Furthermore, working women, like working men in this period, drew initially on republican traditions to defend their rights and interests but ultimately came to justify their concern for social justice on a combination of religious and rationalist grounds. They

came to oppose the growing inequality evident in American society and to demand for themselves as workers and as women greater rights and rewards in that society.

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A New Look at the Great Plains

by Elliott West

To most Americans the Great Plains are the Great Flyover, or maybe the Great Drivethrough. Viewed from a window seat the plains seem nearly devoid of interest, something to get across enroute to someplace far worthier to explore or live in. Yet anyone who has spent time on the plains knows better. Walk around in western Nebraska or the Texas panhandle and you will find a geography that is mixed and surprising and sometimes disorienting.

Old house, rural Montana. (Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

Most people consider plains history much like the land—flat, featureless, and undeserving of more than a glance between sips of a soda. But spend some time in that past and you will see that, like the plains from 30,000 feet up, it has been literally overlooked, and consequently misunderstood and underappreciated. Seen up close, this history is thickly peopled, dense with stories, and full of unexpected revelations that feed a deeper understanding of western—and American—history.

If nothing else, the plains remind us that American history, defined as what people have done on this continent, began in the West. There is vigorous debate today about the early peopling of the Americas—the when and where and how of the first migration from Asia—but the opinion is unanimous that the West was the first region settled. There is also consensus that although the West may not have been the earliest migratory route, one of the first paths of migration was through a passway in the glacial sheet to the north and then along western edge of the Great Plains in the eastern shadow of the Rocky Mountains. From this perspective, Interstate 25, which runs north and south through Cheyenne, Wyoming, to Denver and Pueblo, Colorado, is arguably the oldest road in America. A commuter stuck in one of its rush-hour traffic jams might take some consolation from being part of a tradition dating back about 12,000 years. Great Plains lesson number one: American history is very old.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

Between the times of those first travelers and the coming of Europeans, the Great Plains saw the rise and passing of dozens of cultures. Through trial and error, the peoples who were part of these cultures adapted to a varied environment and to one of the most dangerously erratic climates in North America. They farmed along the eastern edges of the plains, hunted among the prolific game of the high plains, and devised annual rounds of movement that included forays to gather flint from the Rockies and to conduct elaborate hunts at an altitude of 11,000 feet, close to the Continental Divide. The plains peoples were connected to worlds far beyond the Great Plains through trade networks reaching to both coasts and into Central America. A grave dug nearly 1,800 years ago in what is now Nebraska contained parrot feathers from the tropics and shells from the Gulf of Mexico. Peoples who traversed the plains subsisted by taking what was there (and there was plenty, including vast numbers of game birds traversing one of the world's great flyways) while exchanging some of that abundance for other foods they needed to fill their nutritional needs. For example, the bison herds gave the plains people enormous supplies of protein craved by game-poor settlements among Pueblo peoples of the Rio Grande valley, who in return offered

corn to plains people who, apparently unaware of the Atkins diet, craved that carbohydrate-rich crop. Plains people worshiped using many cosmologies, which included what is surely one of loveliest of the American people's many creation stories, that of the Pawnees, who tell us that our world and all its life were sung into existence by the stars. Great Plains lesson number two: American history has always been a cultural grab bag.

If nothing else, looking deeply into the plains' past broadens our appreciation of colonial history. Finally, and thank goodness for it, historians nowadays are more inclined to expand the colonial perspective to include the French, Spanish, and other imperial experiences, but, once again, they typically overlook what the Great Plains has to teach us. There the Spanish, French, British, and American empires converged on terms closer to equality of power than anywhere else. French and English interests reached into the plains from Canada and the lower Mississippi, Spanish from the Rio Grande valley, and the United States out of St. Louis, starting with Lewis and Clark, but that famous expedition, often misrepresented as the start of the region's true history, came after many decades of maneuvering by other rivals. All, including the United States and its president, Thomas Jefferson, considered the plains the key to controlling the western two-thirds of the continent, and they acted accordingly, making remarkable efforts to court and tease alliances from native inhabitants. In what is today Nebraska, Spain suffered one its great imperial disasters when a command under Pedro de Villasur was all but annihilated in 1720 by Indians supplied with guns by French traders. Soon afterwards the French pressed their courtship by taking a delegation of Indians to Paris, where Louis XV entertained them and on their parting gave them jeweled watches. That was eighty years before Lewis and Clark entered this diplomatic arena with their own gifts and medals. To block these cheeky newcomers Spain sent no fewer than four military commands to turn back Lewis and Clark—all obviously unsuccessful, although the Spanish did arrest Zebulon Pike and his men, who made that other, far less celebrated expedition that first described the southern plains as an American desert.

Such episodes should remind us that we will have a much better understanding of North America's several empires when we study how they came together in the continent's contentious center. Great Plains lesson number three: American history has consisted of even wider contests of more contingent powers than the struggles we commonly hear about.

That point leads to another. In too many colonial histories Indian peoples seem essentially pawns in elaborate strategies directed by European chess masters, but as plains history makes clear, Indians were anything but other peoples' tools. They were the main power brokers until quite late in colonial history, when the rising tide of this nation's numbers and influence began to roll beyond the Missouri River. This is another way of saying that American history can be truly viewed only from multiple perspectives. Assume the viewpoint of the plains, from the American center outward, and new stories suddenly come to life.

One story might be called that of the *other* American revolution—the rise of the horse culture. It goes back much farther than even the region's ancient human history, fifty million years back, when the earliest protohorse, *Hyracotherium*, appeared on the ancient Great Plains, and then evolved into its modern form. Some of these animals migrated across the Bering land bridge to flourish in Asia while their American cousins died off at the end of the last ice age. Domesticated and spread across much of the Old World, horses finished their globe-girdling odyssey when the Spanish used them in conquering Mexico and finally, under Coronado, brought them home to the plains in the 1540s, now not as wild creatures but as animals bred for two or three hundred generations as partners to humans in doing grand things. After the Pueblo peoples drove the Spanish from New Mexico in 1680, Indians across much of the West acquired horses. Those on the high plains transformed their lives by exploiting a horse's ability to

draw energy from the Great Plains as Great Pasture, thus marrying that animal's grass-fed strength and speed to human purposes and dreams. It was a great American story, our version of a social, cultural, economic, and military revolution that over five millennia had occurred in central Asia, China, North Africa, and Europe. It unfolded here at a breathtaking clip. Born sometime after 1680, the plains horse culture was complete by about 1780, as that *other* revolution was taking its course in the Atlantic colonies. Great Plains lesson number four: *E unum pluribus*: American history is impoverished if confined to one narrative and to the usual perspectives.

Tell enough stories about the same country, however, and you are bound to uncover conflict. In this case, the one revolution, the one we celebrate with fireworks and cookouts, led within another century to the collapse of the other one, the one we trivialize if we recognize it at all. The revolution of Jefferson and Adams set loose ambitions and dreams that would suffocate the visions and snuff out the brief glories of the other, that of the Comanches, Sioux, and Cheyennes. It's a prime example of how American history gets much messier as we open it up and view it from various angles. The final Great Plains lesson: historical lessons, American and otherwise, are ambiguous.

Once we take a closer took at plains history—once we land the plane or stop the car, and walk around and pay some basic attention to what is there—things turn out to be far trickier than most would have guessed, more convoluted and layered with experience, more varied, dynamic, and shifting. Notice that everything considered in this short piece happened prior to the episodes normally associated with the region—Lewis and Clark, the overland migrations and Indian wars, building the transcontinental railways, slaughtering the bison and establishing homesteads, the cattle industry, the Populists, the dust bowl, and the rise of agribusiness. Follow these modern stories and you will find more unexpected wrinkles that often resonate with the long, largely unexplored earlier history. Parts of the Great Plains, not either coast, have been the most ethnically diverse parts of America, an echo of its splay of ancient cultures. The region where Indians drew great power from the grass is also one of other important natural resources. The nation's richest coal reserves are not in Appalachia but in Wyoming and eastern Montana.

No one who views the Great Plains either historically or as a part of national life today should take them for granted. Take them instead as new terrain to explore and as a chance to complicate creatively an understanding of the West and America.

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Born Modern: An Overview of the West

by Richard White

The present American West is a creation of history rather than geography. There has never been a single West; American Wests come and go. At various times places now considered as thoroughly eastern as western Pennsylvania, western New York, or West Virginia have been the West, and over the course of the nineteenth century the term itself proceeded steadily westward. The arguments for defining the modern West as that section of the United States west of the Missouri River or, more narrowly, west of the ninety-eighth meridian, are historical, as are the arguments for pronouncing this region different from the Wests that preceded it. The modern American West is not the product of the arrival at the Pacific of a steadily moving frontier but is instead the result of transformative events and new processes.

To a remarkable degree, the modern West is the product of two wars—the Civil War, which brought it into being, and World War II, which utterly transformed it. Any broad overview of the history of the American West, such as this one, must recognize the lasting consequences of these events for the West.
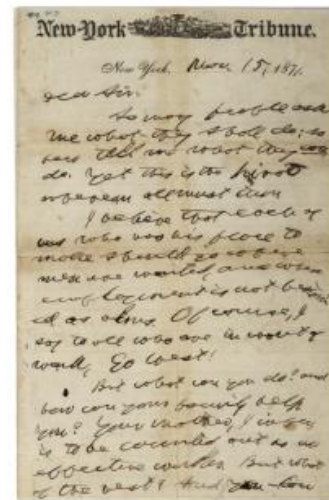
Letter from Horace Greeley to R. L. Sanderson, November 15, 1871, with the iconic advice to "go west." (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Before it became the American West, the region west of the Missouri had for centuries been Indian country and a contested and uncontrolled borderland between empires. Between 1865 and 1869, it underwent a gestation, and a large chunk of it was reborn as a child of the Civil War. By the time this West reached adulthood, it would be fully under American control. Its identity was more than the result of conquest. Americans had been conquering land and dispossessing its prior inhabitants long before they reached the West, but both the pace and processes of conquest—military, political, economic and technological—changed in important ways following the Civil War. As a result, the West evolved differently from lands east of the Missouri River.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

Before the Civil War there had been two parallel expansions—a northern expansion based on free labor and a southern expansion based on slave labor. Terms like Manifest Destiny disguise the deep tensions and divisions over westward expansion that surfaced again and again in the controversies over the admission of Missouri as a state, the annexation of Texas, and the organization of Kansas as a territory. The Civil War replaced this dual expansion with a unitary expansion. There would be no equivalent of the Mason-Dixon Line or the Ohio River in the West. The West is one of the many places that the South lost and lost badly.

There was a second political consequence of the Civil War in the West, and that was the expansion of

federal power. Before the Civil War, the federal government was quite weak. The Civil War created, in Richard Bensel's nice phrase, a "Yankee Leviathan"—a powerful federal government. And although the power of this state diminished unevenly following the war, it remained strongest in the South during Reconstruction—and afterward was strongest in the West. During the late nineteenth century, the West was the kindergarten of the American state, a place where federal government nurtured its power and produced its bureaucracies. After Reconstruction, most of the American Army was stationed in the West. The federal government controlled most of the West's lands and an important, if not particularly efficient, bureaucracy disposed of them. With their lives touched by institutions like the agency that became the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the US Geological Survey, and—late in the century—the emerging Forest Service, westerners, more than inhabitants of any other section, depended on the presence of the federal government.

Federal power, in turn, was linked to a distinctive pattern of development. The backcountry or frontier of the early nineteenth century initially had weak and uneven connections with national or international markets. Market connections depended on rivers and eventually canals. Areas newly settled by non-Indians thus were unevenly integrated into regional or national economies, and politics often reflected these connections—or the lack of them.

In the West, settlement tended to follow, rather than precede, connections to national and international markets. This was true in California with the Gold Rush and mineral rushes elsewhere, but it was most true after the Civil War when the railroads, funded and subsidized by federal, state, and eventually local governments, penetrated the region. "Population," in Richard Overton's words, "followed the rails." Except for Mormons, Anglo-American settlement of the West really had no pre-market or even weak market phase. There was subsistence agriculture in the West, but it was largely American Indian and Mexican American. The great flood of migration brought commercial farmers who came in on railroads and depended upon them to get their crops to market. This was settlement by a mature commercial and increasingly industrial society, and from the beginning of the period, the West was a place of large and powerful corporations. There was no equivalent to these conditions in the settlement that took place further east.

The combination of a strong federal government and an industrial and commercial society had, in turn, further consequences. The first was that after the Civil War, American Indian peoples were badly outmatched. They faced a modern army, shaped by the Civil War, able to move quickly due to the new railroad network, and equipped with ever more powerful weapons. "Experience proves," Grenville Dodge, a leading figure in the Union Pacific and Texas Pacific railroads, wrote, "the Railroad line through Indian Territory a Fortress as well as a highway." Or as Charles Francis Adams, president of the Union Pacific, put it, "The Pacific railroads have settled the Indian question."

Until the War of 1812, Indian peoples east of the Mississippi had been formidable opponents of American expansion. They were not only skilled fighters, but could call on European imperial allies. But Indians were warriors, not professional soldiers. They had to feed their families and could not remain in the field all year. The professional soldiers they faced suffered from neither of these liabilities. The soldiers might lose battles, but they did not lose wars. American advantages in numbers, equipment, and logistics were too formidable. Americans' tactics were too ruthless. The pressures they put on American Indians were relentless.

The results of the forces unleashed by the Civil War and the growth of a modern industrial society were, in hindsight, astonishing. New York is roughly 1,150 miles from Omaha, Nebraska, which is on the Missouri River and was the jumping-off place for the Union Pacific Railroad. Omaha, in turn, was roughly

1,421 miles from San Francisco, which was the terminus of the Central Pacific Railroad, the second half of the first transcontinental railroad. It had taken non-Indians roughly three-and-a-half centuries to take control of the land east of the Missouri; it took less than thirty years to secure control of the remaining 55 percent of the continent. The United States had, of course, claimed virtually this entire region since the Mexican American War, but most of it had remained Indian Country beyond practical control by the United States and only marginally connected with national or international markets. This was not true by the turn of the twentieth century. In hindsight, parts of this rapid expansion now seem a mistake. Large areas were repeatedly deserted during nineteenth-century droughts, and large sections of the Great Plains and the interior basins and plateaus saw their populations peak around 1920. For many farmers in the high arid regions, the twentieth century would be a long, slow retreat.

The West that had emerged from this rapid conquest and occupation by non-Indians was by the twentieth century a hardscrabble place. Its economy was based on extractive industries such as mining, fishing, and logging or on agriculture and ranching. San Francisco, gradually Los Angeles, and to a lesser extent Seattle developed some manufacturing, but by and large the West produced raw materials and semi-finished goods. Outside of the Great Plains, it was more urban than the country as a whole, and much of it was marked by other distinctive demographic patterns. In many parts of the West men heavily outnumbered women, and immigration from China, and later Japan and Mexico led to a racialization of work and demonization of the Chinese and Japanese.

By the time the Depression hit in the 1930s, large parts of the West were already staggering under low commodity prices. This only increased the region's sense of resentment. It saw itself as the hewer of wood and carrier of water for the East and as exploited by eastern capital and corporations. The New Deal gained immense popularity in the West not only because New Deal policies brought some immediate relief from the Depression but because so many New Deal projects—particularly the dams on western rivers—built up a western infrastructure that while of little use in the 1930s, would prove critical to western development during and after World War II.

The Depression shifted public resources westward, but World War II moved them in that direction on a far more massive and enduring scale. The excess hydroelectric power developed during the Depression now provided electricity for factories and aluminum mills, as well as the new atomic works at Hanford, Washington. The West gained a disproportionate share of military bases and government funding. Virtually overnight, the West acquired a shipbuilding industry, and its infant aircraft industry expanded enormously. The West had not produced a single commercial cargo vessel in the 1930s, but during World War II, it accounted for 52 percent of American shipbuilding production. Los Angeles set out to make itself the Detroit of the aircraft industry, and it succeeded. As was the case in the wake of the Civil War, during World War II the government subsidized large corporations such as Boeing, Kaiser, and Lockheed that became critical to the Western economy.

Workers, including those who had taken part in the first large-scale African American migration from the South to northern industrial cities, came west to work in relatively high-paying jobs in these factories. On the Pacific Coast, African American migrants often moved into neighborhoods vacated by Japanese Americans and older Japanese immigrants who had been interned after Pearl Harbor. A region that had supported the deportation and eviction of Mexican workers and their Mexican American children in the 1930s urged their return in the 1940s. The West's population increased roughly three times as quickly as the population of the country as a whole. Much of this growth was on the Pacific Coast and most of it was urban.

Westerners feared the boom and growth would end following the war, but with the onset of the Cold

War, continued federal support for the new aerospace industry as well as the maintenance of military bases spurred further growth. That expansion was not even, of course, but the old extractive economy was no longer at the core of the West. Politically, the West remained more liberal and more supportive of a strong federal role in the economy into the 1960s, but gradually this changed, and the region grew steadily more conservative as the century went on.

In popular culture, the West is seen as dichromatic—with whites and Indians. In reality, the West was more diverse than that, with large-scale immigration from Asia, Mexico, and later other places in Latin America, as well as Europe and Canada.What is perhaps most striking about such a broad overview of the West during the last century and a half is that a region defined in the popular mind by icons of individualism—cowboys, mountain men, gunfighters—can more accurately be seen as the child of government and large corporations. A place that we tend to define in terms of nature and a timeless past is actually probably the most modern section of the country. The West, as defined here, was born modern.

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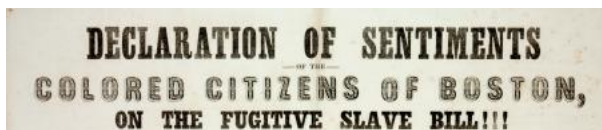**Essay:** Robber Barons or Captains of Industry?

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The Underground Railroad and the Coming of War

by Matthew Pinsker

Headline from a broadside reporting on a meeting held in reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act. The meeting called on all African Americans to guard themselves against southern slave catchers, ca. October 5, 1850. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

The Underground Railroad was a metaphor. Yet many textbooks treat it as an official name for a secret network that once helped escaping slaves. The more literal-minded students end up questioning whether these fixed escape routes were actually under the ground. But the phrase "Underground Railroad" is better understood as a rhetorical device that compared unlike things for the purpose of illustration. In this case, the metaphor described an array of people connected mainly by their intense desire to help other people escape from slavery. Understanding the history of the phrase changes its meaning in profound ways.

Even to begin a lesson by examining the two words "underground" and "railroad" helps provide a tighter chronological framework than usual with this topic. There could be no "underground railroad" until actual railroads became familiar to the American public–in other words, during the 1830s and 1840s. There had certainly been slave escapes before that period, but they were not described by any kind of railroad moniker. The phrase also highlights a specific geographic orientation. Antebellum railroads existed primarily in the North–home to about 70 percent of the nation's 30,000 miles of track by 1860. Slaves fled in every direction of the compass, but the metaphor packed its greatest wallop in those communities closest to the nation's whistle-stops.

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Looking into the phrase "Underground Railroad" also suggests two essential questions: who coined the metaphor? And why would they want to compare and inextricably link a wide-ranging effort to support runaway slaves with an organized network of secret railroads?

The answers can be found in the abolitionist movement. Abolitionists, or those who agitated for the immediate destruction of slavery, wanted to publicize, and perhaps even exaggerate, the number of slave escapes and the extent of the network that existed to support those fugitives. According to the pioneering work of historian Larry Gara, abolitionist newspapers and orators were the ones who first used the term "Underground Railroad" during the early 1840s, and they did so to taunt slaveholders.[1] To some participants this seemed a dangerous game. Frederick Douglass, for instance, claimed to be appalled. "I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted

what they call the *underground railroad*," he wrote in his *Narrative* in 1845, warning that "by their open declarations" these mostly Ohio-based ("western") abolitionists were creating an "*upperground railroad*."[2]

Publicity about escapes and open defiance of federal law only spread in the years that followed, especially after the controversial Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Anxious fugitives and their allies now fought back with greater ferocity. Douglass himself became more militant. In September 1851, he helped a former slave named William Parker escape to Canada after Parker had spearheaded a resistance in Christiana, Pennsylvania, that left a Maryland slaveholder dead and federal authorities in disarray. The next year in a fiery speech at Pittsburgh, the famous orator stepped up the rhetorical attack, vowing, "The only way to make the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter is to make half a dozen or more dead kidnappers".[3] This level of defiance was not uncommon in the anti-slavery North and soon imperiled both federal statute and national union. Between 1850 and 1861, there were only about 350 fugitive slave cases prosecuted under the notoriously tough law, and none in the abolitionist-friendly New England states after 1854.[4] White southerners complained bitterly while abolitionists grew more emboldened.

Students often seem to imagine runaway slaves cowering in the shadows while ingenious "conductors" and "stationmasters" devised elaborate secret hiding places and coded messages to help spirit fugitives to freedom. They make few distinctions between North and South, often imagining that slave patrollers and their barking dogs chased terrified runaways from Mississippi to Maine. Instead, the Underground Railroad deserves to be explained in terms of sectional differences and the coming of the Civil War.

One way to grasp the Underground Railroad in its full political complexity is to look closely at the rise of abolitionism and the spread of free black vigilance committees during the 1830s. Nineteenth-century American communities employed extra-legal "vigilance" groups whenever they felt threatened. During the mid-1830s, free black residents first in New York and then across other northern cities began organizing vigilant associations to help them guard against kidnappers. Almost immediately, however, these groups extended their protective services to runaway slaves. They also soon allied themselves with the new abolitionist organizations, such as William Lloyd Garrison's Anti-Slavery Society. The most active vigilance committees were in Boston, Detroit, New York, and Philadelphia led by now largely forgotten figures such as Lewis Hayden, George DeBaptiste, David Ruggles, and William Still.[5] Black men typically dominated these groups, but membership also included whites, such as some surprisingly feisty Quakers and at least a few women. These vigilance groups constituted the organized core of what soon became known as the Underground Railroad. Smaller communities organized too, but did not necessarily invoke the "vigilance" label, nor integrate as easily across racial, religious, and gender lines. Nonetheless, during the 1840s when William Parker formed a "mutual protection" society in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, or when John Brown created his League of Gileadites in Springfield, Massachusetts, they emulated this vigilance model.

These committees functioned more or less like committees anywhere—electing officers, holding meetings, keeping records, and raising funds. They guarded their secrets, but these were not covert operatives in the manner of the French Resistance. In New York, the vigilance committee published an annual report. Detroit vigilance agents filled newspaper columns with reports about their monthly traffic. Several committees released the addresses of their officers. One enterprising figure circulated a business card that read, "Underground Railroad Agent".[6] Even sensitive material often got recorded somewhere. A surprising amount of this secret evidence is also available for classroom use. One can explore letters detailing Harriet Tubman's comings and goings, and even a reimbursement request for her worn-out shoes, by using William Still's *The Underground Railroad* (1872), available online in a dozen different places, and which presents the fascinating materials he collected as head of the Philadelphia

Vigilance Committee. Anyone curious about how much it cost to help runaways can access the site where social studies teacher Dean Eastman and his students at Beverly High School have transcribed and posted the account books of the Boston vigilance committee. And the list of accessible Underground Railroad material grows steadily.

But how did these northern vigilance groups get away with such impudence? How could they publicize their existence and risk imprisonment by keeping records that detailed illegal activities? The answer helps move the story into the 1840s and 1850s and offers a fresh way for teachers to explore the legal and political history of the sectional crisis with students. Those aiding fugitives often benefited from the protection of state personal liberty laws and from a general reluctance across the North to encourage federal intervention or reward southern power. In other words, it was all about states' rights—northern states' rights. As early as the 1820s, northern states led by Pennsylvania had been experimenting with personal liberty or anti-kidnapping statutes designed to protect free black residents from kidnapping, but which also had the effect of frustrating enforcement of federal fugitive slave laws (1793 and 1850). In two landmark cases—*Prigg v. Pennsylvania* (1842) and *Ableman v. Booth* (1859)—the Supreme Court threw out these northern personal liberty protections as unconstitutional.

Students accustomed to equating states' rights with South Carolina may be stunned to learn that it was the Wisconsin supreme court asserting the nullification doctrine in the mid-1850s. They may also be shocked to discover that a federal jury in Philadelphia had acquitted the lead defendant in the Christiana treason trial within about fifteen minutes. These northern legislatures and juries were, for the most part, indifferent to black civil rights, but they were quite adamant about asserting their own states' rights during the years before the Civil War. This was the popular sentiment exploited by northern vigilance committees that helped sustain their controversial work on behalf of fugitives.

That is also why practically none of the Underground Railroad agents in the North experienced arrest, conviction, or physical violence. No prominent Underground Railroad operative ever got killed or spent significant time in jail for helping fugitives once they crossed the Mason-Dixon Line or the Ohio River. Instead, it was agents operating across the South who endured the notorious late-night arrests, long jail sentences, torture, and sometimes even lynching that made the underground work so dangerous. In 1844, for example, a federal marshal in Florida ordered the branding of Jonathan Walker, a sea captain who had been convicted of smuggling runaways, with the mark "S.S." ("slave-stealer") on his hand. That kind of barbaric punishment simply did not happen in the North.

What did happen, however, was growing *rhetorical* violence. The war of words spread. Threats escalated. Metaphors hardened. The results then shaped the responses the led to war. By reading and analyzing the various Southern secession documents from the winter of 1860–1861, one will find that nearly all invoke the crisis over fugitives.[7] The battle over fugitives and those who aided them was a primary instigator for the national conflict over slavery. Years afterward, Frederick Douglass dismissed the impact of the Underground Railroad in terms of the larger fight against slavery, comparing it to "an attempt to bail out the ocean with a teaspoon".[8] But Douglass had always been cool to the public value of the metaphor. Measured in words, however—through the antebellum newspaper articles, sermons, speeches, and resolutions generated by the crisis over fugitives—the "Underground Railroad" proved to be quite literally a metaphor that helped launch the Civil War.

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[1] Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (1961; Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 143–144.

[2] Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* (Boston: Anti-

Slavery Office, 1845), 101 (http://www.docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html).

[3] Frederick Douglass, *"The Fugitive Slave Law: Speech to the National Free Soil Convention in Pittsburgh,"* August 11, 1852 (http://www.lib.rochester.edu/index.cfm?PAGE=4385).

[4] See the appendix in Stanley W. Campbell, *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law: 1850–1860* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970), 199–207.

[5] Out of these four notable black leaders, only David Ruggles has an adult biography available in print. See Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *David Ruggles: A Radical Black Abolitionist and the Underground Railroad in New York City* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[6] Jermain Loguen of Syracuse, New York. See Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 410.

[7] See secession documents online at The Avalon Project from Yale Law School (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/csapage.asp).

[8] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (Hartford, CT: Park Publishing, 1881), 272 (http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglasslife/douglass.html).

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Primary Source: A former Confederate officer on slavery and the Civil War, 1907

The Marshall and Taney Courts: Continuities and Changes

by R. B. Bernstein

Though the first holders of the job thought it more a burden than a position of honor or power, the office of chief justice of the United States has a pivotal role in the American constitutional system, thanks mainly to John Marshall (1755–1835). Born in Virginia in 1755, Marshall was a veteran of the Continental Army and one of the first students to hear the law lectures delivered at the College of William and Mary by George Wythe. Marshall distinguished himself as a rising young attorney and as one of the advocates of the proposed Constitution in the 1788 Virginia ratifying convention. In 1798, he was one of three American diplomats sent to France by President John Adams to negotiate differences between the new nation and the revolutionary republic. Embroiled in the XYZ Affair, Marshall brought the news of the scandal home to America, where he was lionized as a hero. When Adams fired Secretary of State Timothy Pickering in 1800, he named Marshall to the post, and in 1801, as one of the last acts of his presidency, Adams named Marshall to succeed Oliver Ellsworth as chief justice, after John Jay declined reappointment. Marshall, at 45, was the youngest man named to the post.

John Marshall and Roger B. Taney, Chief Justices of the United States. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

During his thirty-four years as chief justice (still a record in the Court's history), John Marshall transformed the Court's position within the constitutional system and fought a vigorous and skilled battle to uphold federal authority over interstate commerce and in relations between the federal government and the states. Marshall's record of achievement began with *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), in which he vindicated the Court's power of judicial review (the power to review the constitutionality of federal or state laws or other governmental actions) and laid the foundations of federal constitutional jurisprudence. In *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), Marshall held that a land grant was a contract that a state could not revoke without violating the Constitution's clause protecting contracts; in *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), Marshall reaffirmed *Fletcher* and extended it to protect state laws of incorporation—in this case, incorporating a college—from later state government attempts to revoke them. In *McCullough v. Maryland* (1819), Marshall led the Court in vindicating federal authority by striking down as unconstitutional a Maryland law seeking to tax the Bank of the United States, an agency of the federal government.

And, in a series of major cases interpreting the Constitution's clause granting Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce, Marshall and his colleagues vindicated federal regulatory power. *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), for example, struck down a New York law giving a steamship company an exclusive monopoly over traffic across the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey. *Brown v. Maryland* (1827) addressed the issue of when federal authority over interstate commerce ended and state authority began, focusing on the question of whether the goods at issue were still in their original package—if so, then federal authority did not end, but if not, then state authority took over when the original package was opened. In Marshall's last major constitutional case, *Barron v. Baltimore* (1833), the chief justice rejected an argument by a Marylander that the city of Baltimore had violated the Fifth

Amendment by a harbor-reconstruction program that destroyed the value of his wharf; Marshall held that the framers and ratifiers of the federal Constitution's Bill of Rights had intended it only to limit the powers of the federal government, not the states.

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Besides the great precedents, Marshall changed key elements of the way that the Court did business. Before Marshall, for example, each justice delivered his opinion on each case heard by the Court, in a practice known as *seriatim* opinions (from the Latin meaning "in a series"), and it required much labor and legal knowledge to work out how the justices had decided a given case. Marshall introduced the "opinion for the Court," in which one member of the Court (in most cases Marshall himself) delivered a statement of the Court's decision and the reasoning undergirding its decision. Any justice who disagreed could write and deliver a dissenting opinion, though—as Justice William Johnson reported to an enraged former president Thomas Jefferson, who had named him to the Court to counter Marshall's influence— the would-be dissenter usually quailed in the face of the visible disappointment and hurt feelings of his colleagues.

After Marshall died, on July 6, 1835, speculation was rife as to who his successor would be. President Andrew Jackson had had reason to resent Marshall for his decisions in 1831 and 1832 of cases in which the Cherokee nation sought to prevent the state of Georgia from taking its ancestral lands; Jackson had refused to enforce *Worcester v. Georgia*, and the state evicted the Cherokee people, forcing them to beat a heartbreaking and agonizing retreat westward, known thereafter as "the trail of tears."

On December 28, 1835, Jackson named his longtime ally, Roger Brooke Taney (pronounced "tawny") of Maryland as the nation's fifth chief justice. Taney had served Jackson as attorney general and as secretary of the Treasury (as a recess appointment), winning a reputation as a loyal Jacksonian who would craft legal arguments to his chief's political advantage. As Treasury secretary, Taney enforced Jackson's decision to remove federal deposits from the Bank of the United States after two previous Treasury secretaries had refused to do so. An outraged Senate refused to confirm Taney's appointment, and Taney resigned. Jackson later attempted to name Taney an associate justice but the Senate again refused. Only in the spring of 1836 did the Senate relent and confirm Jackson's nomination of the Marylander to succeed John Marshall.

Admirers of Marshall, from his junior colleague on the Court Joseph Story to such notable attorneys and politicians as Daniel Webster, were aghast. Taney, in their view, was nothing but a conscienceless political operative who would follow the dictates of his chief, President Jackson, and gut the idea of the rule of law. Story viewed as a sign of impending trouble the Court's 1837 decision of *Charles River Bridge v. Warren Bridge*. In that case, two companies building bridges over the Charles River in eastern Massachusetts came to legal blows because the Charles River Bridge Company claimed that it held an exclusive right, based on a grant from the state legislature, to operate a bridge over the river. Taney and the majority held that the grant should be read narrowly to permit both the Charles River Bridge Company and the company building the Warren Bridge to operate bridges; Taney also insisted that the rights and interests of the public were as relevant to the Court's decision of the case as the terms of the original grant, and the public interest cut against the granting of such monopolies.

In his first decades on the Court, despite some fevered denunciations of *Charles River Bridge*, Taney surprised and gratified his opponents by following a careful, nuanced path in interpreting the Constitution. Taney preferred to stick more closely to the letter of the Constitution and to balance competing claims of federal and state authority over commerce.

In a series of commerce clause cases, Taney and his colleagues recognized that states as well as the federal government had vital interests in regulating interstate commerce, and worked to find mutually satisfactory formulas to preserve federal supremacy while making room for state regulation. Thus, for example, in *Mayor of New York v. Miln* (1837), the Taney Court upheld, over a bitter dissent by Justice Story, a New York statute requiring all ships' captains to give local authorities a manifest listing all passengers being brought into the state, citing the state's interests in ensuring that paupers or other undesirable persons not enter the state. In *Cooley v. Board of Port Wardens* (1851), the Taney Court held that Philadelphia could require ships either to retain a local pilot to steer the ship into port or to pay a fee. The justices agreed that Congress had not legislated in this area to exclude state authority. In particular, Taney was noted for his articulation and development of the doctrine of the state's "police power"—the power to regulate in the interests of the health, safety, welfare, and morals of the state's citizens.

Taney and his colleagues also were careful to conserve the authority of the Court. In a notable case emerging from Rhode Island, *Luther v. Borden* (1849), the Taney Court took pains not to get involved in a bitter constitutional dispute that had come perilously close to plunging the state into civil war. Instead, Taney and the other members of the Court defined a class of issues called "political questions" better left for resolution to the political branches of the government than to the judiciary. Thus, the Court refused to enforce the Constitution's clause guaranteeing to each state a republican form of government, holding that that clause was best enforced by the president and Congress.

Taney and his colleagues did, however, depart from this nuanced and thoughtful approach to constitutional jurisprudence in cases involving state laws restricting the rights of slaveholders. In those cases, they were willing to deploy the full weight of the Supreme Court to vindicate national supremacy, which thus as a practical matter meant favoring the rights of slaveholders over the attempts of anti-slavery state governments to strike at slavery or hobble its enforcement within their borders. The common element in these cases was the crossing of state boundaries by slaves—whether as runaways or apprehended runaways, or as property brought across state lines by their masters into either new territories or existing states.

The most notorious case decided by Taney, and the one that destroyed his reputation, was *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857). In this case, a slave, Dred Scott, sued John F. A. Sanford (the court reporter misspelled his name as Sandford), the executor of his owner's estate, for his freedom on the ground that his owner had taken him into a free state and a free territory, making him legally free. The case rose slowly through the court system of Missouri and then reached the US Supreme Court. Six justices, led by Samuel Nelson of New York, saw a narrow technical way out of the case—holding, under Missouri law, that Scott as a slave could not sue or be sued in state or federal court. Chief Justice Taney, however, was bent on using the case as a vehicle to do something much broader.

On March 6, 1857, Taney issued his opinion in *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which generally was regarded as the opinion of the Court, despite the presence of six concurring and two dissenting opinions. Taney's sweeping opinion held that, under the original intent of the framers of the Constitution, those of African descent had no rights that members of the white race "were bound to respect"; that the right to own slaves was a property right like any other property right protected by the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution; that the Constitution granted no power to the federal government to limit the spread of slavery; and that such earlier federal attempts to limit slavery's spread into the territories as the 1820 Missouri Compromise were unconstitutional. Scott, Taney held, was a slave and must remain so.

Taney seemingly intended his opinion to be an authoritative judicial resolution of the slavery issue in

national politics, and in particular a rebuke to abolitionists and those who would demand the use of federal power to restrict slavery's spread. If so, his hopes were dashed, for his opinion for the Court backfired, inflaming slavery agitation throughout the nation, spurring abolitionists and anti-expansionists to redouble their efforts, and damaging his reputation and the Court's authority in equal measure. Indeed, the Republican Party's 1860 presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, made his national reputation in the years preceding his nomination by delivering eloquent and stinging attacks on the legitimacy of the *Dred Scott* decision and even, in a powerful 1860 lecture at New York's Cooper Institute, refuting Taney's original intent argument.

With Lincoln's election as president in 1860, and his vigorous use of executive authority to counter Southern states' attempts to leave the Union, Taney engaged in a futile judicial rear-guard action, using decisions he handed down in the US circuit court for the District of Columbia in repeated attempts to frustrate Lincoln's measures. Ironically, Lincoln paid as little heed to Taney's actions as Jackson had paid to John Marshall's opinion for the Court in *Worcester v. Georgia*. Taney died in 1864, embittered and despairing of the Court's authority.

Whereas John Marshall continues to be venerated as the great chief justice, Roger B. Taney's historical reputation continues under the cloud cast by *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. Though scholars have sought to restore some measure of his reputation based on his contributions to constitutional jurisprudence in the fields of the commerce clause, the states' police power, and the political-question doctrine, he always will be the man who rejected the idea that blacks had any rights that whites were bound to respect.

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Abraham Lincoln and Jacksonian Democracy

by Sean Wilentz

Abraham Lincoln was, for most of his political career, a highly partisan Whig. As long as the Whig Party existed, he never supported the candidate of another party. Until the late 1850s, his chief political heroes were Whigs, above all Henry Clay, whom he said he "loved and revered as a teacher and leader." Even after the Whigs disintegrated, Lincoln bragged that he "had stood by the party as long as it had a being."[1]
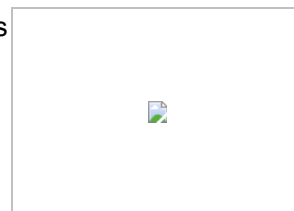
Yet we care about Lincoln not because he was a Whig but because he became a Republican—which marks him as a particular kind of Whig. Unlike the more conservative of the Whigs, he was affected by democratic ideas and practices that shaped the mainstream of both of the major parties of the 1830s and 1840s. And with his conversion to the Republicans, he declared himself an inveterate foe of the Slave Power, at odds with the minority of northern Whigs and the majority of southern Whigs who chose a very different political course in the 1850s.[2]

After 1854, Lincoln also mingled, as he had not previously, with dissident, anti-slavery, former Jacksonian Democrats. In this milieu, where fragments of old party ideologies recombined to form a new Republican whole, Lincoln found himself attracted, as never before, to Thomas Jefferson's egalitarian pronouncements—but also, curiously, to some of the words, ideas, and actions of Andrew Jackson.

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II.

Having come of age in the 1820s, Lincoln, a paragon of the self-made man, upheld certain democratic precepts that distinguished his generation from that of the Founders, and that Whigs of his more liberal persuasion shared with the Jacksonians. One historian has described these precepts as a cultural as well as political fact—a "fraternal democracy," rooted in the male worlds of government and the law, which emphasized comradeship, equality, and expressiveness, including expressiveness on the political stump. "Lincoln seemed to put himself at once on an equality with everybody," one of his law partners said.[3]

Lincoln linked his democratic sensibilities directly to matters of political organization and policy. Mistrust of professional political organization, which persisted among the Whigs into the 1850s, made little sense to Lincoln in the face of the changed democratic realities of the 1830s and 1840s. Lincoln repudiated the nativism and anti-Catholicism that gripped the Whig Party far more than it did the Democrats. In 1855, he famously denounced the Know-Nothings, telling Joshua Speed that, should the nation as a whole ever descend to their level, he "should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty—to Russia, for example, where despotism can be taken pure and without the base alloy of hypocrisy."[4]

Lincoln recognized the depth of his differences with conservative pro-slavery Whigs. He acidulously denounced one of these conservative ex-Whigs, Rufus Choate, when Choate described the Declaration of Independence's opening lines as mere "glittering generalities"—remarks, Lincoln claimed, aimed at replacing free government with the principles of "classification, caste, and legitimacy," favored by "crowned heads, plotting against the people."[5]

Indeed, Lincoln sensed that a substantial number of ex-Jacksonians were friendlier to his anti-slavery candidacy for the US Senate against Stephen A. Douglas in 1858 than some of his former fellow Whigs were. "As a general rule," he wrote to his physician and close friend Anson G. Henry, "much of the plain old democracy is with us, while nearly all of the old exclusive silk-stocking whiggery is against us." Lincoln did not mean that most of the old Whigs opposed the Republicans, just "nearly all of the nice exclusive sort." The "exclusive" Whig conservatives' position, Lincoln observed, made perfect sense: "There has been nothing in politics since the Revolution so congenial to their nature, as the present position of the [slaveholder-dominated] great democratic party."[6]

III.

After the enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1854, Whig principles were no longer sufficient to address the burning issues surrounding slavery and slavery's expansion. Lincoln and his fellow anti-slavery Whigs had to find fresh political bearings. Although, for a time, he may have hoped, like other liberal Whigs, that the northern remnants of the Whig Party could become the vehicle for national anti-slavery politics, those hopes were dashed amid the political firestorm of 1854. Only the newly emerging fusion of political abolitionists, free soilers, anti-slavery Whigs, and defecting, so-called Independent Democrats—"every true democrat," according to one of their number, "that was too intelligent to be cheated by a name"—contained the numbers as well as the principles required to beat back the Southern-dominated Democratic Party and its Northern doughface allies.[7]

Once he joined the Republicans, Lincoln began speaking and writing about politics and natural rights in new ways. Before 1854, for example, he hardly ever referred, in public or private, to the political wisdom of Thomas Jefferson, widely regarded as a forerunner of the Jacksonian Democratic Party. Thereafter, though, Lincoln, like many other Republicans, continually cited Jefferson on equality and the territorial questions, so much so that at one point, near decade's end, Jefferson seemed to have joined Clay as Lincoln's beau ideal of an American statesman. ("All honor to Jefferson," he wrote in 1859, the figure who had pronounced "the definitions and axioms of free society" and whose Declaration of Independence would forever stand as "a rebuke and a stumbling block to . . . re-appearing tyranny and oppression.") Lincoln, also like other Republicans, equated his new party with Jefferson's original Democratic Republicans, and likened the slaveholder-dominated "so-called democracy of today" with the Federalist Party of John Adams. And by the late 1850s, Lincoln was forthright about how his belief in democracy underpinned his anti-slavery views. "As I would not be a *slave*, so I would not be a *master*," he wrote. "This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy."[8]

IV.

Lincoln's sudden turn to Jefferson and Jeffersonian democratic rhetoric was striking, and marked off one phase of his political career from another. More startling were Lincoln's approving remarks about some of the ideas and actions of Andrew Jackson. The crises over the Kansas-Nebraska Act and Bleeding Kansas shifted Lincoln's perspective on Jackson's presidency. Instead of re-fighting the old issues about banking, internal improvements, and executive power, Lincoln focused on what he considered Jackson's commendable handling of sectional extremism. Jackson's record made him a more fitting symbol of

defiant nationalism, standing up to the southern slaveholders, than Lincoln's Whig hero, the Great Conciliator Clay. Lincoln seemed to admire Jackson's steeliness as well as his patriotism. To a cheering rally of Illinois Republicans on July 4, 1856, Lincoln noted how, for many years after the Missouri Compromise, "the people had lived in comparative peace and quiet," with one notable exception: "During Gen. Jackson's administration, the Calhoun Nullifying doctrine sprang up, but Gen. Jackson, with that decision of character that ever characterized him, put an end to it."[9]

Lincoln found Jackson's precedent particularly compelling in the aftermath of the *Dred Scott* decision of 1857—not over slavery or sectionalism *per se*, but over the Supreme Court's supposed supremacy in deciding constitutional interpretation. Pro-slavery southerners hailed Chief Justice Roger B. Taney's ruling in *Dred Scott* as a sacrosanct vindication of slavery and the Constitution, which repudiated the entire basis of what they called "Black Republican" organization. But Lincoln charged that Taney's ruling was exceptional, plainly founded on error, at variance with all precedents, and not at all settled. "We know that the court that made it," he declared, in his first public response to the ruling, "has often over-ruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it to over-rule this." And in defense of this peaceful resistance, Lincoln turned to the example of Andrew Jackson and the Bank War. He quoted at length from Jackson's bank veto message of 1832, emphasizing those passages where Jackson dismissed objections that the Supreme Court had already proclaimed the Bank constitutional. The judicial and legislative precedents concerning a national bank, Jackson said, were divided. Even then, he charged, "mere precedent is a dangerous source of authority, and should not be regarded as deciding questions of constitutional power, except where the acquiescence of the people and the States can be considered well settled." In any event, Lincoln noted, Jackson insisted in his bank veto message "that each public functionary must support the Constitution, '*as he understands it.*'"[10]

Lincoln returned to Jackson and the Bank veto during his campaign debates with Douglas in the late summer and autumn of 1858. "[A] decision of the court is to him a '*Thus saith the Lord*,'" he said of Douglas in Ottawa. "It is nothing that I point out to him that his great prototype, Gen. Jackson, did not believe in the binding force of decisions." Later, at Galesburg, Douglas replied to Lincoln's gibes by noting that Jackson had acceded to the Court's rulings on the bank until a re-chartering of the bank was proposed; by contrast, he charged, Lincoln was advocating disobeying the Court. Lincoln's retort, delivered at Quincy, emphasized that, as an equal coordinate branch of the government, the executive (like the legislature) had to interpret the Constitution as it saw fit. "I will tell you here that General Jackson once said each man was bound to support the Constitution 'as he understood it.' Now, Judge Douglas understands the Constitution according to the Dred Scott decision, and he is bound to support it as he understands it. [Cheers.] I understand it another way, and therefore I am bound to support it in the way in which I understand it. [Prolonged applause.]"[11] Honest Abe, for once, sounded like Old Hickory.

VI.

Less than three years later, as the secession crisis played itself out in Charleston harbor, reviving memories of the nullification crisis, Lincoln would have even more reason to turn to Jackson's example. "[P]ut Andrew Jackson's 'union' speech in your inaugural address," the Kentuckian Cassius Clay advised him, even before the 1860 campaign had ended. "But it may be necessary to put the foot down firmly," Lincoln told the New Jersey General Assembly on his way to Washington for the inauguration, dramatically stamping the stage to enthusiastic cheers. Although, in his efforts to appear conciliatory, the new president omitted any explicit mention of Jackson in his inaugural address, Jackson's proclamation on nullification was one of the few sources he consulted (along with Webster's famous second reply to Hayne and Henry Clay's speech amid the sectional crisis of 1850); and thereafter, Jackson's precedent was very much on his mind. After the fall of Sumter, when a committee in Baltimore bid him to cease

hostilities, Lincoln replied sternly that he would not violate his oath and surrender the government without a blow: "There is no Washington in that – no Jackson in that – no manhood nor honor in that."[12]

The nationalist themes in Lincoln's attacks on secession were common to mainstream proto-Whigs as well as to Jackson's proclamation against the nullifiers. In this respect, Lincoln seized on the piece of Jackson's legacy most in line with those of Jackson's opponents (and which many of Jackson's supporters, including Martin Van Buren, opposed.) But Jackson also based his attack on the democratic, majoritarian grounds he had expressed in his first message to Congress, ridiculing the effort of a single state—indeed, "a bare majority of the voters in any one state"—to repudiate laws approved by the Congress and the president, the people's representatives. So Lincoln based the Union effort, in 1861, on fundamentally democratic grounds, proclaiming in his first inaugural that the slavery issue, and with it the divination of God's will, had to be left to "the judgment of this great tribunal, the American people," which had just elected him president.[13]

VII.

The significance of Lincoln's convergence with certain anti-slavery elements of Jacksonian Democracy, and then with certain of Jackson's political precedents, should not be exaggerated. Yet neither should the convergence be ignored. As the politics of American democracy altered in the 1840s and 1850s, to confront the long-suppressed crisis over slavery, so the terms of democratic politics broke apart and recombined in ways that defy any neat ideological or political genealogy. Just as the Republican Party of the 1850s absorbed certain elements of Jacksonianism, so Lincoln, whose Whiggery had always been more egalitarian than that of other Whigs, found himself absorbing some of them as well. And some of the Jacksonian spirit resided inside the Lincoln White House.

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[1] Abraham Lincoln, Speech on the Sub-Treasury, December [26], 1839, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953–1955), 1:162 and 178.

[2] For a strong statement of some of these themes, see Stephen B. Oates, "Abraham Lincoln: *Republican* in the White House," in John L. Thomas, ed., *Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 98–110.

[3] Robert H. Wiebe, "Lincoln's Fraternal Democracy," in Thomas, ed., *Abraham Lincoln*, 11–30, quotations on 16.

[4] Lincoln to Joshua Speed, Aug. 24, 1855, *CW*, 2:323.

[5] Rufus Choate, "Letter to the Whigs of Maine," August 9, 1856, in Samuel G Brown, ed., *Works of Rufus Choate with a Memoir of His Life* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1862); Lincoln to Henry L. Pierce and Others, April 6, 1859, *CW* 3:375.

[6] Lincoln to A.G. Henry, Nov. 19, 1858, *CW* 3:339.

[7] Frederick Robinson, *Address to the Voters of the Fifth Congressional District* (n.p., [1862]), 11.

[8] Lincoln to Henry L. Pierce and Others, April 6, 1859, *CW* 3:374-376; Lincoln, "Definition of Democracy," [Aug. 1, 1858?]," *CW* 2:532.

[9] Lincoln, Speech at Princeton, Illinois, July 4, 1856, *CW* 2:346.

[10] Lincoln, Speech at Springfield, Illinois, June 26, 1857, *CW* 2:401.

[11] First Debate with Stephen A Douglas at Ottawa, Illinois, Aug. 21, 1858," *CW* 3:28; Fifth Debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Galesburg, Illinois, Oct. 7, 1858, *CW* 3:243; Sixth Debate with Stephen A. Douglas at Quincy, Illinois, Oct. 13, 1858, *CW 3:*278.

[12] Lincoln to Cassius M. Clay, *CW* 4:92–93, n1; Lincoln, "Address to the New Jersey General Assembly at Trenton, New Jersey," Feb. 21, 1861, *CW* 4:237; William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, *Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life,* 1889, 3:478; Lincoln, "Reply to Baltimore Committee," April 22, 1861, *CW* 4:341. The connections between Lincoln and Jackson were not lost on ordinary supporters. "Withal, I am an *uncompromising Union Man*. I despised *Nullification* in 1832, as I do the Rebellion now. I stand by the Administration in their noble efforts to save the Union," a native South Carolinian, relocated to New Jersey, wrote the President in 1864, to show his pro-administration bona fides. "I approved of Andrew Jackson's course in 1832, and, I approve of Abraham Lincoln's course now. I prepared the article 'And. Jackson on States Rights' to strengthen your administration in the judgement of people in this section of the country." Paul T. Jones to Abraham Lincoln, April 11, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

[13] James D. Richardson, ed., *A Compilation of the Papers and Messages of the Presidents* (1897; Washington DC: 1910), 2:1209. *CW*, IV.

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Lincoln's Interpretation of the Civil War

by Eric Foner

On March 4, 1865, Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office for the second time. The setting itself reflected how much had changed in the past four years. When Lincoln delivered his First Inaugural Address, the new Capitol dome, which replaced the original wooden one, was only half-complete. Now the Statue of Freedom crowned the finished edifice, symbolizing the reconstitution of the nation on the basis of universal liberty. For the first time in American history, companies of black soldiers marched in the inaugural parade.

It must have been very tempting for Lincoln to use his address to review the progress of the war and congratulate himself and the nation on impending victory with the end of slavery and bloodshed in sight. Instead, he delivered a speech of almost unbelievable brevity and humility. He began by stating that there was no need for an "extended address" or an elaborate discussion of "the progress of our arms." He refused to make any prediction as to when the war would end. One week after the inauguration, Senator Thomas A. Bayard of Delaware wrote that he had "slowly and reluctantly" come to understand the war's "remote causes." He did not delineate them as Lincoln chose to do in his Second Inaugural Address. Slavery, Lincoln stated, was the reason for the war:

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> One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves. Not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war.

Lincoln, as always, was forthright yet chose his words carefully. Referring to the slaves as "one-eighth of the whole population" suggested that they were part of the nation, not an exotic, unassimilable element, as he had once viewed them. "Peculiar," of course, was how Southerners themselves had so often described slavery. "Powerful" evoked Republicans' prewar rhetoric about the Slave Power. To say that slavery was the cause placed responsibility for the bloodshed on the South. Yet Lincoln added simply, "and the war came," seemingly avoiding the assignment of blame. The war, Lincoln continued, had had unanticipated consequences:

> Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding.

The "astounding" outcome, of course, was the destruction of slavery. Countless Northern ministers had pointed to this as evidence of divine sanction for the Union war effort. Lincoln took a different approach.

Rejecting self-congratulation, he offered a remarkably philosophical reflection on of the war's larger meaning:

> If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether."

Despite having promised not to judge the South, Lincoln, of course, does so in this address. He reiterates his condemnation of slavery as a theft of labor, combining this with the most direct allusion in all his writings to the institution's physical brutality. Lincoln was reminding the country that the "terrible" violence of the Civil War had been preceded by two and a half centuries of the terrible violence of slavery. Yet Lincoln calls it "American slavery," not Southern slavery in the passage above: his point being that the nation as a whole was guilty of this sin.

Lincoln had long favored monetary compensation to the owners of emancipated slaves. The Second Inaugural Address, however, implicitly shifts the moral equation from what was due to slaveholders to the nation's obligation to the slaves. This passage, one of the most remarkable in American letters, echoes the abolitionists' view of slavery as a national evil deeply embedded in all the institutions of society and of the war itself as a "judgment of the Almighty" for this sin. Lincoln's words, an Illinois newspaper observed, "might claim paternity of Wendell Phillips." Indeed, the radical editors of the *Chicago Tribune* pointed out that they had said much the same thing as Lincoln two and a half years earlier in a piece entitled "Justice of the Almighty," even as they acknowledged that their exposition was not "so admirably condensed" as Lincoln's. The *Tribune* had referred to the likely destruction of "the sum total of profit that has been derived from slaveholding," and how "our own sufferings" were "balance[d]" by the "bloodshed and tears" of two centuries of slavery.

Not for the first time, Lincoln had taken ideas that circulated in anti-slavery circles and distilled them into something uniquely his own. Through the delivery of the Second Inaugural Address, he was asking the entire nation to confront unblinkingly the legacy of the long history of bondage. What were the requirements of justice in the face of those 250 years of unpaid labor? What was necessary to enable the former slaves, their children, and their descendants to enjoy the pursuit of happiness he had always insisted was their natural right but that had been so long denied to them? Lincoln did not live to provide an answer. But even implicitly raising these questions suggested the magnitude of the task that lay ahead.

After the passage in which Lincoln, like Puritan preachers of old, struggles to understand the causes of God's anger with his chosen people, he closes his Second Inaugural with the eloquent words most often remembered:

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

Lincoln had been thinking a great deal about the process of reconciliation. In the first weeks of 1865, he had urged military commanders and Governor Thomas C. Fletcher to encourage the people of Missouri to abandon their internecine violence and let bygones be bygones rather than seeking vengeance. Neighborhood meetings, Lincoln suggested, should be held where all would agree to forget "whatever they may heretofore have thought, said or done . . . Each leaving all others alone, solves the problem." Left unresolved in Lincoln's Missouri initiative and in the Second Inaugural itself was the tension between mercy to the former slaveowners and justice to the former slaves. Would the pursuit of one inevitably vitiate the other? "Equality before the law," the Radical Republican leader Charles Sumner insisted, must precede forgiveness. "Then at last will come reconciliation, and not before."

Frederick Douglass, who was in the audience, called the Second Inaugural "more like a sermon than a state paper." In a speech of only 700 words, Lincoln had referred to God or the Almighty eight times and liberally quoted and paraphrased the Bible. Lincoln, of course, had long since acquired a deep knowledge of the Bible. And during the war, while he never joined a church, he seems to have undergone a spiritual awakening. Especially after the death of his young son Willie in 1862, Lincoln moved away from his earlier religious skepticism. Lincoln had long believed that a remote higher power controlled human destiny. He now concluded that God intervened directly in the world, although in ways men could not always fathom. Yet he managed to see the war as a divine punishment for slavery while avoiding the desire for blame and vengeance. If Lincoln's Second Inaugural was a sermon, it was quite different from those that Northerners had grown accustomed to hearing during the Civil War.

After the address, Douglass repaired with some 5,000 other persons to the White House. When he stepped forward to offer congratulations, Lincoln clasped his hand and said, "My dear Sir, I am glad to see you." Douglass called the speech a "sacred effort." Not every listener was as kind. Particularly harsh was the *New York World*, which printed the speech "with a blush of shame." It was an "odious libel," the editors complained, to equate the blood that "trickled from the lacerated backs of the negroes" with the carnage of "the bloodiest war in history." Many Republicans also found the speech puzzling. Why, they asked, had Lincoln not promised an end to the war and laid out "some definite line of policy" regarding Reconstruction? A few contemporaries recognized the greatness of the address. Charles Francis Adams Jr., the colonel of a black regiment, wrote to his father, the ambassador in London: "That rail-splitting lawyer is one of the wonders of the day. . . . This inaugural strikes me in its grand simplicity and directness as being for all time the historical keynote of this war." Overall, as Lincoln himself recognized, the address was "not immediately popular," although he remained confident that it would "wear as well—perhaps better than—anything I have produced." Lincoln thought he knew why people did not like his speech: "Men are not flattered by being shown that there has been a difference of purpose between the Almighty and them." Yet even in its critical reception, everyone could agree with George Templeton Strong as he noted in his diary that the Second Inaugural was "unlike any American state paper of this century."

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Primary Source: President Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, 1861

Multimedia: Teacher's Tour of the Ford's Theatre Center for Education and Leadership

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Essay: "Your Late Lamented Husband": A Letter from Frederick Douglass to Mary Todd Lincoln

Reconstruction and the Battle for Woman Suffrage

by Ellen DuBois

The origins of the American women's suffrage movement are commonly dated from the public protest meeting held in Seneca Falls, New York, in July 1848. At that historic meeting, the right of women to join with men in the privileges and obligations of active, voting citizenship was the one demand that raised eyebrows among the hundred or so women and men attending. As Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the meeting's prime organizer, remembered it, many in the audience, even including the distinguished radical Lucretia Mott, worried that the demand for political equality was either too advanced or too morally questionable to include on the launching platform of the new movement. Joined only by abolitionist and ex-slave Frederick Douglass, Stanton argued for the importance of women's equal participation in the electoral process. In the end, the suffrage resolution passed, the only one of the meeting's thirteen demands not to be unanimously embraced. From that point it was another three-quarters of a century to the 1920 ratification of the nineteenth constitutional amendment, which prohibited the states from "disfranchisement on the basis of sex."

"An Appeal to the Women of the United States," by the National Woman Suffrage and Education Committee (Washington DC: Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1871) urges women to demand equal rights, including the vote. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Given the seventy-two years between the one event and the other, a full third of our history as a nation, the story of the demand for equal suffrage involves many stops and starts, and numerous shifts and splits. Moreover, the exact terms and times of the triumphant end were not—and could not have been—envisioned by those present at the beginning. Differences in and conflicts over leadership, shifting political environments, and various strategies and tactics all mark the long and complex history of the women's suffrage movement, which lasted far longer than its instigators imagined and yet was shorter than it could have been (when we consider, for instance, the additional three-and-a-half decades that elapsed before women won the right to vote in that other eighteenth-century revolutionary nation, France).

This essay will consider the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction epoch on the American battle for women's suffrage. As of 1860, the right to vote was not the primary demand of the women's rights movement, which focused much more on the economic rights of women—and especially of wives—to earn, inherit, and hold property. In addition, because the common reading of the federal Constitution was that it was up to the separate states to determine how to establish the electorate, women's rights activists assumed that women's suffrage—along with women's economic and other rights—had to be fought for and won state by state. Thus, it was not anticipated that winning the right to vote would involve an epic battle over the federal Constitution. We should remember that as of 1860, only twelve amendments—ten of them consisting of the Bill of Rights dating from 1789, and the other two of largely procedural significance—had been ratified. What we know now—that the history of American federal constitutionalism would be marked by alternating periods of interpretation and amendment, of fierce
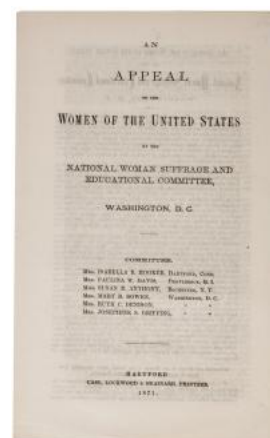
battles waged far beyond Congress and the Supreme Court to alter and augment the shape and meaning of our foundational political document—was not obvious then; nor was it obvious that women's suffrage would be the most prolonged of all these constitutional wars.

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The very first of those periods of constitutional struggle occurred during the era of postwar Reconstruction, which is when the women's suffrage movement took on many of the characteristics that it was to maintain for the next half century. Emerging out of the Civil War, the issue of political equality for women was inextricably bound up with the unsettled political status of the former slaves. When the Thirteenth Amendment passed Congress (with the help of a massive petition campaign engineered by the women's rights movement) and was ratified by the states, the former slaves were freed, but the absence of chattel slavery did not specify what the presence of freedom meant legally and constitutionally. To resolve the anomalous position of the freed population, the Fourteenth Amendment declared that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States were citizens thereof," with all the "privileges and immunities" of national citizenship. Without specifying exactly what these privileges and immunities were, the second section of the amendment went on to address the crucial question of voting rights for the freedmen, a question of particular concern to the ruling Republican Party, which looked to them as a loyal constituency in the states of the former Confederacy.

The Fourteenth Amendment addressed the question of enfranchisement in an indirect, elaborate, and ultimately ineffective way: by pinning a state's number of seats in the House of Representatives to the proportion of the adult population that was permitted to vote. There were, however, two qualifications to this population basis for determining representation: "Indians not taxed" were excluded, and the amendment specifically defined the potential electorate as "male." Here, for the first time, was an explicit reference to gender in the US Constitution. Since the women's rights movement was now in its second decade and included a call for political equality in its platform, the amenders of the Constitution could no longer assume, as had the Founders, that "we the people" simply meant men, and did not include, in any politically significant way, women. Women had to be explicitly excluded or they would be implicitly included.

Women's rights activists objected strongly to what Elizabeth Cady Stanton angrily called "that word 'male.'" They sent petitions to Congress while the amendment was still being drafted, begging for a change in language, but the amendment passed Congress and was sent to the states for ratification with the disturbing qualification of gender intact within it. Women's rights activists objected and criticized, but were caught between their recognition of the importance of political rights for the freedmen and their dedication to their own cause of women's rights. So they stopped short of calling for non-ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Later, because the measures used in the Fourteenth Amendment to encourage black enfranchisement were too weak, a third postwar amendment was designed, this time to address the issue of suffrage directly. The Fifteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in 1869 and ratified a year later, explicitly forbade the states to deny the right to vote to anyone on the basis of "race, color or previous condition of servitude" and authorized Congress to pass any necessary enforcement legislation. The wording, it should be noted, did not transfer the right to determine the electorate to the federal government, but only specified particular kinds of state disfranchisements—and "sex" was not one of them—as unconstitutional.

At this point, the delicate balance between the political agendas of the causes of black freedom and women's rights became undone. The two movements came into open antagonism, and the women's

rights movement itself split over the next steps to take to secure women the right to vote. Defenders of women's rights found themselves in an extremely difficult political quandary. Would they have to oppose an advance in the rights of the ex-slaves in order to argue for those of free women? At a May 1869 meeting of the American Equal Rights Association, a group that had been organized three years earlier by women's rights advocates to link black and woman suffrage, Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave vent to her frustration, her sense of betrayal by longstanding male allies, and her underlying sense that "educated" women like herself were more worthy of enfranchisement than men just emerged from slavery. She and Frederick Douglass had a painful and famous public exchange about the relative importance of black and woman suffrage, in which Douglass invoked images of ex-slaves "hung from lampposts" in the South by white supremacist vigilantes, and Stanton retaliated by asking whether he thought that the black race was made up only and entirely of men. By the end of the meeting, Stanton and Susan B. Anthony had led a walkout of a portion of the women at the meeting to form a new organization to focus on women's suffrage, which they named the National Woman Suffrage Association.

A second group, under the leadership of Massachusetts women Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, formed a rival organization, known as the American Woman Suffrage Association. This wing counted on longstanding connections with abolitionism and the leadership of the Republican Party to get women's suffrage enacted once black male suffrage had been fully inscribed in the Constitution. Over the next few years, both the American and the National Woman Suffrage Associations spread their influence to the Midwest and the Pacific Coast. The National Woman Suffrage Association linked political rights to other causes, including inflammatory ones like free love, while the American Woman Suffrage Association kept the issue clear of "side issues." For the next few years, the two organizations pursued different strategies to secure for votes for women. Starting with an 1874 campaign in Michigan, the American Woman Suffrage Association pressed for changes in state constitutions. Because these campaigns involved winning over a majority of (male) voters, they were extremely difficult to carry out, and it was not until 1893 that Colorado became the first state to enfranchise women.

Meanwhile, the National Woman Suffrage Association refused to give up on the national Constitution. Doubtful that any additional federal amendments would be passed, the group sought a way to base women's suffrage in the Constitution's existing provisions. Its "New Departure" campaign contended that the Fourteenth Amendment's assertion that all native-born or naturalized "persons" were national citizens surely included the right of suffrage among its "privileges and immunities," and that, as persons, women were thus enfranchised. In 1871, the notorious female radical Victoria Woodhull made this argument before the House Judiciary Committee. The next year, hundreds of suffragists around the country went to the polls on election day, repeating the arguments of the New Departure, and pressing to get their votes accepted.

Among those who succeeded—at least temporarily—was Susan B. Anthony, who cast her ballot for Ulysses S. Grant. Three weeks after the election, Anthony was arrested on federal charges of "illegal voting" and in 1873 was found guilty by an all-male jury. Anthony was prevented by the judge from appealing her case but another "voting woman," Virginia Minor, succeeded in making the New Departure argument before the US Supreme Court in 1874. In a landmark voting and women's-rights decision, the Court ruled that although women were indeed persons, and hence citizens, the case failed because suffrage was not included in the rights guaranteed by that status. The 1875 *Minor v. Happersett* ruling coincided with other decisions that allowed states to infringe on the voting rights of the southern freedmen, culminating over the next two decades in their near-total disfranchisement.

Although these various Reconstruction-era efforts failed to enfranchise women, they did leave various marks on the continuing campaign for women's suffrage: a shifting focus on state and federal

constitutional action, a legacy of direct action, a women's suffrage movement that was largely cut off from the efforts of African Americans for their rights, and, perhaps most fundamentally, an independent movement of women for women, which turned the campaign for suffrage into a continuing source of activism and political sophistication for coming generations of women.

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Transcontinental Railroads: Compressing Time and Space

by Richard White

Many of our modern clichés about the impact of technology, particularly about the consequences of the Internet and telecommunications, first appeared as clichés about nineteenth-century railroads, particularly the transcontinental railroads in North America. People remarked on the annihilation of time and space with an enduring sense of wonder whenever a railroad penetrated a new region. When passengers found that they could get to distant places more quickly, they translated reduced time into contracting space and spoke as if distant places had grown closer. The human experience of space depended on the speed of conveyance. With the Atlantic cable and the transcontinentals, Margaret Irvein Carrington wrote in 1869 "with only a single wire to underlie the Pacific, the whole earth will become as a whispering gallery, wherein all nations, by one electric pulsation, may throb in unison, and the continent shall tremble with the rumbling of wheels that swiftly and without interruption or delay transport its gospel and commerce." By 1869, the Pacific Coast was only four days from Omaha, and Carrington reported that "an officer of the army recently returned in forty hours over a distance which required a march of sixty-four days in 1866."
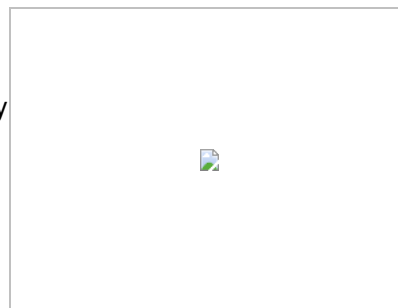
It was only after the Civil War that the railroads really began to create technologically coherent systems. In 1860 there were 31,286 miles of American railroads, but they could hardly be thought of as a system or even a collection of systems. The main reason was that there was no single standard gauge—the distance between the rails—for tracks. The standard gauge in North America today is 4 feet 8½ inches, and by 1860 that was the dominant gauge in much of the eastern United States. It was used in roughly one-half of the total mileage, but it was only one of the more than twenty gauges in use. Five feet was the standard gauge in the South. It was as if hobbyists were trying to connect Lionel tracks with HO tracks, and to make matters worse, lines coming into a city often did not connect. Workers would have to load goods on wagons and transport them across town to another railroad. Trains stopped at rivers where passengers and goods had to be ferried across.

The Civil War was not the primary impetus for standardizing gauges, but it quickened the pace of change. The need to transport men and supplies rapidly without unnecessary breaks gave urgency to the complaints of merchants, who had long resented the increased costs of transshipments. Abraham Lincoln's decision to make the Pacific Railway, the first transcontinental, using a standard gauge (4 feet, 8½ inches) ratified a consensus that had already emerged, but the ratification was nonetheless important. It compelled Pacific Coast railways, where the early gauge was 5 feet, to change, and provided an incentive to all lines connecting with the Pacific Railway to adopt the standard gauge. It was a major step toward continental uniformity. Although the South would continue to fight the standard gauge even after the Civil War, it lost that fight as thoroughly as it lost the war.

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In the years after the Civil War, railroad technology underwent, as Steven Usselman has put it, "virtually perpetual refinement." Except for the gauge, virtually everything about railroad lines grew larger: the locomotives, the weight of the rails, the bridges, the cars. Iron rails gave way to steel rails that could carry heavier loads, and wooden bridges increasingly yielded to iron. Increases in size and weight brought changes to braking systems and suspension systems, and improvements in these allowed further increases in size of the machinery.

This "bulking up" was not so much a necessity for the movement of people as for the movement of things. The ability to move heavy things long distances at relatively cheap rates was the real economic significance of the railroads. In 1869, the year that the first transcontinental railroad was completed, Dan Castello's Circus and Menagerie stopped in Cheyenne, Wyoming, then a raw railroad town on the Union Pacific. The elephants that disembarked were unlikely beasts in an unlikely place, but elephants in Cheyenne were as apt a symbol as any of the reorganization of the world through steam technology. If a railroad could cross hundreds of miles to deliver elephants and Moroccan acrobats into frontier towns, what couldn't they deliver across vast and forbidding distances? The presence of elephants signaled the vast reach of American popular culture and the way the railroads could pull once isolated regions into new orbits. The arrival of railroads signaled the creation of a new set of spatial relations and a new set of material connections.

Elephants disembarking from a railroad train also symbolized the increased speed with which the flora and fauna of continents could mix and mingle. Railroad technology influenced Americans' ideas of nature and shaped the ways Americans changed the natural world. We tend to think of technology as antithetical to nature, but this was not a nineteenth-century attitude. The locomotive was, after all, the iron horse. Western railroads were the most modern of industrial products set in midst of what North Americans regarded as primeval nature. This is one reason that they so fascinated Americans. In the United States intellectuals and popular writers had already accepted "the machine in the garden" as a defining symbol of the republic, marking Americans as both a people of progress and a people of nature. Western railroads promoted travel on their western lines as a journey into nature. The 1879 edition of *The Pacific Tourist* made the transcontinental trip seem both an inspirational immersion in nature and a journey utterly devoid of physical effort or discomfort. Upon seeing the mountains, "[w]ithout scarcely asking the cause the tourist is full of glow and enthusiasm."

To bring passengers into nature, the railroads consumed the raw stuff of nature. Railroads were by the late nineteenth century the largest consumers of wood and coal in the United States. To make the iron and steel that went into the trains, men mined iron ore and coal. Once in operation, these trains caused forests to fall and the earth to be ripped open. In the West, buffalo yielded to cattle, and cattle overgrazed the ranges which allowed invading plants to follow in their footsteps. Farmers transformed vast grasslands into corn and wheat. Industrial towns grew up around mines and consumed vast swaths of timber. None of this could have happened in the way it did or with the speed it did without the railroads carrying buffalo hides, cattle, corn, and wheat to market.

Although railroads improved the lives of many Americans, they took a toll on those who operated them. Even though railroad companies moved reasonably quickly to improve safety for passengers with the Westinghouse automatic brake, platforms between cars, and other improvements, they moved much more slowly to protect their workers. Commentators often compared working on the railroads to wars, and the number of deaths and injuries was astonishing. In 1889, 2,000 men were killed working on the railroads and 20,000 were injured. The vast majority did not die in spectacular accidents but rather in the everyday work of coupling cars, laboring in crowded yards full of moving machinery, and balancing on the top of moving railroad cars to tighten hand brakes. Most railroad companies did not put automatic brakes

on freights until the early twentieth century. In a very real sense in the late nineteenth century, railroad companies found it cheaper to kill and maim workers than to install available, safer technologies. President Benjamin Harrison called these deaths and injuries "a reproach to our civilization." Dead bodies, severed hands and fingers, and legs lost as trains ran over them formed the final grim connection between technology and nature.

Such preventable deaths were another reason Americans loved this new technology but did not love the men who owned the railroads. Anthony Trollope declared that among Americans "the railway is everything. It is the first necessity of life, and gives the only hope of wealth." The locomotive had "been taken to the bosoms of them all as a domestic animal." But railroad corporations in the late nineteenth century were reviled as monopolies whose control over movement and thus over space were undemocratic and unsuited to the lives of free people. Nineteenth-century Americans made a distinction somewhat akin to our distinction between hardware and software. The tracks, locomotives, cars, and bridges were the hardware, and the rate tables and schedules were the software. How the trains and the technology affected people's lives depended on the rates and schedules. Critics of the railroads maintained that the railroads routinely discriminated against some people, places, and things in favor of others.

Charges of discrimination had resonance because they touched both the material interests of millions and basic notions of republican equity. Because railroads were chartered by the state, because the government used its powers of eminent domain to aid the railroads, because governments granted land to railroads and loaned some railroads credit, and because the railroads were public highways under common law, they had greater obligations to the public than normal businesses. It was unjust, critics argued, for railroad corporations to set rates that discriminated against the citizens of the government which gave them life. The railroads should not be allowed to use their control over technology to choose winners and losers by controlling rates. In fact, the railroads often did choose winners and losers. In the western United States, it was as if all towns were on wheels. When rates changed, space changed. When railroad rates made it more expensive to ship goods from Chicago to Spokane than from Chicago to Seattle, which was farther away, it was as if all the merchants in Seattle moved closer to Chicago and all the merchants in Spokane moved farther away.

In the nineteenth century, like today, new technologies changed the way that Americans lived. Then, as now, some people had far more control over technological changes than others. Railroads spurred a long contest over technology—its public purposes and consequences and its private ownership—that is with us still.

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The Myth of the Frontier: Progress or Lost Freedom

by John Mack Faragher

For two centuries the frontier West was the setting for America's most enduring form of popular entertainment. Daniel Boone—master hunter, pathfinder, Indian fighter, and a frontier leader of the American Revolution—was the progenitor of a long line of national frontier heroes. The subject of a short biography published in 1784, Boone was the archetypal Western hero: a man who loves and understands the wilderness, an intimacy he uses to defeat the Indians and tame the country. The real-life Boone delighted in the honor that came with his fame. Yet in his telling, his story had an ironic edge. Yes, he acknowledged to those who sought him out in his old age, he had pioneered the settlement of Kentucky and the region beyond the crest of the Appalachians. But the truth was, his own lands he lost to swindling lawyers and land speculators, and he been forced to move on. Yes, he had fought the Indians. But in truth, he declared, "I am very sorry to say that I have ever killed any, for they have always been kinder to me than the whites." Were he forced to choose, Boone admitted, he would "certainly prefer a state of nature to a state of civilization."

Letterhead from Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, 1910, detail. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Boone's story was a foundation for what has been called "the myth of the frontier." Think of the word "myth" here not as a synonym for erroneous belief, but as the body of tales, fables, and fantasies that help a people make sense of its history. Like history, myth finds meaning in the events of the past. But unlike history, myth is less concerned with facts than with ideological essences. Essentially, the Western, the story form of the myth, tells a tale of progress, a justification of violent conquest and untrammeled development. Boone's story certainly had its triumphal side. But the Western also raises troubling questions. What is the cost of progress? Because myth is composed in the figurative language of metaphor and symbol rather than in the logical language of analysis, it may incorporate such doubts without actually confronting them. As historian Richard Slotkin writes, "The most potent recurring hero-figures in our mythologies are men in whom contradictory identities find expression." Thus the progressive narrative of the Western is consistently subverted by the presence of pathfinders who are also critics of civilization, outlaws who are Robin Hoods, or whores who have hearts of gold. Americans are drawn to characters of paradoxical impulse, to "good-badmen," or army scouts who identify with the Indian enemy. Things are simple in the Western, but not always as simple as they seem.

In the years following Boone's death in 1820, the frontiersman became a ubiquitous presence in American popular culture. Of primary significance was the work of novelist James Fenimore Cooper, who created an enduring literary version of the Boone character in a series of novels known as *The Leatherstocking Tales*, published between 1823 and 1841. Cooper staged a conflict between civilized restraint and natural freedom. On the surface, his stories make the case for "the march of our nation across the continent." Yet his characters voice powerful countervailing arguments. "The garden of the Lord was the forest," Leatherstocking declares, and was not patterned "after the miserable fashions of our times, thereby giving the lie to what the world calls its civilizing." Ambivalence about progress

resonated with a deeply felt American regret over the loss of wilderness as an imagined place of unbound freedom.

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Cooper's novels were "literary," meaning that they were written for a literate public. But the character of the frontiersman soon made its way into the broader realms of popular culture. In 1834 David Crockett published his own autobiography (the first of a western American), the story of a bragging, buckskin-clad frontiersman elected to Congress. Stretching the truth considerably, the book nevertheless featured Crockett's authentic voice and introduced frontier tales to a wide popular audience. Soon there were dozens of imitations, including a long-running series of Crockett almanacs that recounted the hero's continuing feats—long after Crockett himself had died at the Alamo. "I can walk like an ox, run like a fox, swim like an eel, yell like an Indian, fight like a devil, and spout like an earthquake," thundered the Davy of the almanacs.

Crockett was also a character in the first of the "dime novels," cheap paperbacks with sensational themes that began appearing in the 1840s and that were being printed by the millions by the Civil War. The "dimes" were read by Americans of all stripes, but particularly by men of working-class backgrounds. And more than two-thirds of these novels were set in the West. Over time hunter-scouts cast in Boone's mold gave way to more enthusiastically violent characters: Indian-fighter Kit Carson, or Jim Bowie, with a chip on his shoulder to match the massive knife in his belt. Yet many of the stories took subversive turns. In the early 1880s, the James gang, then terrorizing banks and railroads on the Missouri border, became a favorite subject. Week after week, brothers Jesse and Frank defied the law and got away with it in the dimes—until respectable outrage forced the postmaster general to ban the series from the mails. Another persistent dime-novel fantasy was the "woman with the whip," the western gal who acts a man's part but is all the more alluring for it. Calamity Jane, for one, grabbed the public imagination by demanding and receiving equal rights in a man's world.

Using real historical characters to encourage the suspension of disbelief was a characteristic of the dime-novel Western. The master of the uses of authenticity was William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, the showman who in the late nineteenth century turned the frontier myth into America's most bankable commercial entertainment. Born in Iowa in 1846, Cody grew up on the frontier. He tramped to Colorado during its gold rush, rode for the Pony Express, scouted for the frontier Army, and earned his nickname hunting buffalo to feed railroad construction crews. The subject of a sensational 1869 dime novel, he became nationally famous as "the greatest scout of the West." Capitalizing on that image, Cody went on the stage playing himself and then organized a troupe of cowboy and Indian actors to reenact actual events in western history. In 1882 he organized "Buffalo Bill's Wild West," which toured America and the world for the next three decades. The presumed authenticity of historic reenactments was the highlight of Cody's show. Hunters chased buffalo, Indians attacked the Deadwood stage, and the Pony Express once again delivered the mail to isolated frontier outposts. The climax was a staging of "Custer's Last Fight," with Cody arriving just after Custer's demise, the words "Too Late" projected by lantern slide on a background screen. In the grand finale, Cody led a galloping victory lap of all the company's players —"The Congress of Rough Riders of the World"—with the American flag proudly flying in the company van. The whole spectacle, in the words of the souvenir program, was designed to illustrate "the inevitable law of the survival of the fittest."

Cody's Wild West led directly to motion pictures. *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), the first movie to tell a complete story, was also the first movie Western. Based on the real-life holdup by an outlaw gang known as the Wild Bunch, the plot built on the formula Cody pioneered: a dastardly attack, a dramatic chase, and a violent climactic shoot-out. In the film's final image, one of the outlaws points his gun

directly at the audience and fires. People were thrilled and the film was an enormous success. Westerns quickly came to dominate the output of American filmmakers, and over the next sixty years Westerns made up a third or more of all the films produced in the United States.

The Western had always been preoccupied with gender, and in the twentieth century movie Westerns became a primary source for popular images of American masculinity. A good example is Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1903), the most influential and widely read of all Western novels, which was filmed several times, most famously in 1929, with Gary Cooper in the title role. Both novel and film are staged as a series of tests of the hero's manhood. He rides at the head of a posse that lynches a group of cattle rustlers, including his own best friend. Years before they had ridden together as wild and woolly cowboys, but the Virginian has come to see that frontier conditions are passing away. Later he is forced to confront a threatening outlaw. But the central test is his courtship of Molly, the eastern schoolmarm who comes west to find "a man who was a man." Despite her plea that he reject violence, the Virginian meets the villain in a prototypical Western gunfight and shoots him dead. Molly and the audience are forced to accept his code of honor. There seems little doubt that the primary audience for the *Virginian* and other Westerns was male. The masculine world of the cowboy was especially attractive to boys feeling constrained by the authoritarian controls of childhood.

One of the most celebrated of all Western movies was *Stagecoach* (1939), directed by John Ford, the widely acknowledged master of the genre. A dangerous journey through Apache country throws together a colorful cast of characters drawn directly from dime novels and pulp fiction: a gunman seeking revenge (John Wayne, in the role that made him a star), a whore with a heart of gold, an alcoholic doctor, a respectable Army wife, an aristocratic southerner, and a venal banker. The film includes scenes shot in spectacular Monument Valley on the Navajo reservation, with its fantastic buttes towering above the desert. There is a wonderful stunt sequence in which renegade Apaches (played by local Navajos) chase the stagecoach through the desert until the day is saved by the last-minute arrival of the cavalry. Director Ford manipulates and recombines these conventional elements into a film that amounts to considerably more than the sum of its parts. He skillfully reveals the "civilized" members of the party as snobs, hypocrites, or crooks, and recruits audience sympathy for the outcasts, who become the heroes of the melodrama. In the end the gunman and the whore ride off to spend their lives together on a ranch in Mexico, "saved from the blessings of civilization," as one of the characters puts it. The film celebrates westering while simultaneously debunking the civilization brought to the West by the East. *Stagecoach* is able to have it both ways, which is the way the Western has always wanted to tell the story of America.

In the years following World War II, Westerns remained the most popular American story form. Western paperbacks flew off the racks at the rate of thirty-five million copies a year, and Western movies remained popular. From 1945 through the mid-1960s, Hollywood studios produced an average of seventy-five Western pictures each year, a quarter of all films released. Westerns also dominated television programming during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958, for example, twenty-eight prime-time Westerns provided more than seventeen hours of gunplay each week. The administration of justice on these shows was always swift. Lawyers and judges were rarely seen on camera. The Western didn't give a hoot for civil liberties.

Westerns thus had their political side. Most clearly, they were a vehicle for promoting America's role in the Cold War. Metaphors of Western violence—showdowns, hired guns, last stands—permeated the language of postwar politics. "Would a Wyatt Earp stop at the 38th Parallel in Korea when the rustlers were escaping with his herd?" a conservative commentator asked in 1958. "Would a Marshal Dillon refuse to allow his deputies to use shotguns for their own defense because of the terrible nature of the weapon itself? Ha!" Western analogies continued into the Vietnam era. President Johnson told a reporter

that he had gone into Vietnam because, as at the Alamo, "somebody had to get behind the log with those threatened people." American troops carried these metaphors off to war. The primary object of the fighting, one veteran later recalled, was "the Indian idea: The only good gook is a dead gook." Reporter Michael Herr wrote of being invited to join an Army company on a search-and-destroy mission. "'Come on,' the captain hailed him, 'we'll take you out to play cowboys and Indians.'"

The connection between Westerns and political ideology is perhaps best demonstrated by the precipitous demise of the genre amidst the general cultural crisis of the late 1960s and 1970s. Consider the case of filmmaker John Ford. Not since Buffalo Bill had an artist better assembled the components of frontier myth as popular entertainment. But in the final Westerns of his nearly half-century career, Ford's vision of frontier history turned sour. *The Searchers* (1956) is an uncompromising study of the devastating effects of Indian hating, and *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960) is a pathbreaking depiction of the black Buffalo Soldiers in the frontier Army. In *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) Ford called attention to the good things lost in the civilizing process, and in his final Western, Cheyenne Autumn (1964), he belatedly presented the case for the Indians, exposing the American side of the frontier as murderous and corrupt. Ford's doubts about the meaning of frontier history became commonplace in the late 1960s, evident in a flood of films exploiting the widening gap between old images and new ideas, most prominently in the "spaghetti Westerns" that featured the young actor Clint Eastwood as *The Man with No Name*, a completely amoral gunfighter. This cynical approach quickly wore thin, however, and by the late 1970s Westerns had ceased to be a Hollywood staple.

Yet the genre persisted. The 1989 television broadcast of the miniseries *Lonesome Dove*, based on Larry McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize–winning novel about the first cattle drive to Montana, was a critical success, a ratings triumph, and a pop-culture phenomenon. The series created a minor revival of the genre. A cable "Westerns Channel" began replaying classic Western movies and TV series, and Hollywood released a series of big-budget features, miniseries, and TV movies that focused on the West. A few of these new productions rose to the standard of *Lonesome Dove*. Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, winner of the Oscar for Best Picture of 1992, features McMurtry's revisionist perspective while simultaneously paying tribute to the genre. *Lonesome Dove* details the heroic efforts of cowboys getting their cattle to Montana, but closes with the surviving hero bitterly reflecting on the toll in human life. *Unforgiven* fills the screen with violence, but strips that violence of all pretenses to honor, romance, or nobility. "It's a hell of a thing, killing a man," says Eastwood, in the role of a hardened old gunfighter. "You take away all he's got, and all he's ever gonna have." These modern Westerns, asking viewers to consider the costs of westering, are true descendants of Daniel Boone.

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The Square Deal: Theodore Roosevelt and the Themes of Progressive Reform

by Kirsten Swinth

Progressivism arrived at a moment of crisis for the United States. As the nineteenth century came to a close, just decades after the Civil War, many feared the nation faced another explosive and violent conflict, this time between the forces of industrial capitalism and militant workers. Armed conflict between workers and government and private militias broke out repeatedly. The great railroad strike of 1877 triggered armed confrontation; the 1892 strike at Andrew Carnegie's Homestead, Pennsylvania, steel plant included a bloody battle; and just two years later, the strike at Pullman Palace Car Company brought Army troops into a violent clash with workers on the streets of Chicago on the Fourth of July. In the same period, cyclical economic downturns spawned massive protests, including marches by millions of largely rural farmers drawn into the populist movement. Citizens even marched on Washington as workers unemployed in the depression of 1893–1894 formed "industrial armies" to demand relief. To increasing numbers of Americans, something seemed dreadfully wrong.

Theodore Roosevelt giving a speech in Waterville, Maine, 1902. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

These economic and social crises stemmed from the rise of industrial capitalism, which had transformed America between the Civil War and 1900. By the turn of the century, American factories produced one-third of the world's goods. Several factors made this achievement possible: unprecedented scale in manufacturing, technological innovation, a transportation revolution, ever-greater efficiency in production, the birth of the modern corporation, and the development of a host of new consumer products. Standard Oil, Nabisco, Kodak, General Electric, and Quaker Oats were among those companies and products to become familiar household words. Many negative consequences accompanied this change. Cities, polluted and overcrowded, became breeding grounds for diseases like typhoid and cholera. A new unskilled industrial laboring class, including a large pool of child labor, faced low wages, chronic unemployment, and on-the-job hazards. Business owners didn't mark high voltage wires, locked fire doors, and allowed toxic fumes to be emitted in factories. It was cheaper for manufacturers to let workers be injured or die than to improve safety—so they often did. Farmers were at the mercy of railroad trusts, which set transport rates that squeezed already indebted rural residents. Economic growth occurred without regard to its costs to people, communities, or the environment.

Many were appalled. Even middle-class Americans became outraged as the gap widened between the working and middle ranks of society and wealthy capitalists smugly asserted their superiority. A new class of muckraking journalists fed this outrage with stunning exposés of business exploitation and corruption of government officials. Lincoln Steffens's 1902 *The Shame of the Cities*, for example, demonstrated the graft dominating politics in American urban centers. To many, such a society violated America's fundamental principles and promises. Progressivism grew out of that dismay and a desire to fix what many saw as a broken system.

Progressivism emerged in many different locations from 1890 to 1917, and had varied emphases. Sometimes it had a social justice emphasis with a focus on economic and social inequality. At other times an economic and political emphasis dominated, with primary interest in moderate regulation to curtail the excesses of Gilded Age capitalists and politicians. It was, in short, a movement that is very difficult to chart. Historians most conventionally trace its movement from local initiatives through to the state and national levels. But it is potentially more useful to think of progressivism as falling under three broad areas of reform: efforts to make government cleaner, less corrupt, and more democratic; attempts to ameliorate the effects of industrialization; and efforts to rein in corporate power.

Despite their anxieties about the problems in all three areas, progressives accepted the new modern order. They did not seek to turn back the clock, or to return to a world of smaller businesses and agrarian idealism. Nor, as a general rule, did they aim to dismantle big business. Rather, they wished to regulate industry and mitigate the effects of capitalism on behalf of the public good. To secure the public good, they looked to an expanded role for the government at the local, state, as well as national levels. Theodore Roosevelt declared in a 1910 speech that the government should be "the steward of the public welfare." Progressivism was a reform movement that, through a shifting alliance of activists, eased the most devastating effects of industrial capitalism on individuals and communities. Except in its most extreme wing, it did not repudiate big business, but used the power of the state to regulate its impact on society, politics, and the economy.

These progressive reformers came from diverse backgrounds, often working together in temporary alliances, or even at cross-purposes. Participants ranged from well-heeled men's club members seeking to clean up government corruption to radical activists crusading against capitalism altogether. They swept up in their midst cadres of women, many of them among the first generation of female college graduates, but others came from the new ranks of young factory workers and shop girls. Immigrant leaders, urban political bosses, and union organizers were also all drawn into reform projects.

Still, some common ground existed among progressives. They generally believed strongly in the power of rational science and technical expertise. They put much store by the new modern social sciences of sociology and economics and believed that by applying technical expertise, solutions to urban and industrial problems could be found. Matching their faith in technocrats was their distrust for traditional party politicians. Interest groups became an important vehicle for progressive reform advocacy. Progressives also shared the belief that it was a government responsibility to address social problems and regulate the economy. They transformed American attitudes toward government, parting with the view that the state should be as small as possible, a view that gained prominence in the post–Civil War era. Twentieth-century understandings of the government as a necessary force mediating among diverse group interests developed in the Progressive era. Finally, progressives had in common an internationalist perspective, with reform ideas flowing freely across national borders.

To address the first major area—corrupt urban politics—some progressive reformers tried to undercut powerful political machines. "Good government" advocates sought to restructure municipal governments so that parties had little influence. The National Municipal League, which had Teddy Roosevelt among its founders, for example, supported election of at-large members of city councils so that council members could not be beholden to party machines. Ironically, such processes often resulted in less popular influence over government since it weakened machine politicians who were directly accountable to immigrant and working-class constituents. The good government movement attracted men of good standing in society, suspicious of the lower classes and immigrants, but angered by effects of business dominance of city governments. Other reforms, however, fostered broader democratic participation.

Many states adopted the initiative (allowing popular initiation of legislation) and referendum (allowing popular vote on legislation) in these years, and in 1913, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution mandated the direct election of US Senators. Perhaps the most dramatic campaign for more democratic government was the woman suffrage movement which mobilized millions to campaign for women's right to the franchise.

Ameliorating the effects of industrialization had at its heart a very effective women's political network. At settlement houses, for example, black and white woman reformers, living in working-class, urban neighborhoods, provided day nurseries, kindergartens, health programs, employment services, and safe recreational activities. They also demanded new government accountability for sanitation services, for regulation of factory conditions and wages, for housing reform, and for abolishing child labor. Leaders like Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells-Barnett in Chicago as well as Lillian Wald in New York pioneered a role for city and state governments in securing the basic social welfare of citizens. This strand of progressive reform more broadly involved improving city services, like providing garbage pickup and sewage disposal. Some activists concentrated on tenement reform, such as New York's 1901 Tenement House Act, which mandated better light, ventilation, and toilets. Laws protecting worker health and safety mobilized other reformers. Protective legislation to limit the hours worked by women, abolish child labor, and set minimum wages could be found across the country. Twenty-eight states passed laws to regulate women's working hours and thirty-eight set new regulations of child labor in 1912 alone.

The second major area—the effort to rein in corporate power—had as its flagship one of the most famous pieces of legislation of the period: the Sherman Anti-Trust Act of 1890. The Act outlawed business combination "in restraint of trade or commerce." In addition to trust-busting, progressive reformers strengthened business regulation. Tighter control of the railroad industry set lower passenger and freight rates, for example. New federal regulatory bureaucracies, such as the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Reserve System, and the Federal Trade Commission, also limited business's free hand. These progressive initiatives also included efforts to protect consumers from the kind of unsavory production processes revealed by Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. Somewhat unexpectedly, business leaders themselves sometimes supported such reform initiatives. Large meatpackers like Swift and Armour saw federal regulation as a means to undercut smaller competitors who would have a harder time meeting the new standards.

Among progressivism's greatest champions was Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt had a genius for publicity, using the presidency as a "bully pulpit" to bring progressivism to the national stage. Roosevelt's roots were in New York City and state government, where he served as state assemblyman, New York City police commissioner, and governor. As governor, he signaled his reformist sympathies by supporting civil service reform and a new tax on corporations. Republican Party elders found him so troublesome in the governor's office that in 1900 they proposed him for the vice presidency, a sure-fire route to political insignificance. The assassination of William McKinley just months into his presidency, however, vaulted Roosevelt into national leadership of progressive reform.

Although Roosevelt was known as a trust buster, his ultimate goal was not the destruction of big business but its regulation. For Roosevelt the concentration of industry in ever fewer hands represented not just a threat to fair markets but also to democracy as wealthy industrialists consolidated power in their own hands. He turned to the Sherman Anti-Trust Act to challenge business monopolies, bringing suit against the Northern Securities Company (a railroad trust) in 1902. The Justice Department initiated forty-two additional anti-trust cases during his presidency. During Roosevelt's second term, regulating business became increasingly important. Roosevelt had always believed big business was an inevitable economic development; regulation was a means to level the playing field and provide the "square deal" to

citizens, as Roosevelt had promised in his re-election campaign. He supported laws like the 1906 Hepburn Act, which regulated the railroads, and the same year's Pure Food and Drug and Meat Inspection Acts, which controlled the drug and food industries.

Although not always successful in achieving his goals, Roosevelt brought to the federal government other progressive causes during his presidency, including support for workers' rights to organize, eight-hour workdays for federal employees, workers' compensation, and an income and inheritance tax on wealthy Americans. Under his leadership, conservation of the nation's natural resources became a government mandate. He encouraged Congress to create several new national parks, set aside sixteen national monuments, and establish more than fifty wildlife preserves and refuges. Through the new Bureau of Fisheries and National Forest Service, Roosevelt emphasized efficient government management of resources, preventing rapacious use by private businesses and landowners.

After leaving the presidency in 1909, Roosevelt initially withdrew from politics. But his dismay at the slow pace of reform under his successor, William Howard Taft, prompted him to return for the 1912 election. When Republicans failed to nominate him, he broke with the party and formed the Progressive Party. He campaigned under the banner of a "New Nationalism." Its tenets united the themes of his leadership of progressivism: faith in a strong federal government, an activist presidency, balancing of public interest and corporate interest, and support for a roll-call of progressive reform causes, from woman suffrage and the eight-hour work day to abolishing child labor and greater corporate regulation.

While progressives guided the country down the path it would follow for much of the twentieth century toward regulation of the economy and government attention to social welfare, it also contained a strong streak of social control. This was the darker side of the movement. Progressive faith in expert leadership and government intervention could justify much that intruded heavily on the daily lives of individual citizens. The regulation of leisure activities is a good example. Commercial leisure—dance halls, movies, vaudeville performances, and amusement parks like Coney Island—appeared to many reformers to threaten public morality, particularly endangering young women. Opponents famously deemed Coney Island "Sodom by the Sea." Seeking to tame such activities, reformers, most of whom were middle class, promoted "Rules for Correct Dancing" (no "conspicuous display of hosiery"; no suggestive dance styles) and enacted a National Board of Censorship for movies. These rules largely targeted working-class and youth entertainments with an eye to regulating morality and behavior.

Eugenics also garnered the support of some progressive reformers. Eugenics was a scientific movement which believed that weaker or "bad" genes threatened the nation's population. Eugenicists supported laws in the name of the rational protection of public health to compel sterilization of those with "bad" genes—typically focusing on those who were mentally ill or in jails, but also disproportionately affecting those who were not white. Any assessment of the progressive movement must grapple with this element of social control as reformers established new ways to regulate the daily lives of citizens, particularly those in the lower ranks of society, by empowering government to set rules for behavior. It was often middle-class reformers who made their values the standard for laws regulating all of society.

Progressive reform's greatest failure was its acquiescence in the legal and violent disfranchisement of African Americans. Most progressive reformers failed to join African American leaders in their fight against lynching. Many endorsed efforts by southern progressives to enact literacy tests for voting and other laws in the name of good government that effectively denied black Americans the right to vote and entrenched Jim Crow segregation. By 1920, all southern states and nine states outside the South had enacted such laws.

Progressivism's defining feature was its moderateness. Progressives carved out what historian James

Kloppenberg describes as a "via media," a middle way between the laissez-faire capitalism dominant in the Gilded Age and the socialist reorganization many radicals of the period advocated. It was a movement of accommodation. Some regulation of business joined some protection of workers, but no dramatic overhaul of the distribution of wealth or control of the economy occurred. Instead, progressives bequeathed the twentieth century faith in an active government to moderate the effects of large-scale capitalism on citizens and communities. Government would secure the public claim to unadulterated food, safer workplaces, decent housing, and fair business practices, among many other things. Theodore Roosevelt epitomized progressive rebuke of the outrageous excesses of capitalists and their cronies, but also typified progressive accommodation of the new order. He opposed unregulated business, deemed monopolies antithetical, defended labor unions, supported consumer protections, and initiated government protection of natural resources. Yet he never believed we could turn away from the new economy and the transformation it had wrought in American society. The balancing act of reform and regulation that Roosevelt and other progressives pursued led the nation through the moment of crisis at the end of the nineteenth century and accommodated it to the modern industrial society of the twentieth century.

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Theodore Roosevelt: The Making of a Progressive Reformer

by Kathleen Dalton

Theodore Roosevelt's interesting life often tempts biographers to write about him with the history left out. His story offers plenty of drama. Born in 1858 to a wealthy family in New York City he waged a life and death struggle against childhood asthma. Books about brave warriors and explorers comforted the boy when he was sick. His father, Theodore Senior, believed that nature and outdoor exercise could build boys' bodies and characters, and he put pressure on his son to throw off his invalidism by embracing exercise. In his teens, young Theodore rose to his father's challenge and strengthened his body by exercising and going hunting. He remained a forever-restless seeker after adventure and knowledge, a man who embraced many identities in his life: hunter, cowboy, writer, scientist, historian, explorer, reformer, politician, and, finally, president.

Teddy Roosevelt in the Rough Riders, ca. 1898. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

Roosevelt, or T.R. as he was known, invented the modern presidency. A man full of contradictions, he fought bravely in the Spanish-American War, but also proved himself a presidential peacemaker who averted wars by the skillful use of diplomacy and so won the Nobel Peace Prize. In retrospect, T.R. stands out as a unique American wonder, like Niagara Falls. But his story is larger than a one-of-a-kind personal journey from weakness to strength and accomplishment.

In fact, the broad scope of T.R.'s large life gives us clues about the grand historical dramas and conflicts of the era between the Civil War and World War I. In the decades after 1865 the US economy boomed. Railroads paved the way toward new national opportunities for trade and provided a business model for the rise of the modern corporation. Linking the new industrial cities and stimulating modern systems of banking and manufacturing, railroads also led the way toward business consolidations in the form of mergers and monopolies. Wealthy Americans who invested wisely in factories and railroads grew richer than ever, while industrial workers and new immigrants struggled to survive, flocking to crowded cities where they competed for difficult jobs. American cities were plagued by dirt, chaos, and crime as their streets were ripped up to make way for new sites of manufacturing and trade. By 1890 the census showed that 9 percent of the population controlled 71 percent of the wealth, and by 1900, about three quarters of the American people qualified as poor. No wonder that populists, labor leaders, and socialists of many ideological stripes railed against the trusts and the problem of inequality.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

As a boy in New York, T.R. grew up within the wealthiest and most exclusive segment of society. Despite his advantages he found urban life in the Gilded Age repellent and confining. Four years after he graduated from Harvard in 1880, T.R. went west searching for a new life free of the constraints of the industrializing east. He bought two ranches in the Dakota Territory and lived the life of a cowboy. His restlessness and his time as a cowpuncher belong to a historical moment after the Civil War when urban life felt hopelessly blighted and the tide of westward migration provoked the Sioux Wars and the killing of

many Plains Natives. Custer's demise at the Battle of Little Big Horn invited more vicious reprisals, and along with the military suppression of Native peoples came the dominance of western settlements by railroads and mining corporations. Nevertheless, the West and the cowboy remained powerful symbols of freedom to T.R. and many men of his generation who dreamed of living unshackled by the restrictions of modern desk jobs and polite East Coast society. On his Dakota ranches, T.R.'s cattle froze to death and he failed to turn a profit, but he wrote articles and then books for eastern audiences about the hazards and romance of his ranch life. In *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* (1885), *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888), *Thomas Hart Benton* (1887), *The Wilderness Hunte* (1893), and *The Winning of the West* (1889–1896), T.R. argued that the essence of being an American was having a fierce frontier spirit. He sought to kindle across class and regional lines a strong spirit of national renewal. By the 1890s, Roosevelt found literary celebrity among a vast readership of eastern urbanites longing for visions of escape and adventure.

As American cities mushroomed in the 1880s and 1890s, political parties dominated by bosses and supported by immigrant voters offended reformers of T.R.'s privileged class. He believed that garbage pickup, clean water, safe bridges, public transportation, and sewers were investments that city governments needed to make to promote public health and to facilitate economic development. Boss-run cities were slow to respond to such urban problems. Even before his western interlude, T.R. as a New York State assemblyman had proven he was a precocious reformer who knew how to work with the regular Republican Party. He went after a corrupt judge and tried hard to reform the conditions of immigrant labor in tenements. When Roosevelt returned to New York in 1886, it was in the role of urban reformer at a time when corrupt party bosses won elections in part to give their followers jobs and collect political assessments from officeholders. T.R. believed that party hacks should not get government jobs; instead he wanted hiring to be based on civil service exams to raise the level of literacy and competence of government workers. Because of T.R.'s role in the emerging civil service reform movement President Benjamin Harrison appointed him a federal Civil Service Commissioner in 1889. In this role, he and other reformers expanded the number of jobs filled by exam rather than by party loyalty.

Shocked by reports that party bosses and the police were in cahoots with saloons and prostitution rings, New York City reformers formed new alliances in the early 1890s. Though women could not yet vote in New York, they joined reform groups such as the Woman's Municipal League of New York and various good government groups to elect William Lafayette Strong, a reform mayor, in 1894. Mayor Strong brought T.R. back to New York as a police commissioner, where he worked to clean up the police department. T.R. soon pushed the police chief out of the department after discovering that he had accepted bribes at the same time he charged brothels and saloons protection money. T.R. also expanded and professionalized the police by giving his cops telephones, bicycles, fingerprinting, and photographic rogues' galleries. In addition to his belief in law and order, T.R. wrote articles advocating laws to regulate housing to make it safer and more affordable, and called for rapid transit and parks for city dwellers.

After serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, lobbying for American expansion and fighting in the Spanish-American War, T.R. ran for governor of New York in 1899. Heeding the serious challenge that Democrat William Jennings Bryan had made to William McKinley in 1896 by railing against trusts, monopolies, and railroads, T.R. as governor won the passage of new factory-inspection and tenement-house laws. T.R. believed that he had not gone far enough as a reformer, but his gubernatorial career was cut short in 1900 when New York's Republican boss, Boss Platt, pushed T.R. out of New York by arranging for him to become McKinley's vice presidential running mate. Then the vice presidency was seen as a dead-end job rather than a political stepping stone. The McKinley-Roosevelt ticket won the election, but in 1901 an anarchist assassinated President McKinley and T.R. ascended to the presidency.

As president, Theodore Roosevelt had to deal with the dominant conservative wing of his party and a Congress hostile to reform. He took the reins of the presidency without much more of a plan than to emulate Abraham Lincoln's wisdom and his ability to unite the nation. But legislation required the cooperation of Congress, and it was not readily won. T.R.'s legislative victories were modest but historic —a railroad regulation bill, a Meat Inspection Act, and a Pure Food and Drug Act that established federal responsibility for inspecting products to protect consumers.

Roosevelt had better success using his presidency as a "bully pulpit," popularizing reform ideas among voters. He convinced a generation of Americans that government should be responsive to injustice. When he grew impatient with the executive-legislative give-and-take, he took bold executive action that did not require legislative cooperation. Most notably, he instructed his Justice Department to prosecute the Northern Securities holding company, charging it with monopolistic practices. He won the case when it came before the Supreme Court, earning the moniker of "trust buster."

He also made labor history. Although previous strikes had usually prompted presidents to side with management by sending federal troops to suppress strikers, in the Anthracite Coal Strike T.R. pressed management to negotiate with labor. He also used executive orders to protect forests, wildlife, the Grand Canyon, and other natural wonders and historic sites, thereby cementing his reputation as America's greatest conservationist president.

T.R.'s evolution as a reformer did not end when he left the presidency in 1909, for he had been swept up in a tidal wave of progressive reform ideas. Influenced by a large network of woman reformers, including settlement house founder Jane Addams, the Consumer League's feisty Florence Kelley, and activists in the Women's Trade Union League, T.R. endorsed state minimum-wage laws and mother's pensions (later Aid to Families with Dependent Children). When he ran for president in 1912 on the third party Bull Moose ticket he endorsed woman suffrage and the modern welfare state, i.e. unemployment, health, and old age insurance. Though he never returned to the White House, T.R. made his mark as an environmental and urban reformer, a man who reflected his times and their debates, but also a man who tried to face the future by promoting new causes. T.R.'s story then is not just a private tale of growth and change. Roosevelt the reformer remains one of the most fascinating personalities in American history.

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The Hundred Days and Beyond: What Did the New Deal Accomplish?

by Anthony J. Badger

> Before the adjournment of the Special Session, I want to convey to you and to the entire membership of the House of Representatives, an expression of my thanks for making possible a more sincere and more wholehearted cooperation between the Legislative and the Executive branches of the United States Government than has been witnessed by the American people in many a long year.

FDR thanks the House of Representatives for their work during his first hundred days as president, June 10, 1933. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

There wasn't anybody in that entire Brains Trust apparently that had given any thought—they had absolutely no plans—or any real study to the problem created by this banking situation.

—Walter Wyatt, Federal Reserve official, amazed at how unprepared the incoming Roosevelt administration was for the situation they faced on inauguration day, March 4, 1933.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

THE HUNDRED DAYS

The Hundred Days were an accident. Roosevelt took advantage of the need to reopen the banks to ask Congress to stay in session to pass recovery and reform legislation. Much of that legislation was improvised. The haste dictated by the economic crisis profoundly shaped the New Deal response in the Hundred Days.

Despite the four months between election and inauguration, Roosevelt had few worked-out legislative or recovery plans. He certainly had no plans to deal with the rapidly escalating banking crisis. When he took office and shut the banks, he had to turn to held-over officials in the Treasury and Federal Reserve to dust off legislative proposals that they had devised in the Hoover years. The key was not more credit (the banks had had plenty of that) but recapitalization through the Reconstruction Finance Corporation buying preferred stock in the banks. It was still a tremendous gamble when the President went on the air on Sunday, March 12, to explain the crisis and make a "man-to-man appeal" for confidence when the banks reopened the next day. The gamble paid off when people deposited more than they took out. There was no Plan B if that appeal failed.

BackStory
The First 100 Days of the Presidency [Listener Call]

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4:42

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The response to FDR's inaugural and from congressional leaders to his banking proposals encouraged him to ask Congress to stay in session. Eventually Congress passed an unprecedented sixteen pieces of major legislation. In the Hundred Days, the New Deal established a farm program that told farmers what they could and could not plant (the Agricultural Adjustment Administration), created an industrial recovery program that set minimum prices and wages (the National Recovery Administration), launched the biggest public works program in the nation's history (Public Works Administration), set up a national relief program (Federal Emergency Relief Administration), refinanced farm and home mortgages, regulated the stock market and banking, guaranteed bank deposits, and established the Tennessee Valley Authority.

There was no great federal blueprint that FDR wanted to impose on the country. He really only had definite plans for farm policy, the Tennessee Valley, and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Only when existing appropriations for relief were exhausted did he devise a temporary relief administration. Forty days into the Hundred Days there was no indication that there was to be an industrial recovery program —congressional action forced Roosevelt's hand over that and over public works spending.

There was much talk of the emergency as the equivalent of war and a justification for emergency presidential powers as in a time of war. Wartime agencies from 1917 to 1918 served as models for agencies like the NRA. Many officials who had served in government then returned to Washington in 1933. But, in fact the emergency in 1933 led to constraints on rather than opportunities for federal power. The government had to act quickly but there simply was not any established "state capacity" for the government to do so. The federal government, observed one historian, "had almost no institutional structure to which Europeans would accord the term 'the State.'" It had neither the information nor the personnel to implement the policies launched in 1933. As a result, bankers themselves had to decide which banks were sound enough to reopen, farmers had to operate the crop control program, businessmen dominated the formulation and the implementation of the NRA industrial codes, existing state agencies had to administer the relief program, and the Army had to organize the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Similarly, Roosevelt and others had a fatal attraction for one-off, quick-fix solutions that would kick-start the economy into recovery without the permanent expansion of the bureaucracy and constant state intervention. Congressional "share the work" schemes, farm proposals for cost of production legislation, retrenchment, public works spending, and above all demands for currency inflation were all in this "start-up" mode. Roosevelt never lost the hope that tinkering with the currency—including the gold-buying experiment—would raise price levels, particularly of farm products and in itself bring recovery.

This concern for the domestic price level fit in with his main advisers' conviction that the depression was national in origin and would be solved by nationalist measures. These concerns finally knocked out of the reckoning an internationalist option at the London conference at the start of July. For men like FDR's budget director, Lewis Douglas, balancing the budget was one part of an international rescue package that involved exchange rate stabilization and the removal of trade barriers. Roosevelt believed that currency stabilization would tie his hands as he sought domestic recovery, so he scuppered the London conference.

Why did FDR get support for the banking bailout and for the dramatic legislation of the Hundred Days? It was not just his communication skills both personally to congressional leaders and journalists and nationally to the radio audience. He was popular, he had been elected by a large majority, and he had survived an assassination attempt. Above all, it was the scale of the Depression that made congressional leaders of both parties respond to their constituents' demands to support FDR. Unemployment was at least 25 percent, agriculture was devastated, and homeowners and farmers lost their homes and land in

the thousands every month. None of the stabilizers that protect Americans nowadays were in place—almost no unemployment relief since private, local, and state unemployment welfare funds were exhausted; no guarantee of bank deposits; no unemployment or old-age insurance. FDR's opportunity lay in the magnitude of the economic downturn that led political leaders to ignore (temporarily) cherished ideological convictions against government intervention.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF MICRO-ECONOMIC INTERVENTION

The National Recovery Administration did not bring recovery. In part, its failure reflected the contradictions of the New Dealers' analysis of economic failure. In some industries they wanted to check excessive competition that relentlessly fuelled the deflationary spiral: cutting wages and prices in a vain effort to undercut competitors. But their analysis of other industrial sectors was that large firms practiced the economics of scarcity, keeping prices artificially high. The codes of fair practice, drafted largely by trade associations, which held a monopoly of information about their industries, did little to protect consumers, increase wages, or increase purchasing power. To small businessmen the codes seemed to protect their larger rivals. For industries in which a few firms already controlled most of the market, there was little incentive to concede to labor, consumers, or potential new entrants. There were more than 500 codes, which merely increased resentment of bureaucracy and efforts at code enforcement. Concentration, as originally envisaged, on codes in a few central industries would have been better. But fundamentally, there was little in the NRA that would create new jobs. It probably checked the deflationary spiral but, if the hope was that public-works spending would engineer expansion, then PWA spending could not work quickly enough. Probably the biggest mistake was not to include government loans to business in the NRA, which might have financed expansion. When the industrial recovery legislation was knocked down in 1935 it had few friends: the only attempts to sustain it were in coal mining.

The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was more politically and institutionally successful. Production control and price-support loans on stored commodities remained part of US farm programs until 1996. Agriculture was the one area where there was 'state capacity' in 1933. The government had county-by-county production records; agricultural economists had devised a production control plan that was voluntary but provided incentives to offset the 'free rider' principle; and the Extension Service provided a network of agents in each rural county could sign up millions of individual farmers to participate. The farm program operated remarkably smoothly and quickly. Critics have claimed that drought, rather than government programs, cut production, and that the AAA exacerbated rural poverty. Whatever its faults, the income it provided to farmers enabled them to survive on the land in the 1930s until non-farm opportunities arose after 1940. It eliminated many of the risks in farming and provided new sources of credit.

However, organized farm groups achieved political power in 1933 because their cooperation was essential to a voluntary farm program. This strengthening of farm interest groups meant that those groups would stand in the way in the future of plans to reorder American agriculture on a more efficient basis and in the way of solving the problems of rural poverty. New Dealers came to recognize that expanding urban consumer purchasing power, rather than supporting farm prices, was the solution to the farm problem. But by then farm pressure groups were too entrenched. Government support for agriculture became more and more generous (and less justifiable) as the number of people in farming declined.

THE LONGER-TERM NEW DEAL

The longer-term New Deal reforms produced social cohesion in the United States and a faith in the federal government that would last until the 1960s.

Financial regulation of both banks and stock market in 1933 and 1934 heralded a lengthy period of financial stability, contained stock market speculation, and largely ended the specters of bank failure.

From 1933 to 1938 the New Deal instituted reforms that would re-finance the mortgages of homeowners and farmers. They enabled debt-ridden property owners to take out longer-term mortgages and paved the way for a significant expansion of homeownership in the US, although the construction industry did not really start to revive until the late 1930s. The new mortgage arrangements helped the United States eventually to have the highest percentage of homeownership in the world. Farm foreclosures virtually stopped after 1933.

The failure to secure dramatic economic recovery meant that the government had to stay in the business of relief. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration funded state relief programs until 1935. In poor states the federal government put up almost 90 percent of relief money. Harry Hopkins always wanted to replace the dole with jobs. The Civil Works Administration put people to work temporarily in the winter of 1933–1934. In 1935 the Works Progress Administration provided jobs for the unemployed—at its peak, 40 percent of the nation's jobless. Many WPA jobs were unskilled construction jobs, particularly on roads. They struggled to attain the legitimacy and wage rates of jobs in the private sector. But the WPA provided jobs for artists, middle-class professionals, teachers, and students. The range of construction projects from housing projects to high schools to a football stadium at the University of Arkansas created a permanent New Deal landscape at the local level. The WPA showed that government job programs could be creative and efficient. For all the limitations and conservative stereotyping, WPA jobs were the first indication for many Americans that the federal government took its responsibility for their welfare in an economic downturn seriously.

The Wagner Act of 1935 was perhaps the most remarkable piece of legislation of the whole New Deal. It is difficult to imagine another year in which such a pro-union piece of legislation could have been passed. Anti-union tactics had been largely unrestrained in the United States. The courts and local and state governments had usually sided with employers. This alignment reflected the fact that in most communities in the United States, the middle class identified with the employer rather than with local strikers. American workers had been encouraged in union organization in the early New Deal and had launched in 1934 an unprecedented, albeit mostly unsuccessful, wave of strikes. The Wagner Act, by outlawing a host of employer anti-union activities and providing for government-supervised worker elections for union recognition, provided vital protection for union leaders as they organized mass-production workers for the first time in 1936 and 1937. Unions provided the radical cutting edge of New Deal politics in the late 1930s. The decade was perhaps the only one in the twentieth century in which middle-class Americans identified with industrial workers as fellow consumers. From the 1940s onward middle-class Americans tended to view organized labor as hostile to their interests.

The final cement in a positive relationship between ordinary Americans and their government was the 1935 Social Security Act. Like the Wagner Act, the Social Security Act did not herald a "second New Deal"; rather it was the culmination of expert reform development and congressional study over a two-year period. The United States had been an "outlier," a "welfare laggard," in the western industrialized world before 1935. For all the limitations of the Social Security Act—regressive taxes, variations in state provision, lack of coverage of some of the neediest Americans, and the lack of health care—it nevertheless represented a quantum leap in social provision. The contributory taxes also ensured that its legacy was permanent. As Roosevelt rightly observed, no future Congress was going to take away

benefits that their constituents believed they had paid for.

It was these measures above all that created a half-way political revolution in the United States and bound lower-income voters to the Democratic Party until at least the 1980s and made it the national majority party until the 1990s. But it was only a half-way revolution. FDR never created the unequivocally progressive party that he hoped for. In particular, the southern Democrats, who had so enthusiastically supported the emergency New Deal, survived Roosevelt's attempt to reconstruct the party in the South. They were skeptical about the non-emergency, urban, labor-oriented direction of the New Deal, which also threatened traditional patterns of racial and economic dependency in the South. They would combine after 1938 with conservative Republicans in a bi-partisan coalition that would block efforts to extend the New Deal for the next quarter of a century. This constituted a powerful anti-statist coalition that stymied FDR's 1937–1938 hopes of a third New Deal, which would have guaranteed social minima to all Americans through social housing, extended coverage of Social Security, health insurance, a full-scale rural poverty program, and a commitment to full employment. That agenda remains unfulfilled.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The public-works programs (both the large-scale projects of the PWA and the smaller labor-intensive programs of the WPA) have tended to be treated as short-term palliatives aimed at temporary job creation. But the most recent study of New Deal public-works spending concluded that it was "an extraordinarily successful method of state-sponsored economic development."

The New Deal rebuilt the infrastructure of the United States when revenue-starved state governments could not do so. It rebuilt the road system (though FDR's dream of an interstate highway system would not be realized until 1956). It rescued American schools and universities. Long before federal aid to education, the New Deal built schools, paid teachers' salaries, invested in capital projects in the universities, and paid students to stay on at school and college. Multipurpose dams created cheap electrical power and managed water-resource development.

Nowhere was this impact greater than in the Sunbelt. A new generation of younger southern politicians like Albert Gore and Lyndon Johnson could see what the Tennessee Valley Authority had done for a river valley—it could be a model for modernizing the poorest region in the country. Like their western counterparts, they could see that abundant electrical power and readily available water could provide the key for industrial development and the diversification of agriculture. The federal government funded capital infrastructure projects in Sunbelt cities that had been funded a generation before in older northern cities by private capital. What southern and western politicians also believed was that their regional entrepreneurs need access to capital, access that an eastern-dominated financial system denied them. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, under Texas banker Jesse Jones, provided that capital. It is difficult to conceive of the remarkable growth of the South and the West in World War II and after without that New Deal–funded infrastructure investment.

CONCLUSION

The New Deal was a "laboratory for economic learning" in the 1930s. Given the state of government economic knowledge in the 1930s it is not surprising that government employees struggled to engineer recovery through micro-economic intervention. Economic historians and right-wing commentators blame the New Deal for prolonging the Depression by deterring private investment through excessive regulation and raising prices at the expense of jobs. While it is true that Roosevelt had not secured recovery by the time of the dramatic recession in 1937–1938, it is also true that the spending afterwards did create new

jobs. Government employment in the 1930s also compensated significantly for the failure to create new jobs in the private sector. Above all, it is difficult to see that a free-market solution could have been imposed without massive social and anti-democratic unrest. For all the bitterness of opposition to Roosevelt and heightened class tensions in the United States in the 1930s, the New Deal developed, especially through its welfare and jobs programs, enough social cohesion to allow its democratic institutions to survive a catastrophic economic downturn intact and to fight a world war successfully.

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The World War II Home Front

by Allan M. Winkler

World War II had a profound impact on the United States. Although no battles occurred on the American mainland, the war affected all phases of American life. It required unprecedented efforts to coordinate strategy and tactics with other members of the Grand Alliance and then to plunge into battle against the Axis powers—Germany, Italy, and Japan. At the same time, it demanded a monumental production effort to provide the materials necessary to fight. As the United States produced the weapons of war and became, in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's phrase, the "arsenal of democracy," the country experienced a fundamental reorientation of economic and social patterns at home that provided the template for the postwar years.

Soldiers without Guns poster, Office of War Information, ca. 1944. (National Archives)

In the economic arena, the war ended the Great Depression. Military spending that began in 1940 to bolster the defense effort gave the nation's economy the boost it needed, and millions of unemployed Americans returned to work to make the weapons of war needed to protect the United States. The renewed prosperity vindicated the theory of English economist John Maynard Keynes, who had earlier argued that sizable government spending could end a depression if the private sector was unable or unwilling to engage in such spending itself.

Mobilization required enormous organizational adjustments. The nation worked closely with businessmen, for, as Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson observed, "If you are going to try to go to war, or to prepare for war, in a capitalist country, you have got to let business make money out of the process or business won't work." Business leaders who had incurred the wrath of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s, when they balked at fully supporting New Deal programs, now found themselves invited to Washington, DC, to run the agencies that coordinated production. Paid a dollar a year for their services, they remained on company payrolls, still cognizant of the interests of the corporations they ran. A common pattern, which provided an incentive to business to cooperate, was the cost-plus-a-fixed-fee system, whereby the government guaranteed all development and production costs and then paid a percentage profit on the goods produced.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

A huge network of wartime agencies developed to coordinate war production. FDR was never fond of dismantling administrative structures or firing people who worked for him, and so he created one agency after another, with new ones often in competition with old ones, to guide the war effort. That pattern allowed him to play off assistants against each other and to make the final choices himself. There was a National Defense Advisory Commission, then an Office of Production Management, then a War Production Board, and eventually an Office of War Mobilization to coordinate all parts of the war economy.

The system worked. By mid-1945, the United States had produced 80,000 landing craft, 100,000 tanks

and armored cars, 300,000 airplanes, fifteen million guns, and forty-one billion rounds of ammunition. It had also produced the world's first two atomic bombs. And while wartime controls disappeared after the war was over, the experience provided a framework for future administrative organization of the economy.

As propaganda came of age, in a new Office of War Information, Americans rose to the challenge of doing whatever was necessary to support the war effort. They bought billions of dollars' worth of bonds to help defray the cost of the war. They saved metals and fats to be recycled into military materiel and collected rubber until the nation successfully produced synthetic rubber, necessary because shipping lanes to obtain natural rubber were blocked. They planted "victory gardens" to provide fruits and vegetables for personal use. "Use it up, wear it out, make it do or do without" became the slogan of the day.

Songs conveyed America's sense of optimism. "Goodbye, Momma, I'm off to Yokohama" was one example; "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" was another. Americans seeking a song like "Over There," which had summed up their confidence in World War I, never found one. Instead, the popular music industry ground out a series of trite but colorful titles including: "You're a Sap, Mister Jap," "Let's take a Rap at the Jap," "The Japs Don't Have a Chinaman's Chance," and "We're Gonna Find a Feller Who Is Yeller and Beat Him Red, White, and Blue."

The war caused disruptions at home. Americans faced shortages that required them to deal with the hassle of rationing. They had to provide the necessary coupons—issued by the Office of Price Administration—to be able to purchase items in short supply like sugar, or meat, or gasoline. Housing shortages plagued people moving to war-production centers. Even so, midway through the conflict, seven out of ten Americans said they had not had to make any "real sacrifices" as a result of the war.

For groups discriminated against in the past, the war was a vehicle for lasting social and economic gains. For women and blacks in particular, the war was a stimulus—and a model—for future change.

The war brought enormous changes in American women's lives. Women were, without question, second-class citizens at the start of the struggle. Facing discrimination in the job market, they found many positions simply closed to them. In jobs they could find, they usually earned less than men. But then the huge productive effort that began in 1940 gave women the chance to do industrial work. As millions of men entered the military services, both government and industry waged a concerted campaign, with posters of "Rosie the Riveter," to get women to work in the factories, and they did—in huge numbers. The number of working women rose from 14,600,000 in 1941 to 19,370,000 in 1944. In the latter year, 37 percent of all adult women were in the labor force. At the peak of the industrial effort, women constituted 36 percent of the civilian work force. At the same time, the demographic composition of the female labor pool shifted. Traditionally, working women had been single and young. Between 1940 and 1944, married women made up over 72 percent of the total number of female employees. By the end of the war, half of all female workers were over thirty-five.

Women loved the work. Many agreed with a Baltimore advertisement that told them that working in a war plant was "a lot more exciting than polishing the family furniture." They remained frustrated at unfair pay differentials, but wanted to continue working after the war. Some recognized, as one woman in Tacoma noted, "My husband wants a wife, not a career woman," and complied with the propaganda campaign as the war drew to an end to get them out of the factories so that returning servicemen could take back their jobs. Some were able to continue working, but most left their positions. Still, their experience helped lay the groundwork for a women's movement in later years and the war was an important step on the road to equal rights.

African Americans likewise benefited from the demands of war. At the start of the struggle, their unemployment rate was twice that of whites, and many of the jobs they held were unskilled. They could not join the Air Corps or the Marine Corps. In the Navy, they could enlist only in the all-black messmen's branch. In the Army they were segregated from whites, and they were bothered by constant slights. One black American soldier recalled being turned away from a lunchroom in Salina, Kansas, only to see German prisoners of war being served at the same counter. "This was really happening," he said sadly. "It was no jive talk. The people of Salina would serve these enemy soldiers and turn away black American GIs."

Blacks became increasingly assertive. The *Pittsburgh Courier,* a widely circulated black newspaper, proclaimed a "Double V" campaign—V for victory in the struggle against the dictators abroad and V for victory in the campaign for equality at home. Even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into the war, A. Philip Randolph, head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, proposed a massive March on Washington under the slogan "WE LOYAL NEGRO AMERICAN CITIZENS DEMAND THE RIGHT TO WORK AND FIGHT FOR OUR COUNTRY." He agreed to call off the march only when FDR signed an executive order creating a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to investigate complaints about discrimination and take appropriate action. While the FEPC was never wholly effective, it enjoyed a few notable successes when the pressure of war production made employers willing to hire African American workers. Meanwhile, black students at Howard University in Washington, DC, picketed segregated restaurants. Some black airmen finally had the chance to fly, and black soldiers served with distinction in increasing numbers. These efforts foreshadowed the protest campaigns of the subsequent Civil Rights Movement.

Not all groups of outsiders fared well. Japanese Americans were the worst civilian casualties of the war. Though but a tiny minority on the West Coast, they were visible and vulnerable, particularly after Pearl Harbor. Rumors spread about possible sabotage. *Time* and *Life* magazines told readers how to tell friendly Chinese from enemy Japanese: "The Chinese expression is likely to be more placid, kindly, open; the Japanese more positive, dogmatic, arrogant." Government officials added their own observations. "A Jap's a Jap," said General John DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command. Faced with mounting pressure, the Army cited military necessity as the reason to evacuate Japanese Americans, whether or not they were citizens, from the West Coast. When it became clear that other parts of the country did not want the evacuees, a new War Relocation Authority ignored constitutional qualms and forcibly moved Japanese Americans to ten detention camps in seven western states. Harsh conditions undermined a sense of social cohesion. Eventually, some Japanese Americans accepted the chance to fight in the war. Others, who refused, faced further internment, sometimes in even harsher conditions.

For the most part, Americans looked back fondly on World War II. They had fought against totalitarian dictatorships for democratic ideals and they had won. The world was a better place for the sacrifices they had made, and veterans and others took pride in a job well done. For many Americans, this was, in the phrase journalist Studs Terkel helped popularize in 1984 in the title of his Pulitzer Prize–winning book, "the Good War." Yet more recently some observers have pointed out that in the pursuit of victory, the United States on occasion failed to live up to its own democratic principles.

They have debated, too, the degree to which World War II was a watershed that changed the nation's course. The war clearly brought a return of prosperity after the dismal depression of the 1930s. It promoted the growth of big business and solidified military industrial links. It brought about permanent demographic change. For groups discriminated against in the past, the war was a vehicle for lasting social and economic gains. The war changed configurations of political power. Americans now looked to the federal government to deal with problems handled privately, or at a state or local level, before.

Meanwhile, the presidency grew more powerful than it had ever been before.

And yet, continuity with the past was also important, and basic American values endured. As Americans looked ahead, they did so through the lens of the past. They remained attached to the status quo as they sought to create a more attractive, stable, and secure future based on the model that still influenced their lives. They hungered for the prosperity they recalled from the 1920s, so elusive in the 1930s, now once again possible thanks to the spending for war. Their vision of the future included no brave and bold new world, but a revived and refurbished version of the world they had known before. The war restored the self-confidence they had felt prior to the depression and convinced them that what they wanted was within their grasp. The American dream, its contours the same, remained alive and well.

Despite such continuities, the changes that occurred between 1940 and 1945 stand out vividly. Even when seen against a broader perspective, the transformation the United States experienced was profound. In responding to extraordinary challenges, the United States was undeniably different at the end of the war than it had been at the start.

War, by its very nature, has always been a catalyst for change, and World War II followed that pattern. In the United States, World War II made Americans more willing to involve themselves—politically and diplomatically—with the outside world. It also expanded their hopes and expectations and forever altered the patterns of their lives at home.

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Patriotism Crosses the Color Line: African Americans in World War II

by Clarence Taylor

Although African Americans have been the victims of racial oppression throughout the history of the United States, they have always supported the nation, especially during wartime. When World War II erupted, over 2.5 million black men registered for the draft and one million served as draftees or volunteers in all of the branches of the Armed Forces during conflict. Most black men who served were in the Army and were relegated to segregated combat support groups. More than 12,000 black men who served in the segregated 92nd Division received citations and were decorated for their effort, and the all-black 761st Tank Battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation for "extraordinary heroism."

Battery B, 338th Antiaircraft Artillery, ca. 1943, detail. (Gilder Lehrman Collection)

By 1944, 145,000 black men served in the US Army Air Force, including the 99th Fighter Squadron, popularly known as the Tuskegee Airmen. The Tuskegee Airmen became legendary for their heroic feats during the war and received a Distinguished Unit Citation, several silver stars, 150 distinguished flying crosses, fourteen bronze stars, and 744 air medals. Although the Navy put up great resistance and had only allowed blacks to serve as mess attendants, pressure from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and civil rights organizations forced the Navy to start recruiting blacks in April 1942 for service. However, its policy of relegating blacks to segregated units led black leaders to accuse the Navy of practicing Jim Crow. Despite its goal of recruiting 14,000 volunteers in the first year, blacks never made up more than 5 percent of the entire Navy.

Black women also came to the defense of the nation by enlisting in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC). Black women in WAAC were labeled "ten percenters" because they made up 10 percent of the women recruited. Like black men in the Armed Forces, they were placed in segregated units, lived in segregated housing, ate at segregated tables in the mess hall, and received segregated training. Although black WAAC officers received officer cadet training in integrated units, all other aspects of life in the corps were segregated. More than 6,200 black women served in WAAC. In spite of serving in segregated units and facing harsh discrimination, black women served with distinction.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

Although African Americans supported their government during WWII, they were not silent about racial practices in America. In fact, some even noted the similarities between the way Jews were treated in Germany and the way blacks were treated in America. The poet Langston Hughes, for example, expressed this sentiment in his piece "Nazi and Dixie Nordics."

"The Germans are the victims of a mass psychosis," says an American sociologist. "It will take drastic measures to control them when peace comes." These people were talking about Germany.

To a Negro, they might just as well have been speaking of white Southerners in Dixie. Our local Nordics have a mass psychosis too, when it comes to race. As the Hitlerites treat the Jews, so they treat the Negroes, in varying degrees of viciousness ranging from the denial of educational opportunities to the denial of employment, from buses that pass Negroes by to jailers who beat and torture Negro prisoners, from the denial of the ballot to the denial of the right to live.

Hughes, like millions of African Americans, was fully conscious of the gap between the stated ideals of the United States and its practices at home. African Americans were also aware that the war created an opportunity to press US leaders for full citizenship.

DOUBLE V CAMPAIGN

The *Pittsburgh Courier,* one of the nation's largest black newspapers, stepped to the forefront in the struggle for racial equality by launching its "Double V" campaign. Responding to a January 31, 1942, letter to the editor by James G. Thompson of Wichita, Kansas, urging for a double V campaign, the paper published two interlocking Vs with the theme "Democracy: Victory at home, Victory Abroad" in its February 7, 1942, edition. The major objective of the campaign was to encourage blacks to support the war effort but fight for civil rights. The *Courier*'s advocacy of patriotism was in part to prevent critics from accusing it of pushing its own agenda ahead of the nation's objective.

According to the *Courier* the response to the introduction of its campaign was "overwhelming." Its office had been swamped with telegrams and letters of support proving that its slogan represented the "true battle cry of Colored Americans" and that they were determined to protect their nation and the freedoms that they cherished. It argued that African Americans would wage a "two-pronged attack" against those who would enslave us "at home and those who abroad would enslave us. WE HAVE A STAKE IN THIS FIGHT . . . WE ARE AMERICANS TOO!"

The Double V campaign became intertwined with popular culture. During the war, pinup models, usually glamorous movie stars considered sex symbols, were featured in magazines, postcards, and newspapers. In its February 14, 1943, edition, the *Courier* also began to feature photos of pretty young women. Labeled the "Double V girl," the young women were college educated, were usually artistically talented, and were in support of the campaign. In addition to using glamorous women to attract supporters for its campaign, the paper also had photos of people dressed in the Double V fashion wear such as Double V dresses and Double V hats.

Besides the photos of the Double V Girls and Double V fashion, the *Courier* used numerous photos of whites standing alongside African Americans, emphasizing the point that the struggle for democracy was not a black issue but one that benefited the nation. The photos of blacks and whites flashing the Double V were to drive home the point that a unified country was essential for winning the war. Therefore, it urged the country not only preach democracy to the world but to practice it at home.

The Double V campaign was eventually adopted by other black newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Sentinel,* the *Washington Tribune,* and the *Challenger* of Columbus, Ohio. Despite the *Courier*'s effort, by 1943, the paper provided less space in promoting the campaign and by September 1945 the paper stopped using Double V. Although the *Courier* could not claim any concrete accomplishments, the Double V campaign helped provide a voice to Americans who wanted to protest racial discrimination and contribute to the war effort.

THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON CAMPAIGN

Another crucial way that African Americans took advantage of America's involvement in WWII to push for civil rights was through mass protest. When Nazi Germany began invading and occupying countries in Europe, American industries began contracting with the government to increase production of ships, tanks, guns, and other items for defense. Despite the urgent need for tens of thousands of skilled workers to help in the production of these items, war production companies refused to hire blacks. Moreover, the federal government refused to take steps to end the racial discriminatory actions of these industries. In fact, the administration publicly announced that it would continue to segregate black and whites who enlisted in the armed services.

In response to the blatant discrimination on the part of industry and government, civil rights leader and labor organizer A. Philip Randolph launched the March on Washington Movement (MOWM), which helped organize thousands of people of African origin in the United States to march on the nation's capital in 1941, demanding that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issue an executive order banning discrimination in the defense industry. The March on Washington Committee was organized and headed by Randolph and consisted of prominent black leaders such as Walter White of the NAACP and Lester Granger of the Urban League. Although Eleanor Roosevelt met with Randolph and White to convince them to call off the march, Randolph refused, insisting that the President agree to ban discrimination in the defense industry. The threat of thousands of black people coming to Washington, DC, to protest convinced FDR to hold a meeting with Randolph and other march leaders in June 1941. Although the president attempted to convince Randolph to call off the march, Randolph refused unless an executive order was issued.

Eventually, FDR agreed that his close ally Mayor Fiorello La Guardia of New York, and others associated with the White House, work out a compromise with Randolph. The compromise was Executive Order 8802, which banned employment discrimination in defense industry and government. FDR also created a temporary Fair Employment Practices Committee to help ensure that defense manufacturers would not practice racial discrimination. Because of a major victory in forcing the government to take action against discrimination for the first time since Reconstruction, Randolph agreed to call off the march.

Randolph and the march organizers had won a major victory for racial equality and had laid the groundwork for the civil rights protests of the 1950s and 1960s.

Clarence Taylor teaches in the history department and the black and Hispanic studies department at Baruch College, The City University of New York. His books include Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools *(1997) and* Black Religious Intellectuals: The Fight for Equality from Jim Crow to the 21st Century *(2002).*

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http://www.tuskegeeairmen.org

The National Park Service has a section on these aviators on the website for Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Site at Morton Field in Tuskegee, Alabama:
http://www.nps.gov/tuai/
http://www.nps.gov/museum/exhibits/tuskegee/airoverview.htm

The website for the 2007 Ken Burns series *The War,* on WWII, has a segment on the African American experience, with a lesson plan on the Double V campaign:
http://www.pbs.org/thewar/at_war_democracy_african_american.htm
http://www-tc.pbs.org/thewar/downloads/double_v.pdf

The website for the 2003 PBS special *The Perilous Fight* provides a selection of rare color photographs and movies of African American participation in the war:
http://www.pbs.org/perilousfight/social/african_americans/

The National Archives' online "Pictures of African Americans in World War II" includes all branches of service, men and women, and the home front:
http://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/ww2-pictures/

The Center for Military History has an online history of the WAACs, as well as information on African Americans in the Army and the integration of the Army:
http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/wac/wac.htm
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The Library of Congress provides a reading list on "African American Women in the Military and at War":
http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/SciRefGuides/africanamericanwomenwar.html

Kathy Sheldon prepared a "brief history" of African American women in the military at website for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial:
http://www.womensmemorial.org/Education/BBH1998.html#4

For service in the Navy, see the Naval History and Heritage Command's website, particularly the section on the African American Navy Experience:

http://www.history.navy.mil/

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For the work of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, look at the site for the PBS film *The Black Press: Soldiers without Swords*:

http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/

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The A. Philip Randolph Institute provides a brief biography:

http://www.apri.org/ht/d/sp/i/225/pid/225

American Memory's "African American Odyssey," includes a poster for the March on Washington:

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohtml/exhibit/aopart8.html

This University of Maryland site provides excerpts from a speech in which Randolph called for the march:

http://www.bsos.umd.edu/aasp/chateauvert/mowmcall.htm

The Tamiment Library site has a march sticker:

http://www.laborarts.org/collections/item.cfm?itemid=110

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Essay: Different Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement

Multimedia: Introduction to Supreme Court Controversies throughout History

Multimedia: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Legacy

The Civil Rights Movement: Major Events and Legacies

by James T. Patterson

From the earliest years of European settlement in North America, whites enslaved and oppressed black people. Although the Civil War finally brought about the abolition of slavery, a harsh system of white supremacy persisted thereafter. In the early twentieth century, African Americans in the South and in many parts of nearby border states were banned from associating with whites in a host of institutions and public accommodations—schools, hospitals, old folks' homes, rest rooms, waiting rooms, railroad cars, hotels, restaurants, lunch counters, parks and beaches, swimming pools, libraries, concert halls, and movie theaters. Some recreational areas posted signs, "Negroes and Dogs Not Allowed." Racial discrimination deprived Southern blacks of decent jobs and

Civil Rights March on Washington DC, August 28, 1963. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division)

schools and of elementary rights of citizenship, including voting. White intimidation and violence, including lynching, remained an ever-present threat. Outside of the South, blacks had legal rights, but they suffered from widespread discrimination and from de facto residential and school segregation.

Black and white liberal reformers struggled to ameliorate these oppressive practices, forming groups like the NAACP in 1909 and the National Urban League in 1911. South Carolina's Septima Clark established Citizenship Schools for civil rights across the South, and North Carolina's Ella Baker worked to improve conditions in the South. Their efforts remind us that civil rights activism has a considerable history predating the 1940s and that it featured largely unsung grassroots workers.

The 1940s brought renewed efforts, however. In 1941, A. Philip Randolph threatened to stage an all-black March on Washington unless President Franklin D. Roosevelt acted to end racial discrimination in employment and racial segregation of the armed forces. Roosevelt agreed to a Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) to investigate employment practices. Although the FEPC had no real power, Randolph's highly visible advocacy of large-scale, direct-action protest was a sign of militant tactics to come.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

Other developments of the war years promoted pressure for civil rights. One was massive movement of black Americans out of the rural South in order to take defense-related jobs in northern and western cities. This migration continued in the 1950s and 1960s, and greatly increased black voting strength and the potential for black community organization. Black soldiers, serving abroad in World War II, witnessed a less oppressive world of race relations than they had known in the South. Many returned home determined to fight racism.

After the war, civil rights advocates welcomed further signs of liberal change. President Harry S. Truman, waging a Cold War against Communism, recognized that racism at home contradicted American claims to lead the "free world" against oppression. Hoping to woo black votes in the 1948 election, Truman

ordered the desegregation of the armed forces and called for federal laws to advance civil rights. Congress rejected his appeals for legislation, but Truman's moves were noteworthy: No American president since Reconstruction had made such an effort.

Activists operated on the local, grassroots level as well, pressing for an end to school segregation. These bold protestors risked not only their jobs but also their lives. Homes and churches were burned, and attempts were made to kill African American organizers. Often the goal was equality between black and white schools, rather than racial integration, for many blacks were anxious to maintain their own black-run schools. By 1950, the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund, led by Thurgood Marshall, decided to battle racial segregation through the courts. The Fund's efforts led to the landmark 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Marshall exclaimed after the decision, "I was so happy I was numb."

Many historians have identified the *Brown* case as the pivotal moment in the history of American race relations and the beginning of a broad civil rights movement that escalated in the 1960s. In December 1955, grassroots activists in Montgomery, Alabama—NAACP members E. D. Nixon and Rosa Parks chief among them—sparked what soon became a large-scale boycott of buses and of white-owned businesses in Montgomery. The boycott began after a white bus driver had Parks arrested for refusing to obey rules that required blacks to move to the back of buses when no seats were available for whites. The Montgomery movement catapulted the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. to leadership in the Civil Rights Movement. By 1957, King had created his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) to carry on the struggle.

Two visible developments in 1957 also encouraged advocates of civil rights. One was passage of a Civil Rights Act, the first to be approved by Congress since Reconstruction. It created a Civil Rights Division within the Department of Justice as well as a federal Civil Rights Commission that was authorized to investigate racial problems and recommend solutions. The other was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's decision, arrived at reluctantly, to send federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, in order to establish order and enforce a token desegregation plan admitting nine black students to the city's all-white Central High School.

Yet segregated social patterns did not vanish. The Court's ruling that "all deliberate speed" should be used to enforce the *Brown* decision offered little guidance to federal courts in the South and encouraged white opponents of desegregation to develop delaying tactics. In 1964, ten years after *Brown*, only one percent of southern black children attended public schools with whites.

Escalating white violence in the South disheartened proponents of racial justice during the 1950s. Many black people, especially young people, became impatient with the slow process of legal cases. To them, the federal government was both remote and unhelpful, and organizations like the NAACP seemed too legalistic and conservative. Local people, they decided, must take direct action to change racial patterns in their communities. Beginning in February 1960, with the Greensboro, North Carolina, sit-ins at the Woolworth lunch counter, the sit-in tactics spread like wildfire throughout the South. These tactics initiated the most powerful phase of America's Civil Rights Movement, which peaked over the next five tumultuous years. The restless young people had been essentially correct: Direct-action protest, especially if it provoked violence by white extremists, was the most productive means of civil rights activity.

The shift in tactics revived older civil rights organizations like the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and prompted the formation of new ones such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), all dedicated to direct action such as sit-ins and demonstrations. By May 1961, the first interracial freedom

rides from Washington, DC, to New Orleans were underway, designed to force southern officials to honor a recent Supreme Court decision that had called for the ending of racial segregation in interstate bus terminals. Violence quickly followed, as one bus was firebombed in Alabama and its riders were injured. The Kennedy administration sent federal marshals to Alabama to restore order, but the bloodshed did not end until the governor, anxious to rid his state of both the freedom riders and the federal marshals, brought in state troops to end the fighting. Attorney General Robert Kennedy then struck a deal with Mississippi officials that resulted in the riders being arrested (without violence) in Jackson, the next stop.

These bloody confrontations attracted considerable public attention. They also revealed that the Kennedy administration, concerned mainly with Cold War issues, was reluctant to jeopardize its political strength among whites in the South and southerners in the Congress. Kennedy was slow to recognize the moral passion of civil rights demonstrators or to employ force in order to stem the implacable resistance and rage of many southern white people, police, and politicians. It took two deaths and almost 400 injuries at Ole Miss before Kennedy sent in federal marshals to end the violence on the campus.

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In early 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. organized protests in Birmingham, Alabama. Eugene "Bull" Connor, the local police chief, ordered his men to fire blasts of water against demonstrators and unleashed vicious dogs on the resisters. Television captured a host of striking scenes, some of them showing assaults and arrests of black children, and relayed those images to a stunned national audience. As a result, many northerners became aware of the plight of African Americans in the South. As much as any single event in the history of the modern Civil Rights Movement, the violence of whites in Birmingham forced the American people to consider serious federal action promoting civil rights.

In June 1963, following Alabama Governor George Wallace's show of resistance to desegregation of the state university, Kennedy addressed a national television audience to call for a federal civil rights law, which would mainly prohibit racial segregation in public accommodations. Only a few hours later, the widely respected Mississippi NAACP activist Medgar Evers was killed.

When Kennedy was assassinated in November, his civil rights bill seemed stalled on Capitol Hill. But Lyndon Johnson of Texas, who succeeded Kennedy in the White House, proved to be both a masterful strategist and a dedicated champion of a strong bill. In June 1964, President Johnson signed into law a bill that not only included a job-discrimination title but also authorized creation of a new agency, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Though school segregation remained pervasive until the early 1970s, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a landmark measure by any standard, ending segregation in a host of public accommodations.

Civil rights activists now turned to voting rights as a goal. Their Freedom Summer in Mississippi brought some 700 volunteers to the state to promote citizenship-training workshops and voter registration. When two white workers, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, and one black volunteer, James Chaney, were killed, the FBI reluctantly infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan and ultimately cracked the case.

The focus on voting rights in Selma, Alabama, led to further attacks on civil rights activists in 1965. The violence against the men and women who joined the fifty-mile march from Selma to the state capital of

Montgomery was widely televised and President Johnson won increased support for strong reforms. That August, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. A high point of the Civil Rights Movement, the law supplemented the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and further guaranteed black legal equality. Passage of the law also encouraged Johnson, King, and other advocates to think seriously about tackling other pressing issues—notably of social and economic inequality—that badly divided Americans along racial lines. But support for federal social programs did not prove as strong as Johnson had hoped.

By 1965, the Civil Rights Movement was growing fragmented, less interracial, and less committed to nonviolence. Only five days after LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act, looting and burning began in the black neighborhood of Los Angeles known as Watts. Other urban riots followed. These outbreaks exposed the rage of blacks outside the South, but many Americans were appalled by them, blaming them on lawless radicals and revolutionaries. Equally harmful to the movement was its rapid splintering along racial lines. In 1966, black militants, led by Stokely Carmichael, advanced calls for Black Power. "The only way we gonna stop them white men from whippin' us," Carmichael insisted, "is to take over." Carmichael and others soon forced whites from positions of responsibility in CORE and SNCC. They also distanced themselves from the emphasis on nonviolence that King had championed. New groups, notably the Black Panthers, adopted militaristic poses that alarmed whites. Other blacks, including members of the Nation of Islam, rejected integration entirely. The decline of interracialism and the turn away from strict adherence to nonviolence cost CORE and SNCC dearly: No longer did they hold high moral ground. White financial support for these groups, which had been vital, dried up. By 1968, both organizations had collapsed.

The Vietnam War also damaged the political coalition that had enabled the President to secure a host of other landmark legislative victories—Medicare, Medicaid, and federal aid to public education among them—in 1965. Political conservatives, who had been routed by LBJ in the election of 1964, grew increasingly powerful by 1968. The assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4, 1968, was another significant blow to the Civil Rights Movement.

Assessing the movement is difficult. It produced unexpected policies, such as the establishment of affirmative action, especially in the areas of employment and higher education admissions. It benefited blacks in other ways, too. As they acquired confidence in their ability to organize and to effect political change, they gained greater pride in their cultural strengths and accomplishments, notably (but not only) in the fields of music, dance, film, and sports. The work of black artists, such as photographer Gordon Parks, painter Jacob Lawrence, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, and novelist Toni Morrison, received widespread notice and critical praise. In popular culture—films, television shows, ads—ugly stereotyping of black people and black culture became far less widespread. The movement also helped to increase the numbers and percentages of African Americans in middle-class jobs, and the armed forces took steps to end discriminatory recruitment and promotion procedures and to develop integrated forces.

Yet the Civil Rights Movement did not achieve as much as dreamers had hoped for in the mid-1960s. The desegregation of schools, which moved ahead in the 1970s and 1980s, has fallen back, and gaps in educational test scores between black and white students, always high, have widened. In the early 2000s, rates of poverty and unemployment among African Americans remain roughly twice as high as those of whites. For a variety of reasons, including relatively low levels of access to health care, the longevity of African Americans is less than that of whites. Black median income is approximately 70 percent of white income; black median wealth is a tiny fraction of white wealth. Many black inner-city areas feature very high rates of students dropping out of high school, violent crime, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, family breakups, and drug addiction. Rates of arrests and imprisonment of African American

men far exceed those of white men. And the Civil Rights Movement, still suffering from the blows that afflicted it in the late 1960s, lacks power. In 1965, Martin Luther King Jr. and Lyndon Johnson hoped that America, having rallied around effective civil rights acts that promoted legal equality, could move on to tackle serious social and economic inequality—but in the early twenty-first century, that goal still seems out of reach.

James T. Patterson is the Ford Foundation Professor of history emeritus at Brown University and the author of Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945–1974 *(1997) and* Debating the Civil Rights Movement, 1945–1968 *(2006).*

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http://www.streetlaw.org//en/Case.6.aspx

The Eisenhower Presidential Library provides materials for classroom use on *Brown vs. Board of Education*:
http://eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents/civil_rights_brown_v_boe.html

The Kennedy Library and Museum has a website on the integration of "Ole Miss" for classroom use:
http://www.jfklibrary.org/meredith/index.htm

The Johnson Presidential Library provides an educational web component on LBJ for Kids with a section on civil rights issues during the administration of this president:
http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/lbjforkids/civil.shtm

The SNCC 1960–1966 website, part of the ibiblio.org project at the University of North Carolina, has brief articles and links for further exploration of SNCC's short but fascinating history:
http://www.ibiblio.org/sncc/

The PBS Kids website has suggestions for classroom use of the experiences of children who broke the color barrier in desegregating their southern schools in the 1950s and 1960s:
http://pbskids.org/wayback/civilrights/tp.html

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Different Perspectives on the Civil Rights Movement

by Anthony J. Badger

In 1984 Jimmy Carter reflected on growing up in the segregated South. He recalled that as a young child, he, like many white children, had had an African American child as his closest friend. The two children spent all their play time together. One day they traveled on the train from Plains to Americus, Georgia. Carter went into one compartment; his young friend went into another. What struck Carter in retrospect was not that the facilities had been segregated, but that, at the time, he had not thought anything about it. He noted how unthinking and pervasive the white southern commitment to segregation had been.

Jimmy and Roslyn Carter with Martin Luther King Sr., Andrew Young, Coretta Scott King, and other civil rights leaders at Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia, 1979. (Jimmy Carter Library and Museum)

Next Carter recalled the night when the heavyweight boxer Joe Louis attempted to avenge his one defeat at the hands of the German Max Schmeling, who had been feted by the Nazis. The Carters were the leading white family in Plains, but they did not have electricity. However, they could hook up a radio and run it on the battery of one of their tractors. The night of the fight, African Americans in Plains came to the Carters' yard to listen to the fight. As the Brown Bomber destroyed Schmeling, Carter observed the quiet, dignified satisfaction of the black crowd. It was his first intimation that behind the veil of African American deference and apparent satisfaction with segregation lay a racial pride and a determination to privately refrain from acknowledging the legitimacy of white supremacy.

Carter's father was the most powerful white man in Plains. The most important figure in the black community was a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Carter's mother, Miss Lillian, maintained a close interest in the education of the bishop's son, who would visit her whenever he returned to Plains from college in the North. The son would go to the front door of the Carter house and Miss Lillian would meet him in the front room. Mr. Carter was appalled that a black man should go to the front, rather than back, door of the Carter house and that a black man should be entertained by his wife. But he knew better than to tangle with Miss Lillian. Whenever the bishop's son called, Mr. Carter would leave.

HIDE FULL ESSAY ▲

As the two most prominent figures in their communities, Mr. Carter and the bishop had to do business together. How were they to meet? Mr. Carter could not conceive of the African American bishop coming to the front door of his house, the bishop could not conceive of going to the back door like a servant. A compromise was reached. The bishop would drive up to the Carter house and stay in his car, and Mr. Carter would come to the edge of the yard. With Mr. Carter standing and the bishop sitting, honor was satisfied. Such was the elaborate etiquette of race relations that underpinned segregation and which African Americans who were determined could push at the edges but not ignore.

The South that Jimmy Carter grew up in was the poorest region in the country. Here African Americans

were rigidly segregated and economically and politically powerless. When Carter was elected president in 1976, he was the representative of a South that was a booming biracial democracy. He failed to win a majority of white votes in the South, but he won the southern states because of overwhelming black support. As Andrew Young observed, the hands that had picked the cotton picked the president. How had the region been transformed? How had the physical restrictions of segregation been eliminated? How had African Americans gained the right to vote? How had a powerless black minority wrested change from a powerful and entrenched white majority?

For Jimmy Carter, the answer was straightforward. Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement had changed the South and made Carter's own election possible. This classic narrative of the Civil Rights Movement from Montgomery to Selma, from the bus boycott of 1955–1956 to the voting rights campaign of 1965, along with the subsequent judicial and legislative successes is a familiar one. Yet over the past twenty years, historians have challenged that triumphant narrative.

Some historians argue that the economic modernization of the South made racial change inevitable. Segregation was expensive and anachronistic, and southern businessmen saw the economic damage caused by traditional patterns of race relations and by the ensuing negative national publicity that deterred outside investment. Some have even argued that the white backlash provoked by the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954 actually slowed the pace of racial change. It halted the "incipient amelioration of race relations" promoted by new metropolitan elites and moderates in the South. It destroyed moderate southern white politicians and unleashed a violent white response that would, however, eventually bring about federal intervention in the 1960s.

For historians of the Civil Rights Movement, it has become a truism that the protest movement did not suddenly start on December 1, 1955, when Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. There had been resistance by African Americans at the peak of segregation, and seemingly non-political actions in the workplace and in public spaces expanded black autonomy in ways that whites simply did not see or understand. There were institutional and organizational activities as well, including NAACP local activity and Popular Front labor organizing in the 1930s, and NAACP legal campaigns and voter registration drives in the 1940s. Historians see the Civil Rights Movement in the 1940s as different from the movement in the 1950s and 1960s; it was a class-based movement, powered by leftist and biracial trade unions and focused more on economic rights than legalistic civil rights. This era of the movement, however, was brought to a halt by McCarthyism. The Civil Rights Movement that emerged after 1955 was a church-based, cross-class movement that stressed legalistic civil rights. Only belatedly, after 1965, did King and other leaders acknowledge the failure of the movement to address the persistent realities of poverty and economic discrimination.

Historians have also criticized the emphasis on King and other individual civil rights leaders. Too much attention has been given, they argue, to ministers and national leaders at the expense of local people. Case studies of the movement have also focused on the indispensable contribution of women. It was woman professionals at Alabama State College who activated the Montgomery bus boycott and organized its finances. It was the domestic servants who made up the majority of bus passengers and dominated the audiences at the mass meetings during the boycott. It was local women, not men, who were the powerful community leaders in southwest Georgia and Mississippi. It was women who pioneered the grassroots-democracy approach of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the citizenship education and literacy programs of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). In addition, historians have noted that it was students—for whom Martin Luther King and the church were only two of many sources of inspiration—who revived a slumbering protest movement in 1960 and provided the radical cutting edge of the movement from the sit-ins to the 1967

and 1968 Black Power demonstrations on southern campuses.

Finally, recent historians have raised questions about the centrality of the nonviolent protest exemplified by King. African Americans in the rural South had always had a tradition of armed self-defense. World War II inspired black soldiers not to turn the other cheek on their return to the South. The threat of black violence accompanied all the classic nonviolent campaigns. It was black violence, or the threat of it, that finally prompted the federal government to propose civil rights legislation. It was the threat of violent black reprisals that successfully faced down the revived Ku Klux Klan in the South between 1964 and 1967, and that enabled the gains of the 1964 and 1965 civil rights acts to be implemented at the local level.

It is important to challenge the rather sanitized and safe image of a Civil Rights Movement that is celebrated in the annual national holiday to mark Dr. King's birthday. The success of the remarkable social movement of the 1950s and 1960s was not simply the story of heroic nonviolent black protest and a responsive white liberal judiciary and federal government. Nevertheless, the necessary revisions by historians should not be allowed to obscure the radical achievement of King and the Civil Rights Movement.

In fact, revisionist historians overstate their case. The collapse of segregation in the South cannot be explained solely as the inevitable result of economic modernization. Until the 1960s, southern businessmen believed that they could maintain the traditional patterns of race relations in the South and also secure dynamic economic growth. It was only in the early 1960s, with the growth of the Civil Rights Movement, that they finally realized that racial tension was deterring outside investment and that racial change would inevitably be imposed on the region. Then they took the first steps to mediate the transition away from segregation in their communities. Nor did the *Brown* decision halt any significant level of gradual racial change in the South. Before *Brown*, changes had occurred only at the edges of segregation, while year after year, the core had remained intact. Moreover, *Brown* was not the first impetus to violent white backlash. Even before the decision came down in 1954, such backlashes had already broken out in response to black attempts to register to vote and to move into white suburbs.

It is true that McCarthyism helped destroy the left-led unions of the 1940s as well as groups like the Civil Rights Congress and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. But these groups were only part of the Civil Rights Movement of that era. The patient campaign for voter registration in the southern cities and the NAACP's legal challenge to segregation continued. It was when these campaigns failed to bring satisfactory results in the 1950s that African Americans in the South turned to nonviolent direct-action protest in Montgomery in 1955 and in Greensboro in 1960.

It is also true that grassroots activism was crucial in activating civil rights campaigns, in sustaining momentum for the movement at critical periods, and, during the late 1960s, in translating legal gains into visible jobs, real school desegregation, police protection, improved public services, and local political power. But grassroots activism was not enough. African Americans needed the access to national political influence and media attention that Martin Luther King Jr. brought. It was King's campaigns at Birmingham and Selma that led to the legislative victories of 1964 and 1965 that destroyed segregation. Despite the heroism of black and white activists during the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964, by the end of that summer, fewer than 1,000 African American voters and less than 6 percent of voting-age blacks in the state had been registered. However, within three years of the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, over 60 percent of Mississippi's blacks were registered to vote.

Armed self-defense was a resilient and powerful tradition among black southerners. In both the segregated South and the South of the civil rights era, it could make violent white extremists pause. But

black violence was also counterproductive: It aroused paranoid white fears and more often than not led to white repression rather than to concessions. It also played into persistent white stereotypes of black criminality and lawlessness, stereotypes that would be ruthlessly and successfully employed by southern conservatives in the years to come. Nonviolence, on the other hand, was sometimes effective precisely because it promised to hold violent reactions in check. For example, the need to give King victories in order to lessen the appeal of more radical black leaders was an important impulse for both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Given the benefits of nonviolence, it is a measure of King's achievements that the civil rights protests in the South maintained a nonviolent posture—for nonviolence was not a natural or inevitable African American response to white violence.

The segregated South was defeated by a social protest movement from below—the African American Civil Rights Movement—and by judicial and legislative intervention from outside—the federal government. To secure that decisive federal intervention, which forced change on a defiant white South, southern African Americans, during the years between 1955 and 1965, won the culture wars with southern whites. Civil rights protesters were nonviolent; they were peaceful and studious; and they affirmed American constitutional, democratic, and religious goals. In the battle for the hearts and minds of northern public and political opinion, white racist thugs and lawless police forces were no match. The Civil Rights Movement not only out-sang and out-prayed its opponents, it out-thought them.

But 1955–1965 turned out to be a uniquely successful time for civil rights activists. After 1965, white southerners increasingly won the culture wars in the nation at large. They targeted the enemy not crudely and overtly as black, but as violent, criminal, and immoral, and as leeches on the welfare state at the expense of taxpaying, responsible citizens. Before 1965, crucial northern white support for civil rights was cost-free. But after 1965, civil rights progress would involve costs to northern whites in terms of job competition, the invasion of their private spheres of housing and schools, and increased taxes to pay for government poverty and welfare programs that seemed to reward violent rioters.

The victories of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s created the South that elected Jimmy Carter to the White House. The movement created a new black middle class, it secured physical safety and the protection of the law for ordinary black southerners, it dismantled segregation, it eliminated overt racism in southern politics, it empowered black officeholders across the region, and it changed forever the day-to-day interactions between the races. But the limitations of those victories are also evident in the lily-white Republican Party of the contemporary South, the white flight from the southern cities, and the grinding poverty of a rural and urban black underclass.

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The Consequences of Defeat in Vietnam

by Mark Atwood Lawrence

As historians of the Vietnam War know all too well, the amount of documentation about the conflict available in US archives—to say nothing of foreign repositories—can be overwhelming. To master even a small slice of this material is a herculean undertaking, and the task grows more daunting year by year as the US government declassifies more material. In the face of this documentary avalanche, one can't help but be impressed by the sheer thoroughness, if not always the courage and wisdom, with which US decision-makers, diplomats, and military commanders analyzed, debated, and recorded virtually every dimension of the war.

Yet the archival record of the war years is conspicuously thin in one area: detailed assessments of the consequences the United States would suffer if it failed to achieve its goals in Vietnam. Would defeat inevitably amount to a dangerous setback in the broader Cold War? Would it invite further communist aggression, or might the United States be able to contain the damage? Such questions went mostly unexamined during the peak years of American embroilment. To be sure, US leaders intensely analyzed these issues in the years leading up to the major escalation of American involvement in 1965. Again and again, they came to the same conclusion: communist takeover of South Vietnam would open the way to communist expansion elsewhere in Asia and cause US allies and adversaries alike to question the credibility of US commitments around the world, thus inviting further aggression and endangering US alliances. On the strength of these conclusions, Lyndon Johnson committed the United States to a major war in the first months of 1965 despite abundant warnings that victory would be exceedingly difficult to achieve. Thereafter, however, US officials went mostly silent on the issue, content to rest on the assumptions embraced at the outset.

It's not difficult to identify reasons why this was so. Once American troops began fighting and dying, US officials had little encouragement or incentive to study whether the effort was in fact worthwhile. The key question became how, not whether, to fight the war. Any official who dwelled on the possibility of failure risked being labeled defeatist—hardly an appealing prospect in any presidential administration but especially disagreeable for officials serving under Johnson, a president who surrounded himself with yes-men and quickly banished dissenters from his inner circle. Nor did US officials come under much pressure from anti-war critics to reckon in detail with the question of what would happen if the United States failed to achieve its objectives. Radical critics of the war, it's true, sometimes speculated that defeat might humble the United States and produce thoroughgoing reform of US foreign policies, but that was hardly the kind of commentary that was likely to generate serious study in the corridors of power.

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Only once between the Americanization of the war in 1965 and the end of the Johnson presidency in January 1969 did the US bureaucracy weigh in detail the possible consequences of defeat. On September 12, 1967, CIA Director Richard Helms sent the President a thirty-three-page report entitled "Implications of an Unfavorable Outcome in Vietnam"—a fascinating document that was declassified in

1993 but has curiously escaped close attention from scholars. The report, a provocative resource for teaching purposes, is available on-line at http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0001166443/DOC_0001166443.pdf.

In a covering note to LBJ, Helms displayed remarkable unease about what his agency had produced. The report, Helms insisted, was by no means intended as an argument for ending the war. Nor, he hastened to add, was it written to convey any sort of despair about America's prospects. "We are not defeatist out here," Helms asserted from his office in Langley, Virginia. Going still further to reassure the President, he noted that the paper would be delivered to the White House in a sealed envelope and that no other government official would see it.

Such copious reassurances no doubt reflected Helms's keen awareness that he was lobbing a bombshell of sorts at the Oval Office. In cautious but clear language, the report challenged some of the core assumptions on which Johnson had taken the country to war and had repeatedly escalated the US commitment during 1966 and 1967. Above all, the study, which distilled the opinions of more than thirty CIA officials, argued that failure in Vietnam would not permanently damage the US position in the world by opening the way to a devastating chain of communist takeovers or destroying American credibility. Rather, it concluded, "such risks are probably more limited and controllable than most previous argument has indicated."

The study noted that an "unfavorable outcome" would almost certainly not come about through spectacular military defeat or the sudden political collapse of the South Vietnamese government. The United States was too powerful and had invested too much in Vietnam to permit that kind of catastrophe. The report instead foresaw that the United States would offer concessions during prolonged negotiations leading to a political settlement. Though such a deal might at first look like a compromise, the study asserted, it would "in the end lead to the establishment of Communist power in South Vietnam," perhaps within as little as one year after the end of the fighting.

Even a relatively peaceful and orderly communist takeover would undoubtedly have serious repercussions, the CIA paper acknowledged. This scenario, it argued, would amount to "a rather dramatic demonstration that there are certain limits on US power, a discovery that would be unexpected for many, disconcerting for some, and encouraging to others." Above all, communist takeover would make strikingly clear that the United States, "acting within the constraints imposed by its traditions and public attitudes, cannot crush a revolutionary movement which is sufficiently large, dedicated, competent, and well-supported."

But none of this, the study added, would necessarily amount to a cataclysmic blow to US power. The CIA took heart from several considerations. First, a setback in Vietnam would do nothing to weaken the "essential strength" of the United States, which would unquestionably remain the "weightiest single factor" in global politics. "Historically," the report pointed out, "great powers have repeatedly absorbed setbacks without permanent diminution of the role which they subsequently played" in global affairs. At the same time, there was no reason to believe that every government around the world would view a US defeat in Vietnam as a grievous blow to American power and credibility. On the contrary, the study observed, some nations would be reassured by indications that the United States was using its power with "greater responsibility" and a "better-balanced concern for other parts of the world than Southeast Asia." Even those governments that questioned American credibility could be significantly reassured by fresh indications of American resolve.

The largest chunk of the report sought to demonstrate, region by region, that the consequences of defeat would be less serious than commonly supposed. In Southeast Asia, the focus of American anxiety about

falling dominoes and Chinese expansion, the CIA predicted communist takeovers in Laos and Cambodia. In Malaya, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia, however, the report saw good reason to believe that anti-communist political forces were firmly in control and, with fresh US reassurances, would stay that way. As for Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, the report offered similar judgment: with proper indications of continued US support, all of them would remain firmly within the American geopolitical orbit. Nor did the report see reason for alarm about the possibility that West European allies would interpret an American defeat in Vietnam as an indication of weakening US commitment to NATO. "Most would understand that the American stake in Europe's security is of a far different order of importance, and would not be disposed to make false analogies," the study concluded.

Finally, it challenged the notion that the Soviet Union or revolutionary Third World states would be greatly emboldened by a communist takeover in Vietnam to mount new insurgencies. The Soviets were likely to act only with "their usual caution" and would draw back in the face of new demonstrations of US resolve, the CIA predicted. Meanwhile, it added, new commitments of economic and military aid to friendly Third World nations would likely counteract any new temptations to mount guerrilla wars against governments aligned with Washington.

Was the CIA report correct its predictions? What would have happened if LBJ had accepted the logic of the report and sought to disengage the United States from Vietnam in 1967? Might the United States have safely wound down the war in 1967 or 1968, thereby saving more than 25,000 American lives and sparing Vietnam unimaginable destruction? These questions, posed after laying out the basic history of the war, would surely stir lively discussion in any classroom. There are, of course, no definitive answers. But like most good counterfactual problems, the questions can help clarify core issues. Exactly what did American leaders believe they were fighting for in Vietnam? Why did LBJ and other American leaders continue the war even as evidence suggested a lack of progress? Why did they never really reexamine the assumptions that had led them to war in 1965? To put the matter bluntly, why did the Vietnam War last so long?

Alas, LBJ left no clear indications of his thoughts about the CIA document or many of the issues that it raised. But little imagination is necessary to pinpoint reasons why he might have tossed it aside after a merely cursory reading. He may have believed that the document was simply irrelevant since the United States, despite the challenges it faced, could still achieve its basic objectives in Vietnam. Certainly, many scholars believe LBJ never wavered in his belief that the United States could prevail militarily and politically in Vietnam, even after the US public reaction to the 1968 Tet Offensive forced him to open negotiations with North Vietnam. Or he may have believed that the document was simply wrong—that it underestimated the likelihood of bold communist expansion or devastating damage to America's credibility. Certainly, Nixon's foreign policy point man, Henry Kissinger, took that view when he came into office in 1969. It's also possible that domestic political calculations, including LBJ's sense of his prospects for reelection in 1968, led the President to believe he had to carry on the war and thereby escape damaging criticism for weakness in the face of communist aggression.

What is striking from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, however, is the accuracy of the CIA's analysis and therefore, quite arguably, the tragic nature of the decisions by Johnson and then Nixon to prolong the war for another five years. The CIA's description of how the war might end—US concessions leading to a negotiated agreement, followed by communist takeover within a relatively brief period—proved remarkably prescient. The United States opened talks in 1968 and, following numerous major concessions to the communists, reached a settlement in Hanoi in early 1973, only to see communist forces overrun South Vietnam in the spring of 1975. More importantly, the consequences of this setback played out almost exactly as the CIA report anticipated. Laos and Cambodia quickly fell to communist

insurgencies, but otherwise American allies in Asia remained strong and loyal. In Europe, meanwhile, NATO survived. Throughout the Third World, the communist victory in Vietnam energized a few radical regimes and spurred a few insurgencies. Over the long run, though, those developments amounted to little, and new infusions of American military aid reversed the course of the Cold War in the Third World in the United States' favor by the mid-1980s.

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Cold War, Warm Hearth

by Elaine Tyler May

In the summer of 1959, a young couple married and spent their honeymoon in a fallout shelter. *Life* magazine featured the "sheltered honeymoon" with a photograph of the duo smiling on their lawn, surrounded by dozens of canned goods and supplies. Another photograph showed them kissing as they descended twelve feet underground into the 22-ton, steel and concrete, 8-by-11-foot shelter where they would spend the next two weeks. The article quipped that "fallout can be fun" and described the newlyweds' adventure as fourteen days of "unbroken togetherness." As the couple embarked on married life, all they had to enhance their honeymoon were some consumer goods and their privacy. This is a powerful image of the nuclear family in the nuclear age: isolated, sexually charged, cushioned by abundance, and protected against impending doom by the wonders of modern technology.
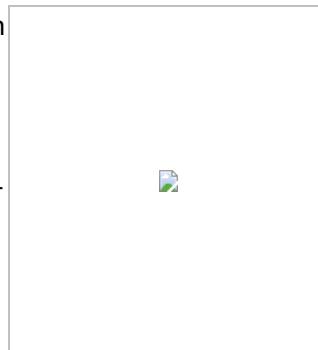
The stunt was little more than a publicity device; yet, in retrospect it takes on symbolic significance. For in the early years of the Cold War, amid the uncertainties brought about by World War II and its aftermath, the home seemed to offer a secure private nest removed from the dangers of the outside world. The message was ambivalent, however, for the family also seemed particularly vulnerable. It needed heavy protection against the intrusions of forces outside itself. The self-contained home held out the promise of security in an insecure world. It also offered a vision of abundance and fulfillment. As the Cold War began, young postwar Americans were rushing into this vision of marriage and family life.

Demographic indicators show that in the period immediately following World War II, Americans were more eager than ever to establish families. The bomb-shelter honeymooners were part of a cohort of Americans of all racial, ethnic, and religious groups, of all socio-economic classes and education levels, who lowered the age at marriage for both men and women, and quickly brought the birthrate to a twentieth-century high after more than a hundred years of steady decline, producing the "baby boom." Although the nation remained divided along lines of race and class, family fever swept the nation and affected all Americans. The trend of early marriage and relatively large families these young adults established lasted for more than two decades. From the 1940s through the early 1960s, Americans married at a higher rate and at a younger age than did their European counterparts.

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Less noted but equally significant, the men and women who formed families between 1940 and 1960 also reduced the divorce rate after a postwar peak. Marriages forged in the late 1940s were particularly stable. Even those couples who eventually divorced remained together long enough to prevent the divorce rate from rising until the mid-1960s. Although the United States maintained its dubious distinction of having the highest divorce rate in the world, the temporary decline in divorce did not occur to the same extent in Europe.

Why did postwar Americans turn to marriage and parenthood with such enthusiasm and commitment?

Scholars frequently point to the family boom as the inevitable result of a return to peace and prosperity. They argue that postwar Americans were eager to put the disruptions and hardships of economic depression and war behind them and enjoy the abundance at home. There is, of course, some truth in this claim, but prosperity followed other wars in our history, notably World War I, with no similar increase in marriage and childbearing. Peace and affluence alone are inadequate to explain the many complexities of the postwar domestic explosion. The demographic trends went far beyond what was expected from a return to peace. Indeed, nothing on the surface of postwar America explains the rush of young Americans into marriage, parenthood, and traditional gender roles.

It might have been otherwise. The Great Depression of the 1930s brought about widespread challenges to traditional gender roles that could have led to a restructured home. The war intensified these challenges and pointed the way toward radical alterations in the institutions of work and family life. Wartime brought thousands of women into the paid labor force when men left to enter the Armed Forces. After the war, expanding job and educational opportunities, as well as the increasing availability of birth-control devices, might well have led young people to delay marriage or not marry at all, and to have fewer children if they did marry. Indeed, many observers at the time feared that these changes seriously threatened the stability of the American family. Yet, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that postwar American society experienced a surge in family life and a reaffirmation of domesticity that rested on distinct roles for women and men.

This demographic explosion in the American family represented a temporary disruption of long-term trends. It lasted only until the baby-boom children came of age. The parents, having grown up during the Depression and the war, had begun their families during years of prosperity. Their children, however, grew up amid affluence during the Cold War; they reached adulthood during the 1960s and 1970s, creating the counterculture and a new women's liberation movement. In vast numbers, they rejected the political assumptions of the Cold War, along with the domestic and sexual codes of their parents. This generation brought the twentieth-century birthrate to an all-time low and the divorce rate to an unprecedented high.

Observers often point to the 1950s as the last gasp of time-honored family life before the sixties generation made a major break from the past. But the comparison is shortsighted. In many ways, the youths of the sixties resembled their grandparents, who came of age in the first decades of the twentieth century. Like many of their baby-boom grandchildren, the grandparents had challenged the sexual norms of their day, pushed the divorce rate up and the birthrate down, and created a unique youth culture, complete with music, dancing, movies, and other new forms of amusements. They also behaved in similar ways politically, developing powerful feminist and civil rights movements, strong grassroots activism on behalf of social justice, and a proliferation of radical movements to challenge the status quo. It is the generation in between—with its strong domestic ideology, pervasive consensus politics, and peculiar demographic behavior—that stands out as different.

What makes the postwar demographic explosion even more curious and remarkable is its pervasiveness across all groups in the society. Americans of all backgrounds rushed into marriage and childbearing, even though many of these newly formed families—most notably large numbers of Americans of color—were excluded from suburbia, the site of the "American way of life." Racial and class divisions were concealed beneath an aura of unity in the aftermath of the war. Post–World War II America presented itself as a unified nation, politically harmonious and blessed with widespread affluence. Emerging triumphant from a war fought against racist and fascist regimes, spared the ravages of war-torn Europe and Asia, and prosperous from the booming wartime economy, the United States embraced its position as the "leader of the free world."

But major challenges lay ahead if the nation was to maintain its leadership in the world. The atomic blasts that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked both the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War. The United States now faced its former ally, the Soviet Union, as its major foe. The Cold War was largely an ideological struggle between the two superpowers, both hoping to increase their power and influence across the globe. The divisions in American society along racial, class, and gender lines threatened to weaken the society at home and damage its prestige in the world. In the propaganda battles that permeated the era, American leaders promoted the American way of life as the triumph of capitalism, allegedly available to all who believed in its values. This way of life was characterized by affluence, located in suburbia, and epitomized by white middle-class nuclear families. Increasing numbers of Americans gained access to this domestic ideal—but not everyone who aspired to it could achieve it.

Poverty excluded many from suburban affluence; racism excluded others. Nevertheless, experts and officials insisted that the combined forces of democracy and prosperity would bring the fruits of the "good life" to all. Racial strife, they asserted, was diminishing. Workers, they argued, were prosperous. But anxieties surrounding these issues did not disappear. Policymakers perceived racial and class divisions as particularly dangerous, because dissatisfied workers and racial minorities might be drawn to left-wing political agitation, leading to socialism or even communism. According to the Cold War ethos of the time, conflict within the United States would harm our image abroad, strengthen the Soviet Union, and weaken the nation, making it vulnerable to communism. The worst-case scenario was Communist takeover and the defeat of the United States in the Cold War. Although strategists and foreign policy experts feared that the Soviet Union might gain the military strength and territorial expansion to achieve world domination, many leaders, pundits, and other observers worried that the real dangers to America were internal ones: racial strife, emancipated women, class conflict, and familial disruption.

To alleviate these fears, Americans turned to the family as a bastion of safety in an insecure world, while experts, leaders, and politicians promoted codes of conduct and enacted public policies that would bolster the American home. Like their leaders, most Americans agreed that family stability appeared to be the best bulwark against the dangers of the Cold War era. Because of the political, ideological, and institutional developments that converged at the time, young adults were especially eager for the comforts and security that the nuclear family promised. Like the young couple who honeymooned in the fallout shelter, postwar Americans set their sights on the affluent and protected home as the location of their own personal pursuit of happiness.

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Ronald Reagan and the End of the Cold War: The Debate Continues

by Michael Cox

For a British professor with more than a passing interest in US foreign policy and the role of the United States in ending the Cold War, it is indeed fascinating to observe how deeply divided opinion still remains over the part played in the making of 1989 by one very special American: President Ronald Reagan. Indeed, in a recent class I taught at my home institution—the London School of Economics—I asked a simple question about which policy-maker at the time was most instrumental in ending Soviet control in Eastern and Central Europe. Reagan was of course high on my list of possible candidates; and you might say that for a European I made a fairly strong case for him—but to no avail.

Ronald Reagan at the Berlin Wall, 1987. (Ronald Reagan Library)

Amongst a group of 500 very bright first-year students, there seemed to be only one correct answer, and that was not Ronald Reagan but, rather, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. By a considerable margin it was the Russian rather than the American who won the overwhelming majority of votes (over 70 percent of the total).

Yet amongst other students, and no doubt amongst political leaders in other countries, Reagan continues to exercise an enormous fascination—as political leader of the free world at a critical moment in time; as a transformational president; and of course, as the man whose policies, it has been argued, contributed more than anything else to bringing about the demise of Communism. Few American presidents have complete special issues of *USA Today* devoted to their life and times. But in early 2011 Reagan did: forty-eight pages of it from the cover title—"Reagan: An American Icon"—through the back page where we find out that it was no less a corporation than General Electric (a company for which Reagan worked as spokesman between 1954 and 1962) that had in fact sponsored that very important "Ronald Reagan Centennial Celebration." Reagan, I suspect, would not have been dismayed. Indeed, according to one account, he later admitted that working for GE was "the second most important eight-year job" he ever had!

Still, for students and teachers of international affairs, the most interesting and difficult question to answer concerns his role in changing the world only a few years after he had assumed the office of president in 1980. Three questions in particular deserve our attention. First, what are the main points in favor of the thesis that Reagan, or at least Reagan's policies, "won" the Cold War? Second, why has there been so much resistance to this thesis—and not only amongst LSE students? And finally, is it possible to arrive (twenty years after the end of the Cold War in 1989 and a century after the birth of Ronald Reagan) at a balanced view of the part he played in undermining the Soviet system?

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When Ronald Reagan took over the White House, the end of the Cold War not only seemed a very long way off—nobody in fact thought in such terms at the time—but in many respects it actually looked as if the USSR (and not the West) was winning. The Soviet Union had just invaded Afghanistan. Its supporters

in the Third World from Central America to southern Africa seemed to be sweeping all opposition before them. America's European allies were mired down in a politically bruising effort to deploy a new class of missiles at home. And, as many felt at the time, the United States stood on the cusp between one highly debilitating decade (Reagan later called the 1970s a "decade of neglect") and another whose prospects looked anything but bright.

Into this situation strode the ever-optimistic Reagan. The time had come, he announced, to reverse the tide of history. Indeed, instead of retreating (some even believed declining), the United States should challenge its enemies, including the USSR, to a serious contest with nothing less than the world as the prize. Reagan was always certain that in the end the West would win. He was so certain, in fact, that he even abandoned the niceties of nearly forty years of diplomatic convention that took it for granted that "containment" was America's preferred strategy toward the Soviet Union and replaced it with an altogether more aggressive policy that did not merely contest the Communist system more forcefully, but called its legitimacy (indeed its very survivability) into question.

Reagan was clear. The USSR, he opined in 1982 before the British Parliament, did not represent the wave of the future. On the contrary, it was, he insisted, condemned like all totalitarian systems to that proverbial "ash can" of history. Reagan even cited Karl Marx in his favor. Marx was right—there was a crisis unfolding—except it was not happening in the capitalist West, according to Reagan, but rather in the communist East. Nor was Reagan content just to point out what was wrong with planning—though he did so in some detail. A few months later he spoke of the USSR in almost religious terms. Its government was not just another system with which the United States was engaged in a competition. It was nothing less (he noted in March 1983) than an "evil empire," one that the United States not only had a foreign-policy duty to oppose but a moral duty to compete with as well.

And compete the United States did with increasing determination, most immediately with a decisive military build up in what became known as SDI (the Strategic Defence Initiative). The United States, some of Reagan's supporters loudly proclaimed, would, quite simply, spend the Soviet Union into bankruptcy. It would also make the USSR pay for its aggressive actions undertaken in the 1970s. Hence was born the "Reagan doctrine," a form of proxy war fought by the United States from Afghanistan to Nicaragua using local forces to increase Soviet problems globally. Finally, the US would seek to squeeze the USSR economically through trade embargoes and investment freezes. And even if this proved problematic (largely because the Soviet economy was not that dependent on the West), there was at least one other metaphorical weapon in the American arsenal: Saudi Arabia, which controlled over 25 percent of the world's oil supplies, and which was well placed to force down the price of the black stuff upon which the USSR did depend for most of its hard currency.

That Reagan had combined a serious analysis of Soviet systemic weaknesses with a fairly coherent strategy of squeeze and pressure is not, I think, in doubt. Where I think there is some doubt is in making a connection between what he talked about and practiced in his first term in office regarding the superpower relationship and what later unfolded in his second term when one of these two players finally decided to fly the white flag of surrender in Europe. Here we have to exercise some intellectual caution and academic balance.

On one hand, there is very clearly a relationship between US policies under Reagan before late 1988 and what subsequently happened on the Soviet side. It would be most odd if there was not. On the other hand, it is not at all obvious what that relationship is.

First, we have to determine which Ronald Reagan we are actually talking about: the tough, uncompromising American leader who seemingly denied the very legitimacy of the Soviet Union and

opposed it by calling for Mr. Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall. Or Reagan the serious negotiator, who met new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on no less than four occasions after 1984. The issue is a critical one in terms of explaining the end of the Cold War. For if, as some believe, it was a policy of strength and contestation that ended the Cold War, then obviously one must conclude that it is the Reagan of the first term who needs to be celebrated. However, if one concludes—as does Reagan's secretary of state, George Schultz, in his memoirs—that it was only the presence of a Soviet leader with whom one could engage after 1985 that made the end of the Cold War possible, then a very different story is bound to be told; not about a Soviet surrender to the imminent might of American power, but about constructive diplomacy, trust, and something that the early Reagan had been deeply suspicious of: namely détente.

This in turn raises the issue of the USSR and the role played by Gorbachev himself. Here most historians would concede that without a reformer taking over in the Kremlin, not only would there have been nobody with whom Reagan could engage, but there would have been no end to the Cold War either. The United States could raise its own military expenditures as high as it liked; it could have lent even more support to so-called "freedom fighters" in Afghanistan, but without a very different kind of Soviet leader responding to some very real Soviet problems it is impossible to envisage 1989 ever happening. The United States might have played its part in weakening the legitimacy of communism and exposing its weaknesses (of which Reagan was more aware than many American experts at the time). However, at the end of the day the corrosive work was not being done from outside the USSR but from within by an economy that could not innovate and an ideology in which fewer and fewer believed.

There is, in addition, another problem with the argument that an assertive Reagan fought the Soviets to a standstill and then wrestled them to the floor until they cried "Uncle," and it is a problem that all teachers of history and world affairs confront on a daily basis in the classroom: complexity. What happens in history—as we all know—can never be explained in single-factor terms; and the end of the Cold War is no exception to this important rule. Indeed, this is why scholars from both sides of the Atlantic are still arguing about it. While some give Reagan his due (though it is never entirely clear which Reagan), they often go on to point out that one also has to take into account several other factors when thinking about 1989, including the central part performed by the ordinary people of Central and Eastern Europe in their own liberation; the important role played by some European leaders—among whom the West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl was key when it came to pressing for German unification in October 1989; and finally, the quiet but critical role performed by misperception and misunderstanding. Here, the evidence is now clear. Was Gorbachev prepared to loosen Soviet control over Eastern Europe and let the states there choose their own way (the "Sinatra Doctrine")? Obviously so. Did he, however, think that this would lead to the rapid and complete collapse of socialism in all its forms? Apparently not. It was one thing seeking a looser, and hopefully less costly, relationship with countries like Poland and Hungary. This did not necessarily mean that Gorbachev actually intended to lose control of the USSR's "cordon sanitaire" completely. In reality, Gorbachev miscalculated and it was this miscalculation that brought the Cold War to an end.

Finally, how did Reagan himself—and indeed how do most Americans—view the historical figure of Ronald Reagan and what he did in bringing about the end of the Cold War. The simple answer to this is that it all depends on which American you talk to and when! This has certainly been my experience as a teacher. In fact, Americans seem to be even more divided about Reagan than nearly anybody else. There is not very much positive that the broad American left has to say about Reagan, and little indication either that they are prepared to give him any credit for anything. The view on this side of the ideological aisle seems to be that Reagan did more to keep the Cold War going than bringing it to an end. Conservatives and Republicans, you will not be surprised to hear, take a rather different view. Reagan—

and here they mean the Reagan of the first term—was absolutely vital in destroying the USSR as result of his policies. George W. Bush even drew significant lessons from what Ronald Reagan had achieved, and sold many of his own policies in the so-called war on terror almost as if they were a re-run of the past. Admittedly in his time, the new enemy was very different from the old one, but the cause was equally just and victory would be achieved by pursuing the same set of uncompromising, morally superior policies against the new totalitarians.

What Reagan himself did say on the end of the Cold War after he left office is revealing. Here, significantly, one finds no sense of the triumphalism that later characterized some more conservative accounts of 1989. Nor, in fact, can we detect much effort on his part to overplay his own role. He accepted that his own policies contributed to the erosion of Soviet power; and that the ideological offensive he unleashed against the USSR in particular (and socialism in general) contributed to changing the terms of the debate about the East-West relationship. But others played their part, too, he insisted: one being Mrs. Thatcher with whom he was so politically close; and the other of course being Mikhail Gorbachev, whose reformist policies he recognized as being genuine when others in his administration were far more sceptical.

Indeed, Reagan even carried on a debate with the skeptics immediately after he left office. He was certainly very critical of his immediate successor. Bush senior may have been the best and only man for the top job. However, he was quite wrong (at first) to treat the Gorbachev reforms with deep suspicion. This not only displayed a distinct lack of vision (unsurprisingly for a president famed for never being possessed of that rather important political commodity), but according to Reagan, it also meant that the West and the United States might lose a golden opportunity. It was time in his view for the United States to be bold and work with the USSR to make the world a safer place; not to hold back for fear of what might lay beyond the Cold War. In this very important sense, Ronald Reagan ultimately demonstrated something that many of his erstwhile critics, and most of his admiring apologists, have never fully comprehended: that whatever role he may or may not have played in bringing about the end of the Cold War—and historians will continue to debate that for many decades to come I suspect—he had what few leaders have ever displayed since: a sense of a different global future in which all might play a constructive role.

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